

The Reverend Bill Clinkenbeard was born in Lincoln, Nebraska, and worked as a Church of Scotland Minister in Edinburgh until his retirement. Bill is a member of the Congregation of St Fillan's Church, and the author of several books, including "*The Battle of Inchcolm*", published in 2012.

Below Bill gives a very personal reflection on our present situation.

**PGB**

### On Being Scared

I kept trying to figure out what made me so scared in relation to the Coronavirus. I was scared of dying of course, but I've been dealing with the fear of death for a long time. With the constant help of the media I had gone over all the possible culprits: the collapsing economy, the restrictions on seeing friends and family and going other places, the lack of worship in a church, etc. I did consider all these things, but that just didn't penetrate to the depth of my dread. Why was this so frightening? It finally hit me last night on my way to bed. It's about us being social beings.

As someone has said, we are socially formed, socially maintained, and socially removed. So this is really about identity, our own identity. The virus is destroying our identity. We need our families and friends to remind us who we are. They recognize us, laugh with us, and tell us the old stories once again. But in this crisis they are not there, at least not in a satisfying way. We need our normal patterns of doing things and going places, our restaurants, shops, gyms, public gardens, etc. But our normal patterns of going places and doing things have all been disrupted. All our good places are shut. All these normal patterns are required to affirm our identity each day, but they are no longer. We do not have enough of the familiar social order to sustain our identity. Why is there no one saying this in the media? What happened to all the sociologists?

I think that recalling the importance of our social identity does help a little in this crisis. While we hope that at the end of this the world still has some degree of normality, what is more important is that we still know who we are.

Bill Clinkenbeard, May 5, 2020