

In Touch

The Cathedral Magazine - Spring Edition 2021



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

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Acting Dean's Message



Dear friends,

Welcome to our Spring Edition of the *In Touch* magazine.

As I pondered my greeting to you, I wondered what was the right way to express my wishes for your Lent? The words, 'Have a happy Lent' didn't seem right at all! Lent is a time for reflection, self-examination, inner development, repentance of sin and new connection with God's world. Yet, Lent can also be joyful. But joy is not the same as happiness. Joy is much deeper. God's joy comes from knowing that we are loved and that God is with us always. It is a joy that is present in all the circumstances of life, in good times and hard. In that sense there is Christian joy, even if things are not necessarily 'happy'. So I wish you a joyful Lent.

Lent in the northern hemisphere accompanies the spring season, a time of warming up, of things coming alive and of new beginnings. This year's Lent will, I hope, also be a time when we emerge out of the long pandemic that has brought so much hurt and loss. Lent invites us to journey with the passion of our Lord. It is the way of repentance to absolution, of hurt to healing, of crucifixion to resurrection; in summary: the path from death to life. This year's Lenten pilgrimage will be one that resonates with many aspects of our personal lives, our city and even the world. We will perceive that our Christian faith is deeply grounded in the world's context, in its suffering and hopes. We will learn again how the promises of God are manifested and actualised. So I wish you a meaningful, healing Lent, where God is close and present.

Lent is a time for prayer. We live in turbulent times and it is prayer that grounds us. God is the Centre of our being. We abide in God's grace. In prayer we deepen our trust in God, and God's Spirit sanctifies us. Now, more than ever we need this grace. Not as an escape from the world's challenges but to give us wisdom to manage what is difficult, and strength to move things in God's direction. I wish you a prayerful, transformative Lent.

Most of all Lent is a time for holiness. On reflection what I said above is all about holiness. So I finish with the words from the preface to the Ash Wednesday liturgy:

'I invite you, therefore, in the name of the Church, to the observance of a holy Lent, by self-examination and repentance; by prayer, fasting, and self-denial; and by reading and meditating on God's holy word.'

May we all have a holy Lent.

Mark

Let the Healing Begin



Text by Michael Gibb

'Despite the pandemic and recent social unrest in Hong Kong, healing will take root as long as we make space in our hearts for God,' says the newly installed Archbishop Andrew Chan Au-ming.

'As Anglicans, we must show that it is possible to disagree, and even to feel disappointed and upset at local and global events today, but at the same time to show God's love for one another,' he adds.

'We must embody the idea that another person's perspective, even if very different to our own, can enrich our lives,' says Archbishop Andrew, who was elected in October 2020.

He quotes Ephesians 2:13-14 for its emphasis on unity: 'But now in Christ Jesus, you who once were far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For he himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility'.

There is no doubt that these are testing times for Anglicans in Hong Kong, and Archbishop Andrew has a long list of priorities for the next few months.

Ordained in 1992 after pursuing music education at university in the UK, Archbishop Andrew wishes not only to help Christians in Hong Kong manage the challenges facing society today, but also to prepare for the post-COVID-19 era.

'These are exceptional times and we can't be sure how the pandemic in particular is affecting Christian life,' he says. One concern is how technology is deployed in church life today.

'Technology has been great for bringing us together during COVID-19 but I hope we don't get too used to it!' he says. 'Many Christians miss the liturgy and especially miss giving the sign of peace and receiving holy communion during services. So we mustn't lose sight of the need for personal interaction and fellowship, despite the advantages of online services once the pandemic has ceased.'



The Most Revd Andrew Chan was installed as Archbishop and Primate of Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hui at St John's Cathedral on 3rd January 2021.

The loss of the personal touch has been significant during the pandemic, the new Archbishop explains. He has experienced the sadness of not being allowed to give the last rites to a parishioner shortly before he passed away because of social distancing.

