

STORY: Faithful Love

Last month there was a news story about a dog and the dog's owner who live in northeastern Turkey.

On January 14, the owner, Cernul Senturk was taken by ambulance to a hospital in the city of Trabzon.

Sentruk has a dog named Boncuk, a small white mixed-breed, whom Sentruk has owned for nine years. The name Boncuk means 'beads' –so-named because of the dog's hazel-coloured eyes. The dog managed to escape from Sentruk's apartment and follow him to the hospital. Hospital staff noticed the dog outside the hospital entrance and contacted Sentruk's family who came and retrieved her.

However, somehow the dog escaped the nearby apartment every day and came to the hospital where she waited outside the main doors, occasionally putting her head inside when the doors slid open.

The hospital staff came to know the dog and to feed her. Each night she returned to the apartment and each day returned to the hospital. She did this for six days until her owner was released from hospital.

It's a heart-warming good news story, and it is also a parable for our times. During Covid-19, most of us have been unable to be with family and friends whom we love. We are waiting for the doors to open and for us to be reunited. Someone commented that when the faith community can finally regather for worship, the first service should be a time of hugging, and waving and shaking hands and visiting with each other and saying how much we have missed each other and how glad we are to be back together.

The story of Boncuk also reminds me of the 23rd Psalm. God is spoken of as a good shepherd. The Psalm ends saying that Goodness and Mercy shall follow me all the days of my life.

In keeping with the imagery of the shepherd, imagine that 'Goodness' and 'Mercy' are actually the names of two sheep dogs, who watch and guide the flock. They follow me all the days of my life.

God is always both with us and waiting for us. God always comes to us. God's love is faithful and patient and is always near, always present in our lives.

This week, think of how you will greet the people you have been missing during this pandemic period; and give thanks for the love of God that is with us all.

Let us pray:

God, thank you for your faithful love, reminding us that we are never alone, that Your goodness and mercy are with us every day of our lives. Thank you for all those whom we love and care for. In Christ's name we pray. AMEN