

In Touch

The Cathedral Magazine - Winter Edition

ST JOHN'S CATHEDRAL HONG KONG

Diocese of Hong Kong Island Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hui

香港聖公會聖約翰座堂



Dec 2020 - Feb 2021

ISSUE 024

Quarterly

The Dean's Message 3

A Church in the Life of...
Archbishop Paul Kwong 4

The Consecration of Bishop
Matthias 8

Buen camino! Buena fe! 10

Faith Begins by Zoom 11

Release for the Captives 14

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SALUTE TO OUR SHEPHERDS



As we celebrate the coming of 2021, it's also time to bid farewell to Archbishop Paul Kwong and to welcome Bishop Matthias Der, our new Diocesan Bishop.

In Touch

In this issue

- | | | | |
|-------|---|-------|--|
| P. 3 | The Dean's Message | P. 16 | Ongoing Bible Study and Prayer Fellowship |
| P. 4 | Lead Story:
A Church in the Life of... Archbishop Paul Kwong | P. 17 | Caring for Those Who Care for Us |
| P. 8 | The Consecration of Bishop Matthias | P. 18 | Book Review :
In Search of the Lost |
| P. 10 | Buen camino! Buena fe! | P. 19 | New Arrivals in SJC Bookstore |
| P. 11 | Faith Begins by Zoom | P. 20 | Cathedral Treasure Hunt on Facebook |
| P. 12 | Letter from the Council
How do you find a Dean? | P. 21 | Daily Gospel Reflection Makes a Difference for Your Day |
| P. 13 | In Memory of Canon Li Fook Hing OBE | P. 22 | Advent and Christmas Services and Major Events at St John's & Daughter Churches |
| P. 14 | Release for the Captives | P. 24 | A Sunday in the Life of... Sunday School Teacher—Fiona Lamb |
| P. 15 | All Things Bright and Beautiful | | |

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THE DEAN'S MESSAGE

Dear Friends,

It is with mixed emotions that I write this final message as Dean. I can still recall the day I first arrived at St John's, back in July 2012. On that first day, Hong Kong happened to be hit with a typhoon signal 10, forcing my start at the cathedral to be postponed. I remember wondering if the stormy beginning was a sign of how my time in this community would go. By the grace of God, the last eight years turned out to be a period of great nurturing and teaching for me and my ministry.

I admire the deep faith in God that I have found you all to have. Very few of you knew who I was before I arrived but despite that, you welcomed me with open arms. That was a sign of great faith in Christ. Upon my arrival, I was instantly humbled by the tremendous heritage that this place carries, both in terms of our Christian witness over the last 171 years, as well as the richness of our spirituality and churchmanship. God's spirit is undoubtedly at work in this place, and I know St John's will continue to shine for Christ for many years to come.

Many people have shared testimonies with me about how St John's gave them a sense of hope, especially in times of difficulty and anxiety. As I write, we are still in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. While we cannot predict how our world will change as a result of this virus, we know that Christ is walking with us each step of the way. St John's has been steadfast in trusting God in times of plague, war, and political instability. It is our faith and hope in Jesus Christ that sustain us through all these worries. My prayer for St John's is that it will always be a place that welcomes all people, wherever they are in their lives, to experience Christ's presence.

Finally, I am forever indebted to the remarkable display of Christian love in this community. From our outreach ministries to the less fortunate and marginalised, to individual parishioners caring for one another, to our collective effort to include people of diverse backgrounds, the love of Christ is being demonstrated. I am continuously touched by the care and love you show to one another, including your kindness towards me and my family.

It has been an immense privilege on my part to have journeyed with you over the last 8 years. I thank God for you all. As I assume office as your bishop, I know I can count on your prayers and support. My wife, Rachel, Lauren and Kristen, my daughters, join me in thanking you all.

Faith, hope, and love! Let us endeavour and strive to further exhibit these foundational tenets of Christianity. Let us serve God and his kingdom with joy and peace.

Thank you and I shall miss you all! God bless!

+ *Dean Matthias*



親愛的弟兄姊妹：

懷著複雜的心情，我以座堂主任身分為本刊撰寫最後一篇家書。仍記得2012年7月來到聖約翰座堂履新之際，當日湊巧碰上颱風襲港，十號風球高懸的情況下，我履新的日子也被迫延後。暗自思量，這樣在暴風下展開的新一頁，是否預示著我在這裡將要渡過的光景？藉賴上帝的恩典，過去八年間我個人以至我的事奉都備受鼓勵，獲益良多。

大家對上主堅定不移的信心，令我深感欽佩。在我到任之前，你們當中認識我的人不多。儘管如此，大家對我的接納正是對基督真誠信仰的體現。無論是過去171年以來在信仰上的種種見證，還是座堂濃厚的屬靈和教會傳統，都令我對這個地方感到五體投地。毫無疑問，上帝的靈在這裡作工，而我知道聖約翰座堂在未來的日子將會繼續榮耀基督。

很多人跟我分享，每當遇到困難和感到焦慮時，座堂往往為他們帶來盼望。執筆之際，我們仍然處身新冠肺炎的疫情之中。雖然無法預測病毒會為世界帶來怎樣的改變，但我們知道足下每一步都有基督與我們同行。座堂的群體在面對瘟疫、戰爭以至政局動盪等艱難時刻，對上帝都抱著堅定的信心。在耶穌基督裡的信心和盼望，也會支持我們渡過所有的憂慮困境。我祈求上主令座堂成為一個永遠友善的地方，讓所有人——無論在任何的景況下——都能夠經歷到基督的同在。

最後，我衷心感激座堂這個大家庭，在不同的領域上時刻展示著基督的大愛，包括藉著外展事工服務弱勢社群及邊緣人士，教友間互相關顧，並且與不同背景的肢體和衷共濟。你們彼此間以愛相待，對我和我的家人亦關愛備至，一直讓我深受感動。

過去八年能與大家同行，我深感榮幸，也為你們感謝主。我知道在接任主教一職的時候，亦會得到你們的禱告守望和支持。在此，我和家人衷心感謝大家。

懷著「信、望、愛」，讓我們竭力彰顯基督的教導，以喜樂和平侍主，協力拓展上帝的國度。

謝謝你們，我將掛念你們。願主祝福大家！

座堂主任
謝子和 謹啟

“ *St John's Cathedral is a place of God's grace, welcoming all, following Christ and changing lives in the heart of Hong Kong.* ”



A Church in the Life of... Archbishop Paul Kwong

TEXT BY / ANDREW ASHLEY

In Touch has a regular feature called 'A Sunday in the Life of...' in which members of St John's talk about their typical Sunday. We have called this article about the Most Reverend Dr Paul Kwong 'A Church in the Life of...' because the Archbishop's life encapsulates so much of the Anglican Church in Hong Kong and around the world over the past several decades.



Archbishop Paul talks about his path to priesthood and his life as a priest.

Archbishop Paul graciously agreed to talk to us about his path to priesthood, his life as a parish priest and his responsibilities as a bishop and primate. It's an intriguing insight into what is now the Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hui and, more widely, into the role of the worldwide Anglican Communion.

An Anglican from the cradle

One often hears the phrase 'cradle Catholic'. The Anglican equivalent is rather less common but Paul is proud of his Anglican roots. Perhaps he was destined to be a bishop. His great grandfather was the first Chinese Anglican priest in the former Diocese of Victoria and his grandfather and father were active members of All Saints and Holy Trinity churches respectively. These churches are now, of course, the cathedrals of Western and Eastern Kowloon.

His parents moved to Hong Kong Island not long before Paul was born and he worshipped at St Stephen's on Bonham Road, the first Chinese Anglican church in the territory. The current building was opened in 1965, the year of St Stephen's centenary, and Paul was confirmed there the same year by the almost legendary Bishop Ronald Hall, who led the Anglican church in Hong Kong for 34 years.

'I was wholly immersed in St Stephen's,' says Paul, 'in the Sunday school, in the choir and as an acolyte, and I first felt a call to ordination while I was in my teens.' The young Paul tried to discern his calling but was advised that he should continue to study, work in the parish and equip himself for ministry.

At Lingnan University, Paul joined the Post-Secondary Education Fellowship, where he made many friends, including Moses Cheng, Chancellor of Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hui and Diocesan Chancellor of Hong Kong Island, got to know other parishes and became active in the affairs of the diocese. After graduating, he worked in a Christian publishing house, but never stopped thinking about his vocation.

Preparing for priesthood

In 1979, Bishop Baker, Ronald Hall's successor, agreed to ordain Paul and sent him to Berkeley, California, to study for a Master of Divinity degree at the Church Divinity School of the Pacific. There were two Chinese Anglican congregations in the Bay Area but, as Paul puts it, 'I wanted to experience something different, so I did my fieldwork at Grace Cathedral in San Francisco.'