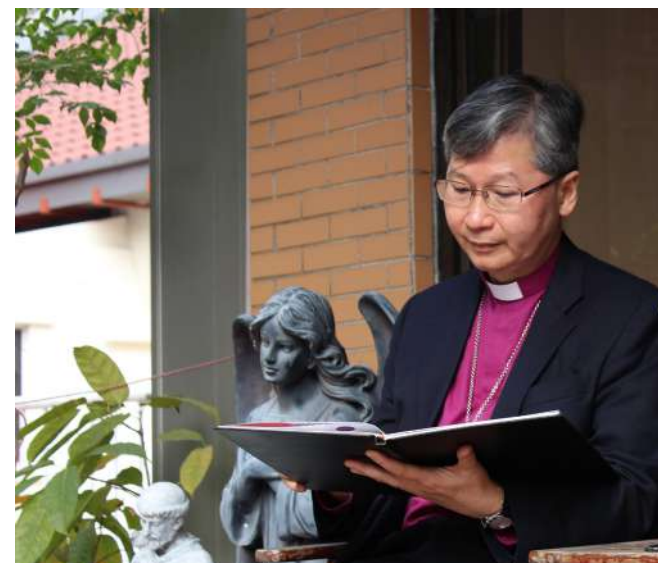
'Not to hold his hand before he departed was very sad,' he confides. 'We must hope that the personal touch will return to church as soon as possible.'

In his new role, having been a clergy member in Hong Kong for nearly 30 years, and Bishop of the Western Kowloon diocese since 2012, Archbishop Andrew is focused on strengthening the province of the Anglican church in the region. He hopes to make Macau the fourth diocese in the Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hui province within two to three years. He also wants to enhance communication amongst all Anglican clergy in Hong Kong and build stronger collegiality.

'Hong Kong has a great deal to offer the Anglican community worldwide even though we are the smallest province, in terms of geographical size and number of Church members. We can maintain connections with Anglican communities, both great and small, rich and poor, liberal and conservative, through our outreach work,' he says.

For Archbishop Andrew, the journey from being the organist at just 12 years of age at St Thomas' Church in Shek Kip Mei where his father was choirmaster to becoming Archbishop has taught him the importance of humility before God and the parishioners whom he serves. And he admits he is still learning how to be a priest and serve God.

'But I know that if we work together with one heart and with a sense of humbleness for future generations, we can see God's kingdom achieved on earth,' he says.



Walking with Jesus through Holy Week



Text by The Reverend Robert Martin
Photos by Michael Luu & staff photographer

Each year, Anglicans along with Christians around the world are invited to keep Holy Week—the seven-day period preceding Easter. During these holy days we walk with Jesus through the last days of his earthly life; from his entry into Jerusalem, to Calvary and the Cross, to the empty tomb. As early as the fourth century, Christians have faithfully walked with Christ along this path, sometimes in Jerusalem itself, but more often in their home parishes and communities.

HOLY WEEK begins with *Palm Sunday*, which commemorates Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem.

First, we hear the Gospel narrative of Jesus' entry into Jerusalem. We use palm branches and palm crosses to remind us of Christ's entry into the Holy City. Once the procession is over, the mood changes as we join in a dramatic reading of the Passion story. We are reminded on this day of our human fickleness, as the crowd joyfully sing '*Hosanna to the Son of David*'. In a few short days the same crowd will shout '*Crucify him*' and demand his death. *Do we by turns applaud him and, by our behaviour and thoughts, crucify him again and again?*

The climax of Holy Week is the Triduum (*Latin for three days*): **Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Holy Saturday**. Each day has its own special and moving liturgy. At St John's we follow this ancient tradition of keeping Holy Week liturgically. It's a drama that we are all invited to take part in, not just as observers, but as participants.



The altar stripped of its furnishings after the Eucharist on Maundy Thursday

Maundy Thursday has a strange name that comes from the Latin, '*mandatum est*', meaning '*he commanded*'. The focus of the evening Eucharist is on the upper room where Jesus washes his disciples' feet and commands them to do the same for one another. We follow his example, and the celebrant symbolically washes the feet of members of the congregation. We also give thanks for Jesus' institution of the Eucharist at the Last Supper. When the Eucharist is over, two notable things happen. Firstly, some of the Sacrament is taken to the St Michael's Chapel, which has been specially decorated to represent the Garden of Gethsemane. Secondly, the altar is stripped of its furnishings, which reminds us of the way in which Christ's tormentors stripped him of his clothes before the Crucifixion. *Are we willing to follow his commandment and wash one another's feet in our daily lives?*



The Watch: In the St Michael's Chapel we keep a solemn watch until midnight before the '*Altar of Repose*' (so called because the Blessed Sacrament reposes there). Doing this reminds us of Jesus' agony in the Garden of Gethsemane, when he had to decide whether to obey his Father's will and submit to arrest and death or run away. *Are we willing to watch and pray with Christ as we find him in those in need?*



