

BBC RADIO ULSTER

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

Friday 16th January 2015

Do you ever get bamboozled by numbers?

The Kepler space observatory recently announced they've now discovered more than 1,000 earth-like planets orbiting other stars. Among all the billions of stars out there Kepler 438-b is the most habitable and Earth-like planet found so far. It's about 470 light years away from Earth. It's all very exciting but I still feel I need Stephen Hawking or even Carol Vorderman to explain the numbers to me in simple terms.

It's the same with some human tragedies. The scale can be so unimaginable it becomes hard to take in. In Nigeria in recent weeks the militant group Boko Haram has continued to kill thousands of people.

And today it's 276 days since more than 200 Nigerian schoolgirls were kidnapped from their school in Chibok.

Since April last year we have discovered more habitable planets outside of our solar system.

We've landed a spacecraft on an asteroid.

But the world has been unable to bring the Chibok schoolgirls back to their families.

The Nigerian government hasn't saved them.

International support hasn't found them.

Millions of tweets with the hashtag

#bringbackourgirls haven't brought them back.

And the prayers of their families and millions of people around the world have not yet resulted in the girls being rescued.

International outrage has risen and fallen and faded away, but of course the families will never forget and many of them protest every day to remind their government and the world that their daughters are still missing.

My youngest daughter is the same age as many of the missing Nigerian girls. In the past 267 days, she sat her 'A' Levels, passed her exams and started university. The thought of her being kidnapped by militants for all of this time is a truly unimaginable horror.

I have a hand made card on my desk. It was a gift from the Girls' Brigade in Islandmagee. They made cards with a drawing of each of the missing girls on the front to remind people to remember and pray for them. The name of the girl on my card is Saraya. Behind all the huge tragic numbers of people suffering in the conflict in Nigeria, there is a young woman missing called Saraya.

She's coping with the trauma of being kidnapped, of being separated from her family and God knows what else.

I hope that one day Saraya will be rescued.

I want to believe that our prayers will be answered.

I want to believe that God is with Saraya.

And I want to be bamboozled by the belief that 'even the very hairs on her head are numbered'.