Paul speaks enthusiastically of his time there. 'I used to take the bus across the Bay Bridge every Sunday and walk to Grace Cathedral at the top of Nob Hill. I often preached at 8.00am (no more than six minutes!), taught in the Sunday school, then attended the main service. I learned a lot at Grace.'

He is still grateful for the opportunity the church gave him. 'I stayed in America for the whole three years. It wasn't easy to study overseas and I wanted to make use of every second, to get to know the country and the Anglican church there.'

Paul broadened his experience by doing his Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) course as a student chaplain at a hospital in Topeka, Kansas, and, perhaps more excitingly, by taking a month-long Greyhound bus trip all the way from Miami to Toronto.

Parish life... and academia

Efforts were made to persuade Paul to stay and be ordained in the Episcopal Church of the USA but as he says, 'I was absolutely committed to Hong Kong and I knew I would return to a Chinese-speaking church.'

Paul was ordained deacon on his return to Hong Kong in 1982, and assigned to a curacy at Holy Trinity in Kowloon City, where his father had worshipped. He felt as though he was returning to family: 'So many people said "You should call me uncle".'

Paul worked at Holy Trinity for two years, under Canon Edmund Der, the father of Bishop Matthias. 'I had a wonderful time at Holy Trinity, where Edmund Der was well loved and respected. I was even godfather to Rachel, who later married Matthias.'

After ten years as vicar of St Matthias, Yuen Long, Paul was ready to expand his academic horizons and went to the University of Birmingham, to study for a Master of Philosophy in Christian mission. He has fond memories of Birmingham, where

he worshipped at St Philip's Cathedral.

A chance meeting with his professor in a Sainsbury's supermarket led to Paul being invited to change his MPhil into a doctoral research programme. He was still focusing on church mission, but this development meant at least a three-year commitment to academic work.

In the middle of his research work, Paul returned to Hong Kong to witness the handover in 1997. 'I was determined to be there when Hong Kong returned to China. It was an exciting time, but I had mixed emotions when I saw the Union Jack being lowered and the Chinese flag raised.'

Creating a new church

It was some time before Paul could return to his academic research in Birmingham. 'Bishop Peter Kwong seemed to forget that I was doing a PhD and told me he had a plan to start a new church in Tung Chung'. Paul then became the first priest of the Church of the Ascension, when Tung Chung was little more than six blocks of government housing and an empty market. 'We were among the first to welcome new residents to Tung Chung,' he says.



'I stayed in America for the whole three years... I wanted to make use of every second, to get to know the country and the Anglican church there,' said Paul.



Courtesy of The Most Revd Dr Paul Kwong

There was no church building, resources were limited and services were held in a social welfare centre. Paul describes a typical Sunday. 'I would pack breakfast at my church flat in Kwun Tong and drive to HKUST to collect my godson, who acted as acolyte, then pick up the lady organist in Jordan. We'd buy flowers in Mongkok, set up our church in the welfare centre and wait for people to come.' But he adds, 'It was very exciting and very fruitful to establish a new church from scratch.' It certainly seems an appropriate follow up to Paul's work on church mission in Birmingham.

It took him some time to return to that PhD programme. After two years building up the church in Tung Chung, Paul asked Bishop Peter if he could return to Birmingham and complete his doctorate. He did so but looking back now, Paul says that although he loves teaching, he prefers parish work to the academic life.

Absolutely Anglican

His strong roots in the Anglican Church in Hong Kong and his experience in America and the UK mean that Paul is very much at home in the wider church. He becomes particularly animated when talking of the worldwide Anglican Communion. 'I'm a diehard Anglican and I love the uniqueness of Anglicanism.'

When we're actively involved in our own parish, it can be too easy to forget that we're part of a global church. But Paul's work with the Anglican Consultative Council, which he now chairs, has given him a broader perspective on the traditions of the Anglican Communion, which is present in more than 160 countries and has achieved an impressive ethnic and cultural diversity.

He expands on his remark about the distinctive nature of the Communion, noting that, 'Part of our uniqueness comes from the fact that we are episcopally led and synodically governed, which gives us a common purpose and a valuable openness.'

Paul strongly believes that God has a plan for the Anglican Communion, but he is not complacent. 'We must have a mission to bring the Gospel of Christ to people. The Communion has a future so long as it has a purpose.'

Being a bishop

Paul is clearly at ease in his role as bishop and archbishop. 'People ask me why I'm so happy, and I reply that God has been so kind to me and the Church so generous.' But he is serious about the demands on a bishop as pastor to his diocese.

In his sermon at the consecration of Bishop Matthias, he talked about bishops frequently being described as 'disconnected with reality' or 'down to earth', suggesting that such descriptions were not always helpful. Enlarging on the theme, Paul says he was making the point that a bishop should not be a politician. 'It's fashionable to assess whether politicians are seen as popular or down to earth, but a bishop should not be judged by same criteria. Politicians want to please people, so they say

certain things in order to be elected.'

Using the theology of incarnation, Paul notes 'God became flesh and lived among us so, yes, it's perfectly ok for a bishop to be down to earth. But that's not the end of it. God lifted us up and a bishop must stand on high ground and raise the alarm when the enemy attacks. He is a leader, who is supposed to lead, teach and evangelise.'

It's clear that Paul's work won't cease when he relinquishes his formal positions. Asked what he looks forward to doing in retirement, he replies simply, 'I hope to carry on serving God.' Coming from an ecclesiastical family, he's fascinated by the history of the church and might be interested in working in the archives in Bishop's House. Or possibly a role in a parish – 'But I'd have to obtain permission from the Archbishop!' he says.

Whatever he does, Paul will continue to follow the precepts of one of his favourite texts, 1 Thessalonians 5: 16-18, '*Rejoice always, pray continually and give thanks in every situation.*'



Celebrating 2020 Easter Sunday Eucharist



Giving the blessing when Fr Hugh and Ruth reaffirmed their vows on their 50th wedding anniversary



Archbishop Paul at the Opening Service of the 17th meeting of the Anglican Consultative Council.

Thanks For The Memory

Archbishop Paul has touched many hearts at St John's. In Touch asked members of the cathedral family to share their memories.

Fr Dwight recalls his first meeting with the priest who was to be archbishop, over 20 years ago. Newly arrived, he got to know Hong Kong by taking random bus trips. 'I would jump on a bus, go to the terminus and roam around the community.' On one trip, Fr Dwight wandered into St Matthias, Yuen Long, knowing nothing about the parish. 'I was warmly welcomed by the vicar and enjoyed a chat over a cup of tea.'

The meeting is still affectionately remembered by Fr Dwight. But he was surprised at last year's 170th anniversary dinner, when Archbishop Paul reminded him of that chance encounter. 'I thought he must have forgotten it!' says Fr Dwight.

That ability to connect with people and retain the connections is clearly something at which Paul Kwong excels. Betty Tsang says, 'We all know Archbishop Paul but we can't expect him to know every one of us.' Betty was astonished after a service at St John's. 'He recognised me, even though he had only known me at St Stephen's, many years before.'

Mary Szeto echoes Betty's words, 'Imagine my surprise when Archbishop Paul called me by name after meeting me only once.' 'He always cuts an imposing figure, especially in full regalia,' Mary adds. 'I can understand why people might be in awe of him. I suppose I was too, but when I got to know him, I

realised that he is really interested in people and cares deeply.'

As Ian Burchett, former Canadian Consul General, notes, 'St John's Cathedral has a unique ability to bring communities together.' Archbishop Paul is very much at home in the wonderfully diverse cathedral family. 'His Grace was always able to connect with each of us when we could easily be lost in the crowd.' Ian remembers the Archbishop's 'thoughtful words which made you feel he was talking only to you, however grand the occasion.'

Rita Chan focuses on Archbishop Paul as a spiritual leader, praising his inspiring sermons. She mentions the sermon at Bishop Matthias's consecration, about how bishops must stand on the high ground and yet be down to earth.

Rita illustrates the Archbishop's ability to combine both requirements. 'Archbishop Paul's wholehearted support for the Michaelmas Fair Masterchef fundraiser—to which he contributed a dish—ensured that it was a joyous occasion.' On a more serious note, Rita recalls that 'his remarkable leadership of the ACC enabled Hong Kong to host its conference in 2018. This was a very precious experience for St John's and for everyone involved.'

The final words are Ian Burchett's memories of Archbishop Paul at the Palm Sunday procession each year. 'His holy words were illuminated by that lovely twinkle in his eyes, as he conveyed his blessings: "The peace of Christ and how lovely to see you here."'