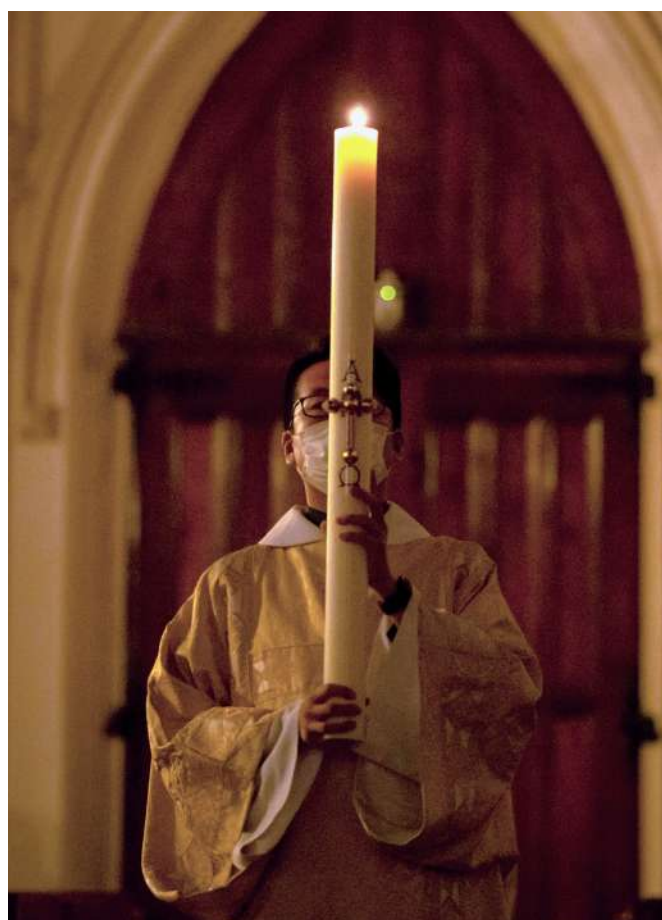
Good Friday is the most solemn day of the Christian Year and, along with the Easter celebration of the Resurrection, the most important. On this holy day we stand before the mystery of the Cross with Mary and John, and share their sorrow as the Lord of Life is killed. We hear the Passion, the story of Jesus' Crucifixion sung dramatically—and we join in the words of the crowd, 'Crucify him, crucify him'. After the singing of the Passion, there is the Veneration of the Cross. This is not a time for many words, just a simple bow or kiss of devotion to our crucified Saviour. We then receive him in Holy Communion from some of the sacrament which has been reserved from the night before. To mark Jesus' agony and death, there is no celebration of the Eucharist between Maundy Thursday and the Easter Vigil. *We leave in sorrowful silence.*

Holy Saturday is a day of expectant waiting. Christ lies in the tomb and the Church awaits the Resurrection. No sacraments are celebrated this day as the Church is in mourning.

Easter Day, according to ancient custom, begins after sunset on Holy Saturday, so the *Great Easter Vigil* is the first proclamation of the Resurrection of Christ. The Cathedral is in darkness as we begin this service of light, fire and water—powerful symbols of the Resurrection. In the porch of the Cathedral a new fire is kindled to symbolise the victory of Christ over sin and death. From this holy fire we will light the Paschal (*Easter*) Candle. The light is passed through the congregation as the Easter Proclamation is sung. We listen attentively to the scripture readings about God's 'saving acts' from the creation, through the deliverance of Israel's from Egypt, until the time of Jesus' victory over evil and death. The gradual lighting of the church symbolises the victory of Christ over death, as does the singing of the Gloria, which has not been sung during Lent. At every **Easter Vigil**, the waters of baptism are blessed and the congregation renew their baptismal promises around the font. This is the ancient time for the Sacrament of Baptism to be celebrated. This night, the greatest feast in the Church's year, continues with the First Eucharist of the Resurrection to welcome the Risen Christ. **Alleluia! Christ is Risen!**

This is the '**Drama of Holy Week**'—not a series of exotic services to attend but an invitation to faithfully walk with Christ through the last week of his life, and to accompany him through his sufferings that we may rejoice in his Resurrection. It's a drama that we are invited to take part in, not just as observers, but as participants, as we respond to Christ's call:

'If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me.'



