



Dear friends and parishioners,

From the end of this year, I won't be doing something which I have been doing for twenty years of ministry – issuing marriage certificates and signing registers in the course of a church wedding. The way in which marriages are registered in the UK is changing, due to legislation which takes account of wide social and technological changes. I, and a lot of other clergy, will have to learn a whole new system.

In itself that won't be hard. But – it is also a sign of the way the world keeps changing, all around us. Whether this seems for the better or for the worse, this deeper truth can easily bring a feeling of real unsettledness, which can even have a physical effect. It seems as if we have been living in a very changeable set of situations for a while now, politically, socially and even environmentally, and I know lots of people who are struggling with this in different ways.

Faith is something which changes as well, as we grow and change and develop new understanding and have new experiences. This is not something I worry about; if faith is a relationship with God, then of course it will change, and older and far greater theologians and people of faith than I am have all noted this. Yet within all that changes, the love of God remains constant: even if we can't feel it. In our journey he holds us close, always, as this beautiful Celtic blessing which I often use, puts it:

May the road rise up to meet you.
May the wind be ever at your back.
May the sun shine warm upon your face;
Rains fall soft upon your fields, and until we meet again,
May God hold you in the hollow of His hand.

With my prayers and every blessing for the month of September,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nicola" followed by a stylized flourish.

Nicola Lenthall