The Consecration of Bishop Matthias

TEXT BY / MICHAEL GIBB

Beneath a bright early October sky, the Most Revd Paul Kwong, serving as Presider, led the joyful procession of clergy and laypeople to the altar at St John's for the Consecration of the Very Revd Matthias Der to the Holy Order of Bishop.

Amid hymns, Bible readings and prayers, a Confession of Faith and, at the moment of Consecration, the Bishop-elect was examined by the Presider.

'Are you persuaded that God has called you to the office of the bishop?' asked the Most Revd Dr Paul Kwong.

'I am so persuaded,' replied the Bishop-elect.

Immediately, the words of the First Reading seemed to echo once more around Cathedral: *'Thus says the Lord: Here is my Servant, whom I uphold, my chosen, in whom my soul delights; I have put my spirit upon him.'* (Isaiah 42)

Speaking a few days after the Consecration, Bishop Matthias said he had been blessed because God has always guided him

throughout his journey of faith, helping him to make tough decisions. He cites his journey back to Hong Kong from Canada eight years ago as an example of God's plan. He freely admits to feeling worried after he was offered the position of Dean at St John's.

Not only did he feel unprepared and lacking in experience for such a move, leaving Canada would uproot his family. The St John's community was ten times larger than his church in Canada, where he had served as priest for twenty years. The decision to move back to Hong Kong where he grew up was a tough one to make.

'But it came to me that priesthood is about obedience. God works through us, and I felt that moving back to Hong Kong was part of God's purpose,' he says. It was a leap of faith, but he was persuaded.

Now, looking back on his eight years as Dean, Bishop Matthias reflects that it has been a great privilege to share his journey of faith with so many wonderful people at St John's.

'I have been so fortunate that God has always sent good people



Consecrating Bishops including The Right Reverend Louis Tsui (1st from left), The Most Reverend Peter Kwong (2nd from left), The Right Reverend Timothy Kwok (3rd from left), The Right Reverend Andrew Chan (2nd from right), and The Right Reverend Thomas Soo (1st from right).

to share my journey with me. Everyone at St John's has been so supportive,' he says. During this time, there have been many joyful occasions, such as weddings and baptisms, and also great sorrow, too, when loved ones passed away and friends got sick.

'But God's presence is always with us and is our strength,' he says.

As said in the Second Reading, *'Guard the good treasure entrusted to you, with the help of the Holy Spirit living in us.'* (2 Timothy 1)

'We were so blessed to have Bishop Matthias as our Dean at the Cathedral for the last eight years,' says Cheung Ting-kin, who attended the Consecration as a member of the Council.

'His well-rounded experience in various kinds of Ministry, his strong multi-language skills and his experience and service in both Canada and Hong Kong have equipped him to lead us further in the Diocese of Hong Kong Island and continue to be our shepherd following the Lord our God.'

Dr Cheung says Bishop Matthias helped him enormously after his father suddenly passed away in 2018.

'He presided the funeral service and comforted me and my family through that very difficult time,' he says.

Jeannie Chan was one of the servers at the Consecration. 'I am very happy for Bishop Matthias, even though I am going to miss him as our Dean. I felt privileged to assist him as a server during Wednesday morning services, and I am going to miss the time that I can learn from him and his sermons.' She says everyone helping out at the Consecration worked hard to ensure the ceremony proceeded according to plan.

God has persuaded Bishop Matthias to take on the office of Bishop, and we rejoice, but at the same time he will be sorely missed at St John's: his wisdom, his gentle soul, his good humour and his caring spirit.



The giving of the Pectoral Cross and Ring by Archbishop Paul to the new Bishop.



Bishop Matthias (left) and Archbishop Paul Kwong exchanging a sign of peace at the Consecration Service.

Buen camino! Buena fe!

(Good way, Good faith)

TEXT & PHOTO BY / THE REVEREND AMOS POON



Backpack reminds you what are the essentials of your life.

Last summer, my wife and I travelled to Northern Spain, and walked the Camino de Santiago, the pilgrimage route of St James. After the martyrdom of St James, his bones were found in Santiago in the 9th century, according to Church tradition. A Cathedral was built there for believers around the world to come and pray. The name, Santiago, is actually the Galician dialect of St James. The Latin form of St James is Sancti Iacobi, and putting them together it sounds like Santiago.

There is no specific starting location for the pilgrimage route. In the Middle Ages, pilgrims would start their journey from their homes, going toward the Santiago Cathedral. Therefore, there are many paths for pilgrimage. Today there are three famous ones: one is from Portugal heading north to Santiago, the second is close to the north side of the Iberian Peninsula, and the third one is the most famous one, the French Way, starting from Saint-Jean-Pier-de-Pole in France, a journey of around 800km. This time we were travelling along this French Way, but due to time limitations and physical conditions, my wife started at Leon in Spain, and walked 310km, (a 13-day journey), while I met her in the last five days and set off from Sarria for 117km.

In fact, there is a reason for choosing Sarria as the starting point. In 1993, the French Way was designated as an intangible Cultural Heritage by the United Nations. It is one of the world's

two pilgrimage routes honoured with this award. The other one is the Kumano Koto, in Wakayama, Japan. The government then started to promote the development of this route, and issued certificates to all those, who walking 100km on it, arrived in Santiago on foot. For this reason, I began my trip in Sarria.

To begin a pilgrimage journey, the first thing is ask yourself is; 'What should I bring along the road?' The pilgrims in the Middle Ages carried only three things: a scallop shell, a gourd and a walking stick. On the one hand the shell is a symbol of St James; on the other hand, it is used as a dish to hold food for eating. The gourd is a water container, and the wooden stick is your most faithful companion during the journey. The symbol of St James is a scallop shell, as the tradition has it that after he was martyred in Jerusalem, his body was transported back to Santiago. During the transportation a disaster struck, but his body was miraculously protected by the scallop shell and didn't suffer any damage. There is a mark on the pilgrimage road, drawn by different yellow lines pointing to the same destination. This mark reminds the pilgrims that they are going on the right way, and also reminds them that even if they start from different locations and take different paths, they will eventually reach the same destination.

Back to the question on what to bring along the path. Of course, modern people cannot just take three things on the road. As we needed to carry our own back pack, and were advised that the weight of it should not exceed one-tenth of our weight, we could only bring some basic needs. I brought three sets of clothes, a sleeping bag, an extra pair of shoes, two water bottles, my mobile phone, (with charger and extra battery), and two walking sticks. Looking at my backpack, I found out that actually there are not many things that we really need. Many things we possess only satisfy our wants, but not our needs. The psalmist teaches us that *'The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.'* It does not mean that after we believe in the Lord, God can make us rich, but rather it means that we shall live a life that is satisfying with the accompany of our Lord.

The journey continues in the next issue...



Our first meal at Sarria

Faith Begins by Zoom

TEXT BY / THE REVEREND WILL NEWMAN

Baptism and Confirmation are the ways that we begin our faith journey as members of the Christian Church. It's appropriate then that 'Faith Begins' is the name of the adult baptism and confirmation course that we run at the cathedral each year. 'Faith Begins' and its predecessors 'Genesis' and 'I Believe' have been going since 2004, bringing many hundreds of people into the family of the Church.

On each course we have 40-50 adults. A typical evening starts with supper in the Harold Smyth Room, followed by a talk by one of the clergy, and then we break into smaller table groups for discussion. Each group has a leader, a lay member of the cathedral or daughter churches.

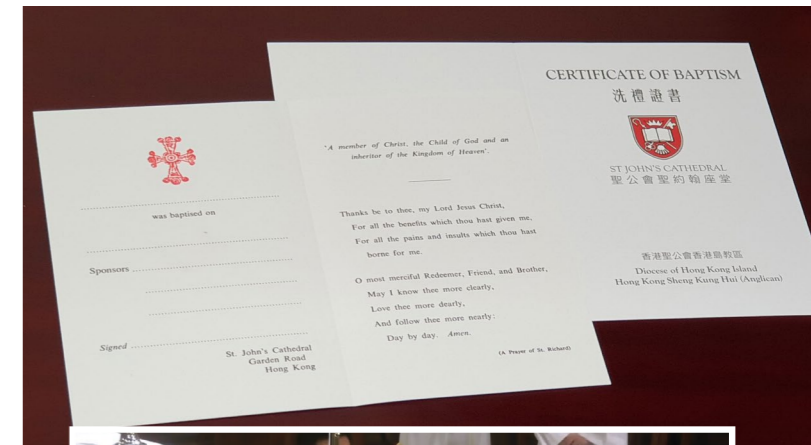
In 2020 we planned to start straight after Chinese New Year, but we postponed because of the COVID restrictions. One of the participants asked 'Can't we do this course by Zoom?' But at that time we hoped we could soon hold the course in person.