The Real Christmas

Text by The Reverend Will Newman

We all know the Christmas story, told in Lessons and Carols and Nativity Plays all over the world every year: The Angel Gabriel announces to Mary that she will give birth to the Son of God; Mary and Joseph travel to Bethlehem, where they find no room in the inn; Jesus is born in a stable and laid in a manger; angels tell the good news to Shepherds who visit the new baby; later, three kings or wise men follow a star which leads them to the infant Jesus.

How many of us realise that this familiar story joins together two very different accounts of the birth of Jesus, told in the gospels of Matthew and Luke?

In December 'The Real Christmas', an Advent Course by Zoom explored these two accounts.

In our familiar Christmas story Mary takes centre stage along with her baby, but in Matthew's account it is Joseph, son of David, who has a key role. The angel appears three times to Joseph, not Mary, and it is Joseph who obeys God's commands. Matthew tells us nothing about Mary and gives no details of the birth of Jesus, no journey to Bethlehem, no manger, no shepherds.

Matthew's focus is on Jesus as a royal baby, descended from King David, a baby who fulfils many of the old prophecies. The Magi or wise men follow a star to find a newborn king. In Matthew's eyes these things tell us from his birth that Jesus is the rightful Messiah and King.

By contrast Luke tells all the familiar story with Mary taking a central part, but without the wise men. Luke's Jesus is not worshipped by rich strangers, but born in poverty and celebrated by lowly shepherds. Luke seems to be telling us that Jesus will be most at home with the poor and humble. Mary's joyful Song of Magnificat tells that God puts right what is wrong, raising up the lowly, feeding the hungry, and confusing the powerful and proud. It's a foretelling of what Jesus will do.

Both Matthew and Luke tell of light—the star in Matthew, and in Luke, Jesus himself is the light in the darkness, a light to reveal salvation and glory.

This links Matthew and Luke's accounts with the opening of John's gospel. John tells not of the birth of a baby, but of the coming of the light, God as a human being, the Word made flesh. It's a different way of telling what the Christmas story is about.

'In the beginning was the Word ... What has come into being in him is life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it!'

Buen camino! Buena fe!



Let's continue the journey with Fr Amos

Text & photos by The Reverend Amos Poon

Every day we set off very early. For a journey of more than 100km, we had to finish at least 20-30km each day, which is 5-7 hours of walking. As we didn't book any rooms at our next destination, arriving late might mean that there would be no place in the albergues.

My journey started at Sarria, walking 22km, and arrived at Portomarin; then another 25km from Portomarin to Palas de Rei. On the second day of the journey, the sky was still very dim in the morning and when we walked on the mountain road, our surroundings were covered by a thick fog. All I could see was the faint silhouettes of people ahead and the road at my feet. Then, when we reached the top of the hill, an amazing moment happened. In the blink of an eye, as the sunlight shone across the earth, the thick fog dissipated, and the earth was filled with lively colours again! Seeing this scene, I remembered the lyrics: 'Yet saints their watch are keeping, their cry goes up, "How long?" And soon the night of weeping shall be the morn of song.' It turned out that the morning light did not come gradually, but it came in an instant. This also to me signified the will of God, which will come in His time, beyond our expectation.

There were also many volunteers along the road serving the pilgrims, especially during summer vacation. One day, when we were filling up our bottles with water, we met a

family. The father came up and asked us where we were from. We said we were from Hong Kong. When we were casually chatting about our journey, he suddenly asked us if we would like him to pray for us and Hong Kong. As you might remember, Hong Kong was going through a very chaotic time in summer 2019. We nodded, and then the three of us put our shoulders together and prayed. I cannot remember the exact wording, but I do remember that someone did pray with us, and I still remember there was a person who was willing to pray for us. Indeed, I believe that the Lord used that experience to tell us that 'He is always here, accompanying us, through our journey of life.'

After five days of walking, 117km and 30 hours on the road, we finally arrived at Santiago Cathedral. The full name for Santiago is Santiago de Compostela, which means St James on a starry field. There are three things a person must do when they reach Santiago Cathedral. The first is to enter the cathedral and hug the statue of St James. The second thing to do is to pray to the bones of St James, entrusting him with your petition and letting him intercede with the Lord on your behalf. The third thing is to go to the 'end of the earth' to have a look.

