Dear friends

The month of April represents a time of emergence as animals in hiberbernation surface from their winter sleep as seen by my recent Hedgehog visitor. Also, it represents a time of growth as some parts of the world commence their Harvest season, and for all of us trying to move forward in new and positive ways. As the weather gets warmer hopefully we will be able to experience and enjoy the spring celebrations of Easter week as it represents a sacred holiday celebrated by Christians worldwide. There are many Easter traditions ranging from parades with national costumes, culinary practises such as France famous for giant omelettes, Passion Plays telling the story of Easter and Fiestas. Naturally not every culture irrespective of denominations celebrates Spring Holy week but for many it's a very important religious time of year and the entire week is filled with colourful processions and religious celebrations.

Traditionally many families exchange chocolate eggs, or paint hard-boiled eggs on Saturday and children spend Sunday morning hunting for them in the house or garden. As I write this Easter note I reflected back to my childhood and the stringent rationing ending and the joy and luxury of receiving a chocolate egg. Now well into my dotage I still enjoy indulging with an Easter egg and fruit-filled 'Hot-cross buns' on Good Friday. Over the past months thanks to the outstanding professional clinical teams and support of volunteers the success of the vaccination campaign is well underway and for many people it was their first human contact in months. Also, depending on global ease of lockdown restrictions it will commemorate the first time in months that family and friends may be able to come together to celebrate Easter week irrespective of one's cultural beliefs. Photo taken by a Catalan friend of the wonderful Easter Egg display at Can Serra, Palafrugell, Catalonia.

Since the pandemic commenced a year ago many of us have found ways of entertaining ourselves through conquering new skills and hobbies such as being creative through mastering the arts such as imaginative writing, a musical instrument or oil painting and the opportunity of learning a new language. Also, being creative in the garden as a way of preventing or overcoming anxiety, loneliness and / or depression. Personally, I have enjoyed the challenge of having to learn new media and technology skills in a productive manner which certainly was initially daunting and challenging but achieved rewarding outcomes!!

During this pandemic, the associated impact and suffering of individuals has been more visible than any previous health crisis and greater hardship like no other in recent years therefore, it's essential for individuals to capture the spirit of generosity and kindness. Hence, as I bring my note to a close, I ask that you remember those who are less fortunate having to rely on foodbanks, benefits and families destitute experiencing homelessness now a humanitarian crisis and individuals seeking shelter at night. Also, remember people you know who are living alone who may be experiencing social isolation, lack of self-worth and poor mental wellbeing. "*If we each selfishly pursue only what we believe to be in our own interest, without caring about the needs of others, we not only end up harming others but also ourselves." Dalai Lama.*

This Easter greeting is sent to let you know I am thinking of you and wishing you good health.
Warm regards

Ellie