Fast forward to the autumn, and Faith Begins by Zoom! We've had to adapt. We miss not having supper together, because that's a time when we can chat and get to know each other a little. We used to have simultaneous interpretation for the clergy talks, but that's not possible on Zoom, so instead we either have a bilingual talk, or a talk in English followed by a short summary in Chinese. The Breakout Groups on Zoom allow us to divide up for discussion. And at the end of the evening we come together again for Prayer. So technologically it works. But what have we lost? And what have we gained?

My own experience of Zoom is that it works well for people who know each other, but it's not so easy with strangers. That's why it's really important for the group members to get to know each other. But that's a challenge.

Evelyn Chan, one of the group leaders, says 'We really miss the interaction between individuals which only happens in face to face meetings. As a group leader we only see the face of the participants on screen. It's a challenge to facilitate discussion when we can't read the body language of the members.'

John Tanner from Discovery Bay Church, one of the group leaders, adds 'A key part of Faith Begins is building up relationships with people just coming into the church and walking with them on their journey. Having led a Faith Begins group last year, I can say it's noticeably more challenging to do this on Zoom.'



Kevin She has been a group leader on every course since 2004. 'People take more time to warm up on Zoom, so I always allow time for people to have a bit of casual chat first. For people who are shy or are not that willing to open up for the first few sessions, Zoom may actually provide a safe space for them.'

Several of the group leaders are using other technologies they probably never needed for this course before. Kevin says 'I have a WhatsApp group of my group members, and sometimes I send them a WhatsApp message beforehand about what I'm going to do in the discussion, so they have time to prepare.'

Jeannie Chan has a very positive experience with her group: 'I have to say how much I appreciate the technology that can bring people together. I thought it was going to be difficult to engage. However, it was the opposite. We are all at home and everyone seems to be more relaxed; we have got to meet the participants' family members when they were caught on camera and this is something special. I feel like knowing the person more when you know their family members. Although we are not physically together, the closeness is not less. The group get along well in a short period of time. I wonder if this is anything to do with the online meeting. The group members really look forward to seeing each other in the near future as we enjoy our faith journey together.'

One thing we have happily gained is more regular attendance. Zoom at home in the evening is easier for some than a trip into the cathedral, and almost everyone has joined every session. God willing, the Baptism and Confirmation Service will go ahead as planned at 5pm on Sunday 22nd November, and we will welcome these new members into the Church.

Huge thanks to the Group Facilitators: Evelyn Chan, Jeannie Chan, John Tanner, Kevin She, Madeleine Foo, Marques Ng, and TK Cheung. And to my clergy colleagues on 'Faith Begins', Amos, Franklin, and Mark.



Letter from the Council

How do you find a Dean?

TEXT BY / MICHAEL SPENCER

Dean Matthias' election as Bishop-Coadjutor of Hong Kong Island in November 2019 was a joyous occasion. I had the privilege of being one of the Cathedral's representatives at Synod and participated in the election at St Stephen's Church in Sai Wan. The church erupted in cheers and applause when we learned he had been elected. After many months' delay because of COVID-19 restrictions, his consecration service was held on 3rd October, and it was again my honour to sit in the back row of the Cathedral and witness this special event. We are all so pleased for our Dean and look forward to his new ministry as our Bishop.

But our gain is also our loss. It would be asking too much for him to continue as Dean of his Cathedral, so his election kicked off a search for his replacement here.

The search for a Dean is in many ways like the search for any executive to lead a large organisation, with perhaps more prayerful contemplation than is usual in the business world.

The Cathedral is governed under the Church of England Trust Ordinance of Hong Kong. This Ordinance requires that when the Deanship becomes vacant, a Board of Patronage shall be appointed to conduct the search and nominate (to the Trustees) a replacement. The Board consists of the Archbishop of Hong Kong, who is also the Chair of the Church of England Trust, one clerical and one lay representative of the Trustees, four lay representatives of the Cathedral Council, and one clerical and one lay representative of the Diocese. This ensures that while the views of Cathedral representatives carry the most weight, the decision will have support of the whole Diocese. I was appointed as one of the Council representatives and served as Secretary of the Board.

Our work began towards the end of February when we met to discuss our strategy, to agree to a description of the position we

would use in our advertisements, and to discuss our personal views on the characteristics of a successful applicant. We knew, already, that conducting this search as the COVID-19 pandemic was beginning to spread throughout the world, was going to be particularly challenging.

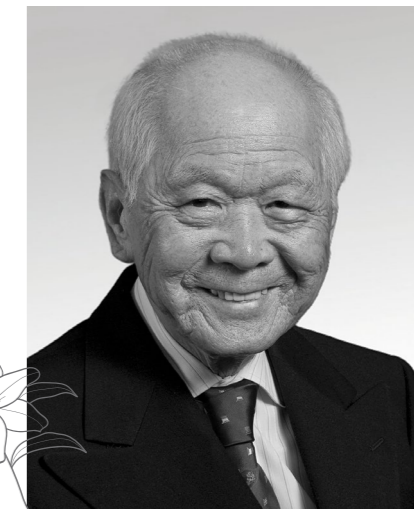
The position was advertised in three Anglican and Episcopalian news services in the United Kingdom, Canada and the United States, and by word of mouth—usually the most effective means of searching for candidates. I held off posting the ads for a few weeks until the first wave of COVID-19 had peaked in most countries. Even then, a few people wrote to me to explain that they were refraining from applying because of concerns about traveling amid a pandemic, and wished us well in our search.

Eventually, we received a dozen serious applications from around the world, and a short-list of four candidates was agreed upon. These would be interviewed in person and by Zoom meeting by myself and two other Council members on the Board.

In my profession, when I am interviewing candidates for a job opening, I am usually confronted with a lot of people with very similar backgrounds and skills. A search for a Dean couldn't be more different. All of the candidates we interviewed brought very different experiences, ministries and personalities. I personally found it challenging to weigh the different attributes of the candidates, to think about what they might bring to the position, and what I hoped our decision would mean for the Cathedral.

After a few weeks' prayerful consideration, the Board met in early October and the choice of the candidate we would recommend to the Trustees was a unanimous one. The Archbishop has finalised the appointment with the Very Revd Kwok Keung Chan, and we look forward to welcoming our new Dean.

In Memory of Canon Li Fook Hing OBE



Canon Li Fook Hing was born in Hong Kong in 1923. He was a distinguished engineer and a successful businessman. He was also well known for being a devoted Christian and a respected philanthropist in the church and community.

Bishop Matthias Der, Dean of St John's Cathedral, paid tribute to Canon Li saying:

'When I received a call from John Li on the morning of 9th October telling me that his father, Canon Li Fook Hing, had just passed away, a touch of sadness came upon my heart. However, quickly following the sadness was the image of God receiving Canon Li into the glorious heavenly home. In my mind, I visualised Uncle Fook Hing wearing his trade-marked gentle smile and God saying to him, "Well done, my good and faithful servant!"'

On behalf of the Cathedral family, I salute Canon Li for his steadfastness in faith, love for the church and generosity in kindness towards people, near and far. For over 70 years, he served the Cathedral, diocese and the Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hui with such vision, faithfulness, and dedication. Whether it was the 24 years he served as the diocesan treasurer or the 29 years as a council member, out of which 15 years as trustee of St John's, or the many decades he spent as a board member at schools, hospitals, NGOs and the yacht club, his service was never about himself. It was about serving others out of his love for Jesus Christ.

When I first arrived, he told me he had served with 5 deans and 4 bishops. He was proud of that history, as he should be! And we are proud of him and found it an immense privilege to have the opportunity to know him personally. I admire his dedication to growing deeper in the Christian faith. A few years ago, well into his 90's, he wrote me to discuss theological and biblical questions. Every week, without fail, you would see Uncle Fook Hing and Auntie June sitting in the front row, at the 9am service. The seats were never "officially" designated for them. However, they always came early, well before others, in order to get the best seats in the house. Coming to worship was never a duty for Mr Li but a true communion with Jesus Christ, through which he also enjoyed having fellowship with other Christians. Above all, the indelible mark that Mr Li made along with Mrs June Li was that of their generosity and kindness. The hundreds of meals they hosted over the years at their home and at the Cathedral, the number of outreach projects they organised, and the profound sharing and giving to the community all remind us that God is here and his love abounds.

Canon Li was a devoted family man, an avid sportsman, a faithful ambassador of Christ and a generous philanthropist, who had lived life to the fullest. Canon Li, thank you for all that you have rendered and contributed. Thank you for the exemplary devotion, kindness and faithful service in Christ.