According to legend, the final destination of St James' evangelical journey was a place called Finisterra. It is located at the most northwestern part of Spain. *Terra* means 'earth' and *Finis* means 'the end'. Together, it means 'the end of the earth'. At the time of Jesus it was the most western place in the known world. In fact, in the Acts of Apostles, Jesus commanded His disciples to be his witnesses to the end of the earth. In the end it was St James who fulfilled this commandment and arrived at Finisterra. When I reached Finisterra, I looked out at the Atlantic Ocean. In my mind I thought that the coastline had not changed much in two thousand years, so what I was looking at then must be the same as what St James had been seeing during his time. In the past, pilgrims would burn their clothes there, which meant that the old self was dead and they were to clothe ourselves with the new self and become a new creation in the Lord. Burning is now prohibited, so we prepared an item we brought with us through the journey, and put it there as the last prayer of our pilgrimage.

Because of this meaningful journey in my life, I highly recommend the pilgrimage way of Santiago. Through everyday journeys, we experience a meditation towards the depth of our heart and mind. 'Pilgrimage' in Chinese means 'willing to face towards God' (朝聖). In fact, it is true that the Lord is not elsewhere; the Lord is always by your side and standing in front of you. However, our eyes are looking in the wrong direction. As long as we are willing to take the path of pilgrimage, and as long as we are willing turn our life and face Him, the Lord is always there.





Requiem aeternam ...

Text by Felix Yeung
Photos by Michael Luu

The *annus horribilis* of 2020 was not entirely miserable; despite the numerous suspensions of public worship, we were still blessed with a couple of months of worshipping together in person. On All Souls' Day (2nd November 2020), we were also able to hold our annual Eucharist for the commemoration of the faithful departed.

Why do we pray for the dead? In the second book of the Maccabees, 'For if [Judas] were not expecting that those who had fallen would rise again, it would have been superfluous and foolish to pray for the dead. But if he was looking to the splendid reward that is laid up for those who fall asleep in godliness, it was a holy and pious thought. Therefore he made atonement for the dead, so that they might be delivered from their sin.' (2 Maccabees 12:44-45) This passage tells us that those who have passed this early life still have the opportunity to be 'delivered from their sin'. As we profess our faith in the words of the Creed: 'I believe in the communion of saints', we are certainly not disconnected with our brothers and sisters who have gone before us; instead, we are all living members of the Body of Christ, both here on earth and in heaven. It is in fact not unusual for us to pray for the dead, as we hear Sunday by Sunday in the prayers of intercession, or in the Eucharistic Prayer. As the Church teaches: 'Our prayer for [the faithful departed] is capable not only of helping them, but also of making their intercession for us effective.'



In classical music, a *Requiem* (which is taken from the first Latin word of the Introit chant of the Mass, *Requiem aeternam*) can consist of as many as 12 parts:

1. Introit (*Requiem aeternam*)
2. Kyrie eleison
3. Gradual (*Requiem aeternam*)
4. Tract (*Absolve Domine*)
5. Sequence: *Dies irae*
6. Offertory (*Domine Jesu Christe*)
7. Sanctus (and Benedictus)
8. Pie Jesu
9. Agnus Dei
10. Communion (*Lux aeterna*)
11. *Libera me*
12. *In paradisum*

Precisely speaking, items 8, 11, and 12, are not part of the *Requiem* mass: the *Pie Jesu* is an acclamation to be added *ad libitum* in the Eucharistic Prayer, and the last two items are prayers for the burial rituals. Very often, composers do not set all 12 parts, with the more recent settings omitting the Gradual and the Tract. Johannes Ockeghem's (1410/1425-1497) setting is possibly the earliest polyphonic *Requiem* and the six-part setting by Tomás Luis de Victoria (c.1548-1611) is one of the pillars of the genre. In the movie *Amadeus*, we learnt of the mystery behind Mozart's *Requiem* (unfortunately it is not historically true). What we are certain is that Mozart did not complete the *Requiem* and eventually one of his students, Franz Xaver Süssmayr, completed the work. Another well-known setting by Giuseppe Verdi is so big in scale that it is virtually impossible to be used in liturgy.

Later on, composers began to deviate from the 12 standard parts listed above. Instead, they choose texts to express their views on the subjects of life and death. As the musical world marked John Rutter's 75th birthday in 2020, the Cathedral Choir also performed the chamber ensemble version of his *Requiem* at the All Souls' Day Eucharist last year.

