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There is so much uncertainty.

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Perhaps you're sharing this with me, this reflection that things seem to be changing more than usual even more frequently than usual. It's very hard to make plans maybe you have noticed. Normally as we are approaching summer holidays, we would have had our plans sorted and we would know what happens, in terms of where we travel with whom we travel. And when we'll be back - when the school, the university starts again and this time

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many of these questions, not all, but many of them aren't answered. Maybe you had to change your plans recently affected by the pandemic that, in some way directly or indirectly affected everyone on Earth. Perhaps it's the first time in history when one single event affected everyone across the countries across the nations.

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So I wanted to share with you this wisdom about impermanence. Impermanence, is a body of teachings that are about change.

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And just wanted to make it very clear that this is not belief impermanence, is not a Buddhist belief as such. It's something that you can notice by yourself, probably even on daily, even hourly basis, things don't seem to last do they?

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Whatever has started sooner or later is going to end or change and we somehow have to change with it. And that is really confusing. And sometimes for that very reason we try to grasp on to things, enjoy them while they last. Take things as they come. And other times we might feel really depressed and anxious, especially in this situation. When you are perhaps already quite an anxious person, this uncertainty is not helping is it? If you sometimes feel that you might have a tendency for depression, this situation is also not helping is it? Because the sense of isolation may be building up upon our sense of being disconnected from other people.

3:02

So, I thought I will tell you a little story about a king who, whenever he had something to celebrate, like, whenever he won a war, he would throw a big, lavish, expensive party and celebrate for days on end. And he would throw all the money that that was there at people, spending it all.

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And other times where things were going not so well. And that might be actually as a result of ongoing celebration when he ran out of all the money when perhaps the kingdom was attacked. And

perhaps whenever they as a community would have lost something, the king would go into despair, he would start punishing his people and get really depressed.

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So we can imagine his advisors, the ministers around him, were growing a bit worried, because this, going from one extreme of really grabbing on to the good things, really trying to make them last a little bit longer. And also, on the other extreme, really feeling depressed and downhearted and completely shattered whenever things were not going well. And, in a sense, make it even last a little bit longer by feeling the sense of despair and a lack of success.

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Things were not looking good for the kingdom. So the ministers came with this idea that they will give a gift to the king of a ring. A ring like this. A ring that had a message written on it.

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And that ring was given to the king to remind him. And the message was very simple. The message was, 'this too shall pass'. So whenever things were going well in the kingdom, and they won the war, the harvest was particularly good last year, the king was reminded. This too shall pass. At other times, when things were looking rather gloomy. The ring was reminding the King, 'this too shall pass'.

6:01

And perhaps this is a message for this situation that we are facing currently in our modern times, both on a social level, but also on our personal level. That things sometimes look fantastic. And we want to grab on to them, we want them to last longer than they are meant to. This too shall pass and, whenever we feel anxious, downhearted, depressed, whenever we fall into despair, because things don't seem very good.

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The message is, 'This too shall pass'.

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And I'm going to leave you with that message today. My name is Pati Bielak-Smith. I'm a Buddhist chaplain at Bangor University. And you can contact me for the contact details provided on the chaplaincy website or check out the Awakened Heart Sangha. We are here to help you.