You are truly a remarkable example for us all. May you rest in peace and rise in glory!

Canon Li went to the United States in 1941 for study and received his bachelor's degree from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and a master's degree from the University of Michigan. With practical experience gained from shipyards in Scotland, he returned to Hong Kong in 1948 as a professional engineer. He joined the family business in 1966 looking after shipping. He was also an avid participant in stock investment and real estate development.

As one of the pillars of the laity in the church, Canon Li served as the Treasurer of the Sheng Kung Hui Diocese of Hong Kong and Macau for 24 years. He was a member of the Council of St John's Cathedral between 1960 and 1990, and a trustee of the Cathedral for 15 years (1975-1990). He was installed as Canon on 25th November 2006 by the Diocese of Hong Kong Island of Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hui, being the first lay person installed as Canon in Hong Kong.

Recalling his friendship with Canon Li, Cathedral Trustee Martin Matsui wrote:

'Mr Li was an avid sailor, which befitted someone who studied naval architecture at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, one of the premier engineering schools in the world. It's clear that going to the U.S. changed his life, since it was there that he would meet his bride-to-be and life-long soul mate. He came from one of the most prominent families in Hong Kong, but he always carried himself with modesty, integrity, and a sense of purpose. We Anglicans like to claim him as one of our own but he did not belong to us only. He was a servant of our Lord and an instrument of His peace, which included doing many charitable and spiritual good works. He never sought out the accolades of men. I remember when he was part of our Cathedral Endowment Fund committee, he insisted that all of his donations be marked as anonymous. I was pleased for him that he could be recognized as a Canon in our church.

Before I became a trustee of St John's, I sought out his counsel since he also once held that office. He told me not to worry too much about the job since God would help and provide guidance. Mr Li's time on this good earth has now come to an end and we should all count ourselves blessed that we knew him. As a sailor, he would have agreed with the spirit evidenced in C.P. Cavafy's poem "Ithaka", which recounts the voyage home of Odysseus, another great seafarer. The last line of the poem reads:

*"Wise as you will have become, so full of experience,
You'll have understood by then what these Ithakas mean."*

Godspeed Uncle Fook-Hing!

Release for the Captives

TEXT BY / THE REVEREND WILL NEWMAN

St Luke's Gospel records that when Jesus went to the synagogue in Nazareth, he read from the scroll of the prophet Isaiah:

‘The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives...’

Jesus released people who were captives, imprisoned by sin. In normal, non-COVID restricted times, a group of volunteers from St Stephen's Stanley and St John's Cathedral visits Stanley Prison each Friday, and for a short time the prisoners we meet are released from the same old routine of their normal lives, and able to talk freely, often laugh, sometimes even cry, with people from outside. We get to know some of them not just as objects of compassion, but as friends.

The prisoners we see are in Category A, on long term or life sentences. Some of them have been in prison for 20, 25, or 30 years. For some of them, Christianity is the lifeline that is saving them and giving their lives meaning.

But we do more than visit and explore the gospel together. We help in a practical way, too. Many of the prisoners keep their minds active over the long years by studying. But not all of them have the financial support to pay for courses of study. That's where we, and you, come in.

Some readers will remember that in September 2017 the Cathedral Choir gave a delightful evening concert to raise funds for Education Scholarships for Prisoners. Andrew, a Christian prisoner we know who has been released, spoke movingly at the concert, and it was a fantastically successful event, raising some HK\$1.2 million.

We decided to divide the funds. We donated \$625,000 to the Correctional Services Department (CSD) to set up a 3-year scheme called the St John's Cathedral Education Fund. The rest we kept in the cathedral's finances to pay out on a case-by-case basis for prisoners we know.



Bishop Matthias hands a cheque to John Budge, Chairman of 'Voice for Prisoners', for their Education Fund, assisting prisoners all over Hong Kong to keep learning.

I recently received a letter of thanks from CSDHQ, telling us that almost the entire fund we donated has now been used up. 296 Category A prisoners, men and women, have received financial assistance from our fund. This includes paying public exam fees for City & Guilds and Exams run by the British Council, but by far the largest expenditure is on distance learning courses with CUHK, HK Management Association, and OUHK. Some prisoners take OUHK degrees, costing \$20,000 a year or more.

The benefit to prisoners is hard to over-estimate. Pursuing a course of study is a major effort for those who have little formal schooling. Maintaining the continuing effort to study requires application and commitment that will stand them in good stead for the future. When they successfully complete a course, they experience a great sense of achievement, and there are few opportunities for that in prison.

Each year in January there's an academic awards ceremony in Stanley Prison for those who have successfully completed courses. It's a great day for prisoners, and very moving, because it's the only day of the year when they can be reunited with family members face to face, without being separated by a glass screen.

Ever since Chinese New Year we have not been able to visit the prison because of the COVID restrictions. We look forward to the restrictions being lifted so that we can return and renew friendships with some of the most forgotten people in society.

'Inasmuch as you did it to the least of these my brothers and sisters, you did it to me.' (Matthew 25.40)

If you would like to try prison visiting when we are able to resume, contact Will by email to newman@stjohnscathedral.org.hk

All Things Bright and Beautiful



Like the hymn 'All Things Bright and Beautiful', which is sung to praise God in our worship, flower decorations are often prepared as offerings in church. We give thanks there to our Heavenly Father through our artistic work made from His wonderful creations.

As the hymn reminds us, all creations were made by the Lord God, who is the giver of life. 'Flowers represent life,' said Grace

Fung of St John's Flower Guild, 'that's why we believe in praising God with real plants.' There is no better offering than the fresh look and scent of flowers.

Thanks to the dedication of the Flower Guild, floral arrangements can be seen in the Cathedral on Sundays (except during Advent and Lent), with festive decorations in the sanctuary for the seasons of Christmas, Easter, and Harvest Thanksgiving.

These flowers were arranged by a team of passionate parishioners who volunteer for this creative ministry. Coordinated by Grace, the Flower Guild contributes their floral craft for a pleasant ambience in the Cathedral. It is truly a blessing to our congregation and other visitors to our spiritual home.

If you would like to join this beautiful ministry of the Flower Guild, please contact Grace Fung or Viola Ip through the Cathedral Office.



Extensive decoration for special occasions



Decoration for the Consecration of Bishop Matthias on 3rd October 2020

Ongoing Bible Study and Prayer Fellowship

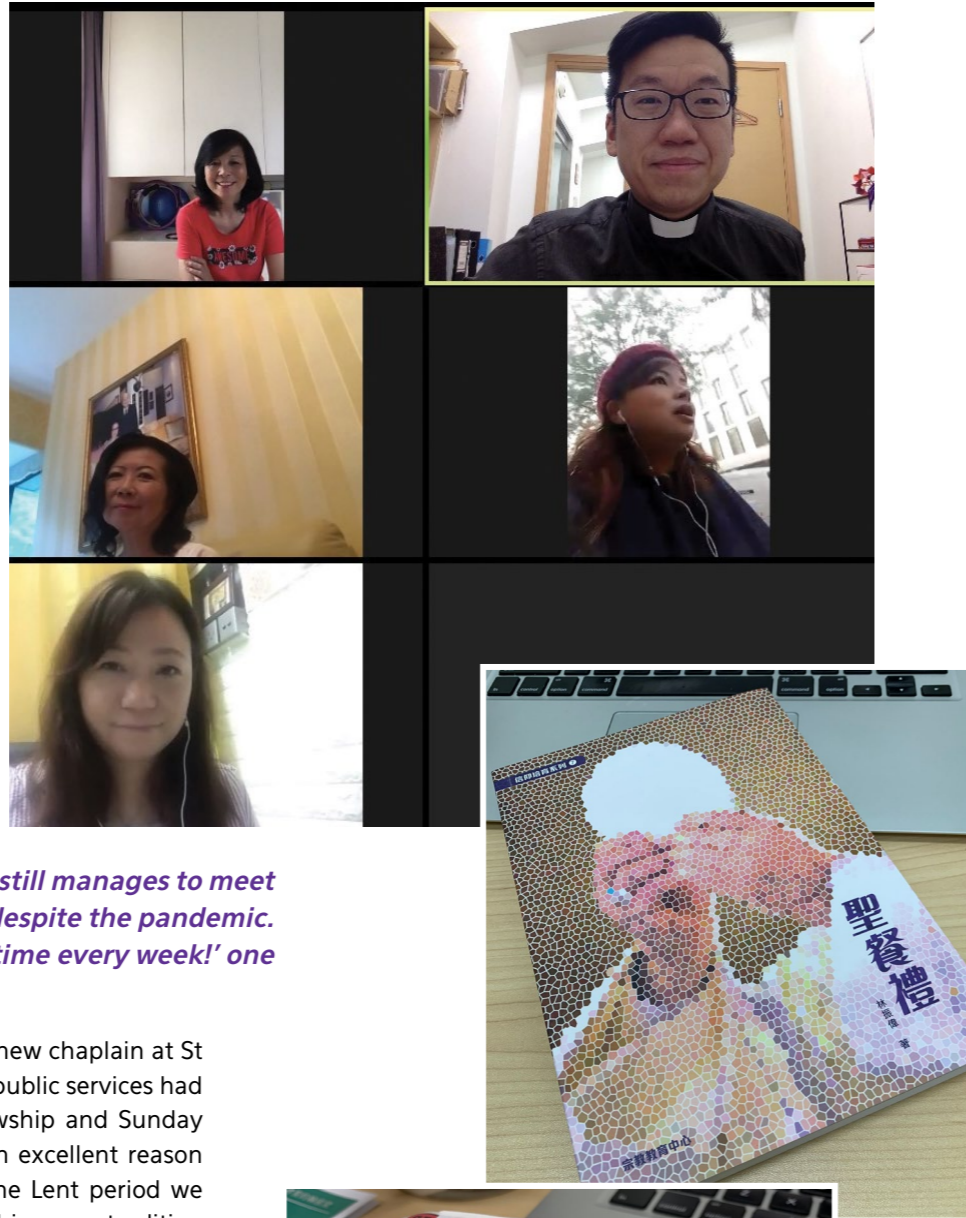
TEXT & PHOTOS BY / THE REVEREND AMOS POON