Rutter wrote his *Requiem* mass in memory of his father, who had died the previous year. Unlike the traditional *Requiem* mass, Rutter's included texts from the Psalms and the 1662 Book of Common Prayer. It consists of 7 movements, with an overall arch-like structure:

The opening *Requiem aeternam* (1) and the final *Lux aeterna* (7) both highlight the serene consolation of our Christian hope in heaven; *Out of the deep* (2, from Psalm 130) and *The Lord is my shepherd* (6, from Psalm 23) feature a solo cello and a solo oboe respectively; *Pie Jesu* (3) and *Agnus Dei* (5) represent the two extremes of Rutter's personal prayers to his deceased father, a serene meditation and an urgent cry of grief; all these sum up to the centre uplifting movement of *Sanctus* (4), with a recurring sound of the Glockenspiel, mimicking sound of the funeral bells, while showing a glimpse of the heavenly glory.

St John Henry Newman wrote a beautiful prayer for the Holy Souls. As we think of our beloved brothers and sisters who have gone before us, we may also say this prayer for them:

*Jesu! by that shuddering dread which fell on Thee;
Jesu! by that cold dismay which sickened Thee;
Jesu! by that pang of heart which thrilled in Thee;
Jesu! by that mount of sins which crippled Thee;
Jesu! by that sense of guilt which stifled Thee;
Jesu! by that innocence which girdled Thee;
Jesu! by that sanctity which reigned in Thee;
Jesu! by that Godhead which was one with Thee;
Jesu! spare these souls which are so dear to Thee;
Souls, who in prison, calm and patient, wait for Thee;
Hasten, Lord, their hour, and bid them come to Thee,
To that glorious Home, where they shall ever gaze on Thee.*



Lantau 95km Hike in 42 Hours

Text & photos by Thomas Li

*Look at the earth bringing forth fruit and flower;
Look at the sky, the sunshine and the rain;
Look at the hills, looks at the trees and mountains,
Valley and flowing river, field and plain:
Praise to thee, O Lord, for all creation,
Give us thankful hearts, that we may see:
All the gifts we share, and every blessing,
All things come of thee.*

As a result of no overseas travel due to the pandemic, this year I went hiking around Hong Kong nearly every weekend. The text from John Rutter's anthem 'Look at the World' summed up why I was motivated to appreciate the local natural wonders. Every hike was a refreshing experience, and I immersed myself in the awe of the spectacular landscape and greenness around the Hong Kong countryside. Hiking allowed me to hang out with my friends more often and to explore new places together. Photo opportunities and filming of our hikes with sports cameras always made this a memorable experience to be treasured. We could also share and discuss our daily life issues, which improved our bonds of friendship. Despite Hong Kong not looking big on the map, in terms of hiking there were many options for adventures. The hikes trained my body and mind to deal with distance, altitude, direction, weather and landscape conditions.

Among many explorations, the diverse natural surroundings, heritage and sheer beauty of Lantau Island made a big impression on me. A long hike around the island gradually came to mind. Route planning was tricky though, since I wanted to hike through many parts of the island. It turned out to be 95km in distance, like an open-ended figure 8



shape on the map. There was also the dilemma where to stay overnight between the hikes. It turned out to be more economical to go home every day after the hike, rather than stay over at a hotel in Tung Chung. Despite the time spent on transport, I did not have to worry about food and laundry, nor did I have to carry heavy camping equipment. I was anxious, though, whether my body would be able to cope with such a long distance over five days in a row. Thirty percent of the route was also unfamiliar territory to me.

Day One

Despite a potential typhoon threat later in the week, the weather was favourable. The hike began on the 3rd November 2020 at 7am from the north eastern corner of Lantau. Greg from the Cathedral Choir joined me, and a taxi dropped us next to the toll plaza after crossing the Tsing Ma bridge. Since I had never hiked in this part of Lantau before, I was worried whether we would be stopped by the Tunnel management before we reached our starting point next to the bridge anchor point. Thankfully we were not stopped and soon found the entrance of the concrete footpath that led to the coastal village in Tso Wan or Grass Bay.



When we reached Fa Peng Teng or The Rock of a Vase, there was a magical sea view of sunbeams shining through the opening of clouds, with Hong Kong Island in the distance. Sadly, the vast open sea in front of us would probably be reclaimed for the artificial islands as part of the 'Lantau Tomorrow Vision' in a few years' time. The potential environmental damage and significant financial risks are a grim prospect for me, and an unfortunate solution to solving the housing problems of our city.

As we continued, Disneyland came into sight below as we descended the steep hills between Sunny Bay and Penny's Bay. At that point I was surprised and happy to meet up with my colleagues from work, Maggie and Sam, who joined the adventure. Another moment of anxiety arose as we found our way up the hill again in the direction of Discovery Bay. Satellite map and online references did not state clearly whether it was possible to go under the highway, and the entrance to the mountain path was hidden by the forest. Luckily, there was a path connecting both hills and after a brief interval of bush whacking the path became clear onward to Discovery Bay.



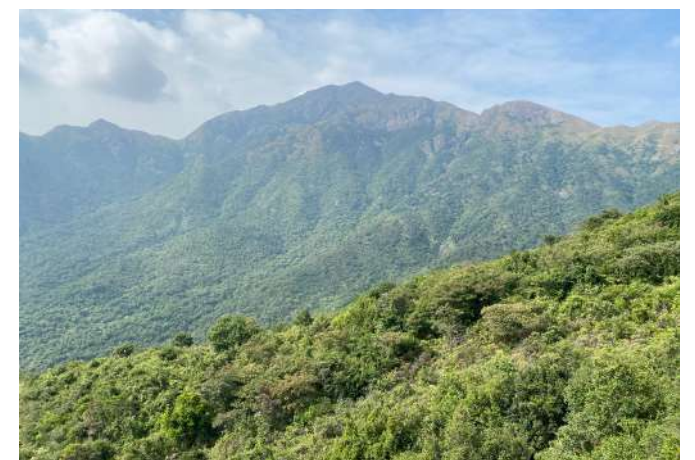
The path became steep and rocky as we crossed the mountain ridge between Tai Che Tung and Tiger's Head above Discovery Bay. Nonetheless, the great view of the bay took our focus away from the strenuous ascent

to Tiger's Head and the heat from the sun. I was glad that my friend Charles finally met up with us after some delay. The sky became cloudy and cooler as we went in the direction of Tung Chung. There was a dramatic change of scenery after we passed the villages in Pak Mong, and the landscape transformed from rural scene to mega infrastructures, dominating the coastline. Along the Hong Kong Olympic Trail, which was the ancient pathway between Tung Chung and Mui Wo, we saw large machinery employed for reclamation to expand Tung Chung on the other side of the highway. That concluded the first day. We covered 22km in nine hours, just in time for afternoon tea in Tung Chung.

Day Two



The Cathedral Verger Hoi joined me on the 2nd day of the hike. We headed up to Por Kai Shan along a rather steep rugged slope from Tung Chung. Once we were up on the hill the ascent became a gradual climb all the way to Sunset Peak. The two tallest mountains on Lantau—Sunset Peak (869m) and Lantau Peak (934m), came into view as we went past the sides of Ap Kuk Lek (721m), Sam Shan Toi (721m) and Lin Fa Shan (766m). A special feature on Sunset Peak were the bungalows built by church missionaries in the 1930s. The high altitude allowed us to get away from the heat down at sea level and there was an abundant supply of water on the mountain which offered a stunning view of the bay of Pui O below.





Bungalows built by church missionaries in 1930s on Sunset Peak

The Silvergrass/Miscanthus were also booming and provided many wonderful photo opportunities. Sunset Peak and the adjacent Yi Tung Shan (749m) were covered like silvery armour with the Silvergrass shining under the sun. Since transport to Lantau is much more convenient these days, Sunset Peak has become a hotspot for Silvergrass enthusiasts. Even on a weekday, we came across swarms of people heading up for the attractions. It all became rather crowded and noisy.

We quickly descended to Pak Kung Au, and I continued the hike through the South Lantau Country Trail to Shek

Pik Reservoir. Surprisingly I encountered no one along this trail. There was a great view to the south side of Lantau Peak before descending to the catchwaters at Tong Fuk. Although scenic-wise the path along the catchwaters was not interesting, the system that trapped the mountain water to the Shek Pik Reservoir was an impressive work of engineering. After seven hours, my walk came to an end when I reached the dam of the reservoir. It was the second day of the hike, covering 16km.

Let's continue the hike with Thomas in our next issue.



A Sunday in the Life of ...

Ho Tat Hoi

Verger

In conversation with Andrew Ashley

Sunday at St John's is very special. Every week—well, when life isn't subject to the exigencies of COVID-19—there is a series of splendidly uplifting services with large and enthusiastic congregations. Many people are involved in ensuring that our worship runs smoothly. But one man is the essential link between all the services.