The Bible Study and Prayer Fellowship still manages to meet every week on Wednesday afternoon despite the pandemic. 'I look forward to this most treasured time every week!' one of the members says.

It was certainly an uneasy time for me, as a new chaplain at St John's Cathedral. Two weeks after I arrived, public services had to be suspended, with restrictions on fellowship and Sunday School gatherings. Lent provided us with an excellent reason to start meeting online via Zoom. During the Lent period we studied the provincial Lent book together. This was a tradition begun by Fr Wai Ho. This year the book was about the Eucharist, covering all the questions you might ask, from why we light candles on the communion table, to why we sing the Agnus Dei before the communion. The Lent book has six chapters, and we spent six weeks in Zoom studying them. As the course was quite interesting, even some parishioners who did not belong to the group before joined us.

During the Eastertide, as we still could not meet in person in church for public service, we did the Stations of the Cross through Zoom, reading the passion story together and meditating on how Jesus' death is connected with our life. In June, by the grace of God, there was a short period of time when we could meet each other in person. How amazing it was that the group members and I felt like we had been friends for a long time, when actually it was our first time seeing each other face to face. Some of them felt good to meet in person, while we still provided the option to join us via the internet.

However, good times don't last. Fellowship soon went back to online meetings in July. I don't think meeting behind the



camera is anything near to meeting in person, but I still feel that providing a place and time people could meet and see each other each week, praying and reading together, is something pastorally very essential. This is especially true because we are talking about a time when we could not come to church to worship God. The fellowship has now finished studying the Book of Hebrews, and in September we are starting our journey through the Gospel of John. I hope that the pandemic will end soon, and we can meet together again in person very soon.



Caring for Those Who Care for Us

For over thirty years, HELP for Domestic Workers has served Hong Kong in its mission towards fairness, righteousness, and equality, and been a light for those in their darkest hour. Now, more than ever, HELP needs the loving support of our community in order to continue giving hope to those who need it most.

The life of a foreign domestic worker in Hong Kong is one of caring and sacrifice. These individuals travel far from their homes and families, often for the sole purpose of providing a better life for their loved ones. They work tirelessly to care for us, our children, and our elders, and in doing so give strength to our families and our community. Without its 400,000 foreign domestic workers, Hong Kong would not exist as it does today.

Yet despite the vital role they play in our society, Hong Kong's domestic workers are often its most vulnerable members. While the pandemic has affected all of us, domestic workers have been disproportionately impacted. Many have been forced to work under unfair or unsafe conditions and given inadequate support when health problems arise. Numerous workers have faced termination for reasons related to the virus, but are unable to return to home due to travel restrictions. With charity shelters overrun and nowhere else to turn, these workers risk ending up on the streets or taking on overwhelming debt simply to cover basic needs.

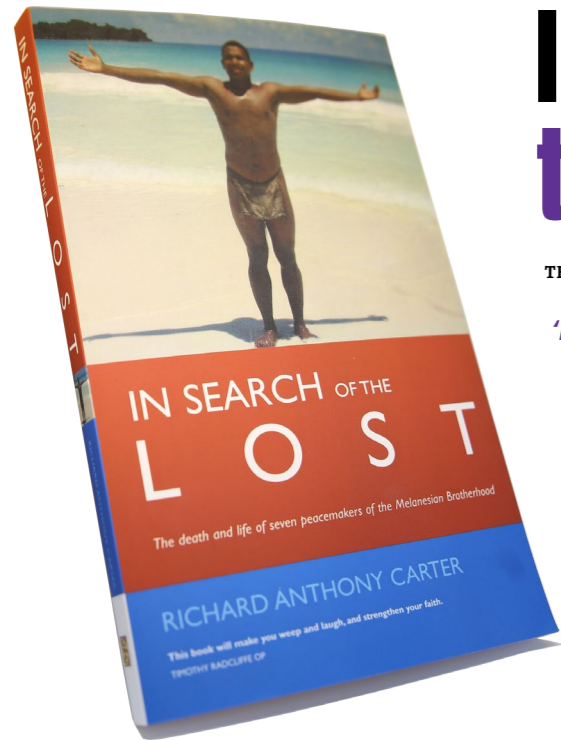
HELP recognises the importance of treating each member of our society with dignity. Founded in 1989 by James Collins, a



worshipping member of St John's Cathedral, HELP empowers foreign domestic workers and their employers to gain access to fair treatment by providing advice, assistance, and education. Over the past 26 years, HELP has responded to over 52,000 requests for assistance from domestic workers. In response to the pandemic, HELP has been working to provide basic accommodation to those who are between contracts or waiting to return home, in addition to our usual services. Since this project began in August 2020, HELP has supported 23 workers in finding short-term accommodation.

At this time, HELP is in urgent need of funding in order to continue our service to those in need. The number of new clients seeking assistance from HELP has doubled in September this year. While HELP has been working strenuously to keep up with the needs of our clients, our success depends on the compassion and generosity of our community. Now, more than ever, we are called upon to look after those who devote themselves to taking care of us.

If you are able to make a donation, please visit HELP's ongoing campaign page at <https://give.asia/campaign/covid-19-fundraising-campaign#/>, or visit HELP's website at <https://helpfordomesticworkers.org/en/donate/>. If you are interested in becoming a fundraising volunteer, please send an email to communications@helpfordomesticworkers.org



In Search of the Lost

TEXT BY / THE REVEREND DR JOHN KATER

'Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God.' (Matthew 5.9) People who attended the 2008 Lambeth Conference of Anglican bishops tell me that one of the most moving moments of their experience was the recognition of seven members of the Melanesian Brotherhood, (an Anglican community based in the Solomon Islands), as martyrs whose deaths came as the result of their Christian work as peacemakers during a time of intense civil strife.

Richard Anthony Carter now serves as a priest at St Martin-in-the-Fields, London, but he began his ministry as an overseas missionary and teacher, first in Indonesia and then on the island of Guadalcanal, famed as the site of one of the bloodiest battles of the Second World War, and in the early years of this century torn again by warfare. While on Guadalcanal, he came into contact with the Melanesian Brotherhood, in time becoming a tutor and chaplain, and eventually taking vows to become a member of the community.

The Brotherhood is the largest monastic community in the Anglican Communion, with members from many of the islands that make up the Solomons. It is noted for the simplicity of life with which it practises its vows, for its strong evangelistic work (often performed as dramas in which Biblical stories are performed as stories translated into the everyday life of the audience), its stirring music and its unusual practice of temporary vows. Members can either renew them periodically or, after spending a number of years with the Brotherhood, they can leave to marry and form their own family, continuing their ministry as active lay Christians in their local community.

Shortly before the end of the last century, Guadalcanal was stricken with deep ethnic conflict between natives of the island and people from other islands who had emigrated to Guadalcanal in search of economic opportunity. Carter, who kept a diary while serving the community as its chaplain, recorded how the tension grew into violence, which affected the community and sparked an interest in responding as peacemakers. In the course of their efforts, one of the brothers was taken hostage and killed by the leader of a militant faction. When no word came back to the community about his fate, six brothers set out to find him and bring him back. They too were taken hostage and eventually killed. The news of their death

came after weeks of waiting, during which the community kept a constant vigil of prayer.

This book, drawn from Carter's diaries at the time, not only narrates the events of their death; it also provides profound reflection on what it means to live a life committed to peacemaking in a time and place where violence seems not only necessary but even attractive. The deep pain of the community as it came to terms with the loss of seven of their brothers is ultimately overshadowed by a luminous faith in the power of the resurrection, as Carter describes how the deaths of the martyred brothers became an inspiration, not only to the community itself, but far beyond—indeed, throughout the Solomon Islands, and ultimately to the entire Anglican Communion and beyond.

Perhaps one of the most striking aspects of this narrative is Carter's careful introduction of each of the seven brothers who gave their lives as peacemakers. These young Solomon Islanders seem to have little in common with the great saints whose lives we celebrate; those figures who seem quite at home in stained glass windows but perhaps have very little to do with the real life of ordinary people. These men were village folk, whose piety was shaped not only by the Book of Common Prayer but by the rhythms of Melanesian fishing villages, where celebrations are marked by dancing and feasting, where visiting dignitaries are welcomed to church by warriors carrying shield and spear, and where life is lived close enough to the margins that there is not always food to share. Carter obviously knew and loved these brothers of his, and tells their stories both as individuals and as members of a community of brothers. Their stories remind us that sainthood—holiness—is not a quality reserved for stained glass windows, but may be met and practiced in the most everyday of moments by the most ordinary people. Perhaps

their story can help us remember that the saints we see in those windows really were flesh-and-blood human beings remarkably like you and me.

Nearly two decades have passed since the events narrated in this book, but the influence of those events continues to make itself felt in unexpected ways: in the Solomon Islands, where the Melanesian Brotherhood, alongside a community of Franciscan brothers and two orders of sisters, continues to provide much of the missionary energy for the work in the Anglican Church of Melanesia; in the countries where they have gone to bear witness to the gospel; and certainly among Anglicans whose life is infinitely more comfortable than that of the brothers, but who can glimpse in their witness something that we might be missing in our own life of faith. Carter describes the impact of the brothers and their dramas when they visit schools, prisons

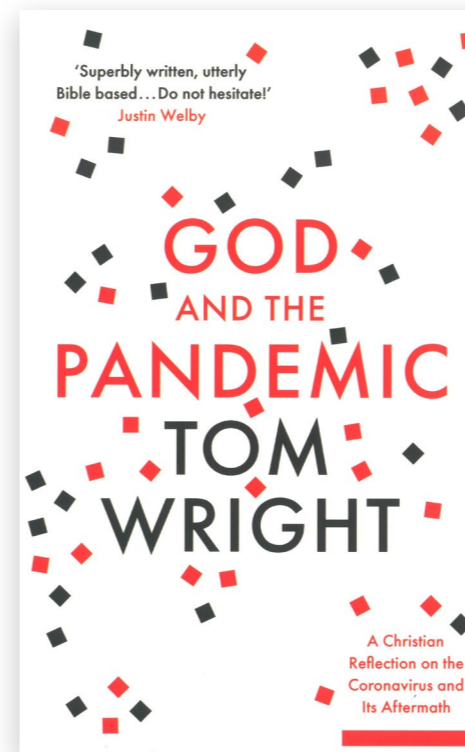
and ordinary parishes in Britain, that most secularized of settings, and watch as unlikely audiences respond with open hearts.

I first encountered the Melanesian Brotherhood through a video made by Fr Carter at the time of the 2008 Lambeth Conference and still available on YouTube at <https://youtu.be/BMyTnldh6nQ>.

That video led me to explore the music of the community, also available on YouTube: <https://youtu.be/88yLavVfk9c>

But nothing had prepared me for this book. It is available from Book Depository. The British Dominican Timothy Radcliffe commented that 'it will make you weep and laugh, and strengthen your faith.' He was right.

NEW ARRIVALS IN SJC BOOKSTORE



GOD AND THE PANDEMIC

'How should Christians react to the Pandemic?' and 'Where do we go from here?' are the two important questions prompted by the renowned author Tom Wright in his new book 'God and the Pandemic.'

Through examining the Biblical passages, the author urges that embracing lament is a vital Christian response to the pandemic, as Jesus taught us to 'weep with those who weep,' and as the world is weeping now, the church is to take our place humbly among the mourners. Facing the situation of the world, there is no easy answer, we hope this book could inspire us all what we, as Christians, should do in this time of crisis.

'This is classic Tom Wright. It is accessible to almost anyone asking questions, and yet it manages to be demanding for those who think they know the answers. It is superbly written, and utterly Bible based, and leaves one satisfied at having learned and yet wanting to know more. I read it in a sitting with pleasure, provocation and profit. Do not hesitate!' – Archbishop Justin Welby.

'God and the Pandemic' will be selling at a discounted price at the Cathedral Bookstore. (HK\$120, original price is \$136) Further discount is offered with bulk purchase, please ask the staff for more details.



Ready-Set-Find buddy series

(a set of 4, Chinese/English Bilingual)

Readers: ages 3-6

Get ready to follow the footsteps of our Bible characters! They need your help to find many things along the way. So, on your mark, Ready-set-Find!

Cathedral Treasure Hunt on Facebook

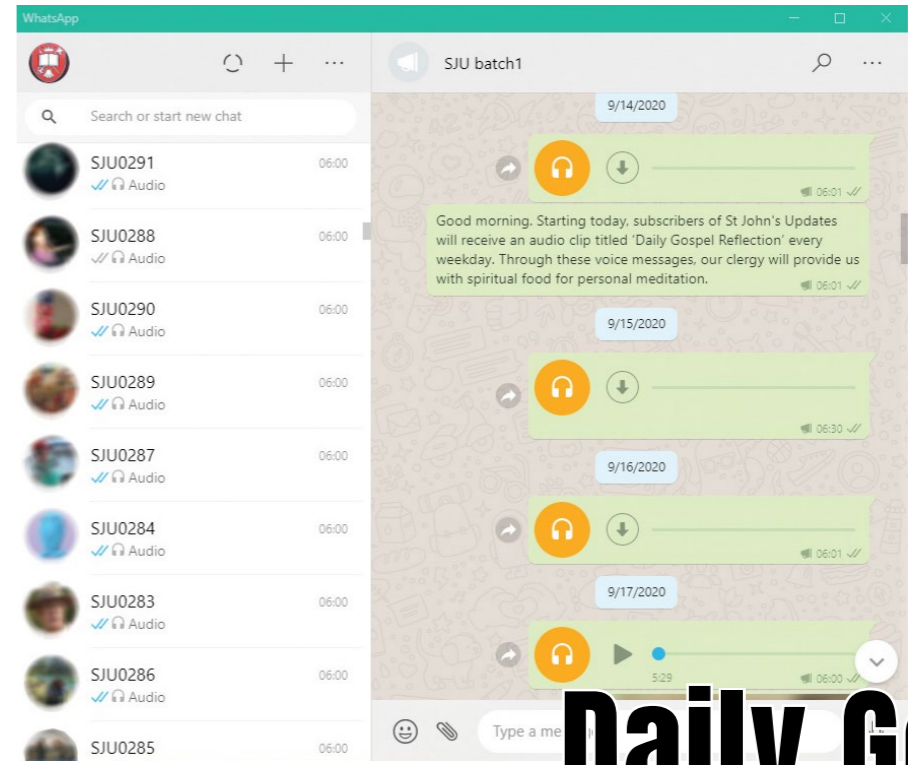
To better engage with the congregation and the general public on Facebook, the Cathedral recently hosted a photo contest 'Cathedral Treasure Hunt' on the official St John's Cathedral Fan Page. Participants were required to identify the correct location of the Cathedral treasures featured in the photographs posted by the administrator during the contest period.

Starting from 18th October 2020, three photographs were uploaded to the Fan Page every Sunday for four consecutive weeks. The photographs captured some of the treasures that can be found in the Cathedral. Facebook users were invited to locate these features by posting the correct location in the comment field under each photograph. The first three participants who got all the correct answers each received a special prize.

Treasures featured included:



Do you know where you can find these treasures at the Cathedral?
Check out the answers from our Fan Page (please scan the QR code for direct access to the Page).
If you miss any one of them, do come visit St John's Cathedral during our opening hours for a better look at them.



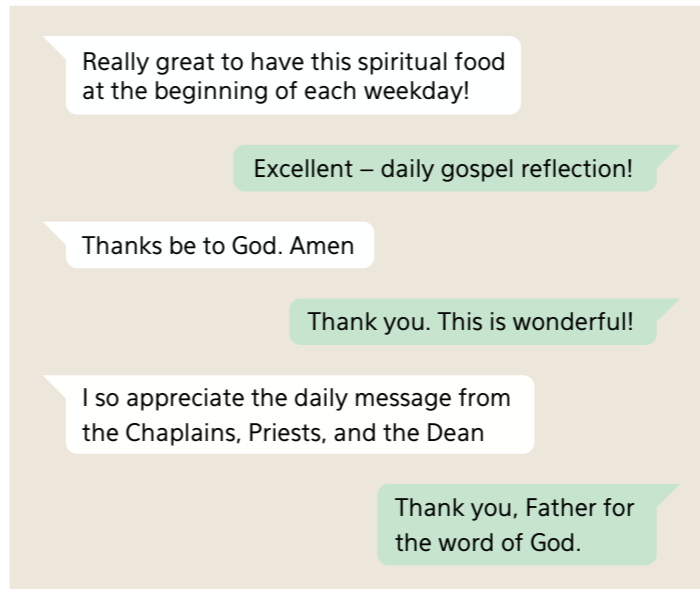
Daily Gospel Reflection Makes a Difference for Your Day

Have you ever wondered how good it feels when the first thing you listen to every day is the word of God? Of course, your alarm or wake-up call doesn't count!

Subscribers of St John's Updates have been receiving a short audio clip called 'Daily Gospel Reflection' by WhatsApp every weekday since 14th September 2020. This meditation tool is offered by the Cathedral clergy, based on the Gospel Reading of the day. We thank God for His words and we thank our priests for their spiritual direction in giving us the daily lessons.

Perhaps for Christians like me, a daily reminder of God's love and guidance is a much-needed blessing to gear ourselves up for the challenges in our daily life. Listening to the voices of our priests, we may bring our minds to focus on what the Holy Spirit is saying to us, and what the Gospel means to us today.

We are pleased that the Daily Gospel Reflection is well received by the audience.



If you would like to receive the Daily Gospel Reflection, simply follow the steps below:

- add the Cathedral mobile number 9506 2311 to the contact list of your mobile phone
- send the message 'subscribe to St John's Updates' to the number via WhatsApp

Subscribers will also receive updates about St John's news and activities.

By providing us with your mobile phone number, you consent to receive messages from the Cathedral office through WhatsApp. More information about the collection of personal information by St John's is available from the Cathedral website <https://www.stjohnscathedral.org.hk>

Advent and Christmas Services and Major Events at St John's & Daughter Churches



St John's Cathedral

4-8 Garden Road, Central, Hong Kong
Tel: 2523 4157
www.stjohnscathedral.org.hk

13th December (Sunday) The Third Sunday of Advent

5.00PM 'Blue Christmas' Eucharist

24th December (Thursday) Christmas Eve

3.00PM Carols for Kids*
4.30PM Carols for Kids*
6.30PM Carols for Christmas Eve*
11.00PM Midnight Mass of the Nativity*

27th December (Sunday) St John the Evangelist

4.00PM Thanksgiving Service on the Occasion of Retirement of The Most Revd Dr Paul Kwong

20th December (Sunday) The Fourth Sunday of Advent

5.00PM Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols

25th December (Friday) Christmas Day

8.00AM Said Eucharist
9.00AM Sung Eucharist with Brass Ensemble*
10.30AM Sung Eucharist (Mandarin)
11.45AM Responsorial Eucharist with Carols
1.30PM Sung Eucharist (Tagalog)

31st December (Thursday) New Year's Eve

11.00PM Watchnight Eucharist

1st January (Friday) Naming of Jesus

9.00AM Said Eucharist

* Admission by ticket only. Please refer to Cathedral announcement about ticket distribution.

The Cathedral is closely monitoring the pandemic situation. Please visit our website for the latest updates about service arrangements.



Discovery Bay Church
SKH Wei Lun Primary
School, Lantau

Further information
Tel: 2987 4210
www.discoverybay
church.org.hk

20th December (Sunday) The Fourth Sunday of Advent

10.00AM Nine Lessons and Carols

25th December (Friday) Christmas Day

10.00AM Family Eucharistic Celebration of the Incarnation

Emmanuel Church
Béthanie Chapel
139 Pok Fu Lam Road, Pok Fu Lam

Further information Tel: 2523 4157
www.emmanuel.org.hk



24th December (Thursday) Christmas Eve

11.00PM Midnight Mass of the Nativity and Blessing of the Crib

25th December (Friday) Christmas Day

9.15AM Said Eucharist with Carols
11.00AM Family Eucharist

27th December (Sunday) Sunday after Christmas—Holy Family

10.15AM Sung Eucharist with Baptism

St Stephen's Chapel
22 Tung Tau Wan Road, Stanley
St Stephen's College

Further information Tel: 2813 0408
www.ststephen.org.hk



13th December (Sunday) The Third Sunday of Advent

6.00PM Christmas Lessons and Carols by Candlelight with St Stephen's Chorale

20th December (Sunday) The Fourth Sunday of Advent

10.00AM Holy Eucharist

24th December (Thursday) Christmas Eve

5.00PM Christmas Crib Service for young families, with Carols
11.00PM Christmas Midnight Mass

25th December (Friday) Christmas Day

10.00AM Christmas Eucharist with Carols

St John's Cathedral

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Dean

The Rt Revd Matthias Der

Cathedral Chaplains

The Revd Canon Dwight dela Torre

The Revd Canon Peter Koon

The Revd Sharon Langbis

The Revd Franklin Lee

The Revd Robert Martin
(Chaplain and Priest-in-Charge of
Emmanuel Church)

The Revd Will Newman
(Chaplain and Priest-in-Charge of
St Stephen's Chapel)

The Revd Mark Rogers
(Chaplain and Priest-in-Charge of
Discovery Bay Church)

The Revd Amos Poon

Cathedral Honorary Chaplain

The Revd Dr Philip Wickeri

Executive Administrator

Viola Ip

Director of Music

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A Sunday in the Life of... Sunday School Teacher

*Fiona
Lamb*

Sunday School Family—maintaining traditions

TEXT BY / MICHAEL GIBB

First, it's Carpet Time. Candles are lit at the small altar in the Fanny Li Hall and then the children sing a hymn, listen to a story, celebrate any birthdays and say their prayers before breaking into small classes for Bible stories and arts and crafts. Then, dressed in their red t-shirts, they scurry over to St John's Cathedral for the final part of the morning Eucharist.

This routine is the essence of Sunday School at St John's, and one very familiar to volunteer teachers like Fiona Lamb.

'I've been teaching at St John's Sunday School for 27 years!' says Fiona, who moved to Hong Kong when she was eight weeks old and, apart from boarding school in the UK, has lived here ever since.

She was 'terrified' when she first started volunteering, but Sunday School is now an irreplaceable part of her life.

'Volunteering has been such a privilege and joy,' she says. 'There would be a huge gap in my life if I were to retire!'

The rewards have been many: nativity plays, the service for blessing animals (especially meaningful for Fiona as she has two dogs, Murphy and Gunner), cakes at Pentecost, outings for dim sum, the Michaelmas Fair and lessons every Sunday.

But one aspect of Sunday School stands out.



Fiona's parents were married at St John's in 1950.



'When I first started volunteering, classes were very small and mainly expat kids. Now we have over 200 kids registered and they come from all over the world,' she says.

As Fiona points out, children are the future of the church and healthy numbers at Sunday School promises a more vibrant Christian community in the future.

'Everyone is welcome and that has been the story of our successful growth,' she says, adding that her children attended Sunday School at St John's. In fact, her son Michael is the reason she got involved in the first place.

'He started asking questions about God and I thought, "Right. Time for Sunday School!"' she says. Michael has also taught Sunday School alongside mum.

Fiona's connections to St John's date back seventy years. Her parents, Sidney Gordon, an accountant from Scotland, and England-born Olive, known as Paul, a nurse at Queen Mary's, were married at St John's in 1950. They'd met on a blind date at a St Andrew's Ball. Fiona and her daughter Nichola also held their weddings at St John's while her two children and two granddaughters were baptised here. Nichola's son Dallas is waiting for his baptism. He's with his mum and dad in Australia, but will have to wait until after COVID-19.

'The baptism has to be at St John's. It is a family tradition!' Fiona says.

Fiona has no plans to stop volunteering. Not only is Sunday School a lot of fun, it serves a need.

'It is very important that the children know the Bible,' she says. 'So I start the new school year with Genesis and then work through. We do lots of reading, lots of arts and the children love it, and so do I.'

If you are interested in volunteering at Sunday School, please contact Donald (email: donaldkkleung@netvigator.com) or Rita (email: jonjerchan@netvigator.com). They would love to hear from you!