Our Verger, Ho Tat Hoi, spends his Sundays working hard behind the scenes to prepare the cathedral for the glorious worship we enjoy. 'Sunday is always very busy', he says. After leaving his home on Peng Chau and arriving at St John's by 7am, Hoi Gor is immersed in a continuous whirl of activity as one service follows another.

Working with the servers and sidespeople, Hoi Gor is responsible for getting everything in order for each service. Service booklets and pew bulletins, chalices, ciboria and eucharistic elements, vestments for the priests, the arrangement of the chancel ... there is plenty to keep him occupied, including the collections to be counted.

St John's is a busy place every day of the week. Hoi Gor and his team keep the cathedral open and prepared for the weekday services. And there is much work to be done to ensure that everything is ready for Sunday. Vestments and altar vessels must be kept in perfect condition and repaired when necessary. Supplies of wine, wafers, candles and incense must be managed, and collection statements prepared. 'There's always a lot of paperwork,' says Hoi Gor.



He finds the current pandemic particularly frustrating. He's still at St John's every Sunday for the live-streamed services but some of his working week must now be spent at home. 'It's so hard for me because there are many things I need to do in church. At home I can only do paperwork.' Some of that time at home is currently spent preparing booklets for the Chinese-language services.

Hoi Gor originally worked in forestry and came to St John's after a recommendation from a friend. It was a good move. 'I'm so happy working here and I've learned a lot.' He does much vital work behind the scenes but after eighteen years at St John's, he has become a key part of the cathedral's welcome to the outside world. His smiling face is often the first impression that visitors receive as they enter the cathedral.

The office of verger is an ancient one, with its title coming from virge, the ceremonial rod carried by a verger on solemn occasions. In earlier times, a verger might have used his verge to prevent stray animals from disrupting a procession or even to chastise unruly choristers. It's difficult to imagine Hoi Gor having to do anything like that but his air of friendly competence makes it clear that he's ready for whatever his office demands of him.





New Head of Cathedral Support for Domestic Workers



Manisha Wijesinghe has recently been appointed Executive Director of HELP for Domestic Workers. In Touch invited Manisha to share her views on this outreach ministry of St John's.

1. What do you want to achieve in your new position?

As I take on the role of Executive Director of HELP for Domestic Workers, I appreciate the hard work of countless staff and volunteers who have helped continue the mission started by James Collins 30 years ago.

Over the past three decades, HELP has changed the lives of over 100,000 domestic workers through one-on-one support, education and empowerment programmes. We have been honoured to support these women and men in their endeavours to provide for their families, while contributing to the development of both Hong Kong and their home countries.

Domestic workers are integral to Hong Kong. They clean our homes, care for our children and the elderly, and allow mothers and fathers to work. If just one domestic worker experiences abuse, it's one too many. Our mission is to empower domestic workers through advice, assistance, education and support, and to help them gain access to justice.

Building on our vision to create a safe and just Hong Kong for everyone, I hope to play a small part in guiding HELP for Domestic Workers to continue supporting domestic workers in Hong Kong.

2. Any opportunities and challenges for the ministries of HELP in 2021?

Last year's unexpected challenges pushed us to re-examine how we engage with the world around us. COVID-19, social distancing requirements and travel restrictions meant that we were approached by many more domestic workers in crisis. Our average monthly caseload increased by over 80%, and that trend is unchanging as the pandemic drags on.

Domestic workers stranded in Hong Kong due to loss of employment, workers suffering from depression and anxiety, and workers facing physical and mental violence and abuse are only some of the issues on which our team has worked. Not only that, employers reach out for advice on how best to support their domestic workers, even while they themselves face employment or financial difficulties.

Learning from 2020, HELP in 2021 hopes to bridge the gap between domestic workers and employers. When government departments and tribunals were closed because of the pandemic, we saw a 98% success rate in cases settled amicably out of court using HELP as a mediator. By encouraging domestic workers and employers to talk through these difficult issues, we avoid unnecessary legal disputes.

We did see a marked increase in our caseload in 2020, and we encountered challenges in fundraising. The economic downturn means 2021 will be a pivotal year for us. Every dollar donated means our team can continue supporting

the domestic worker community; each donation, however small, makes a difference, not only for the domestic worker and the employer, but for their families as well.

3. Can you share something that you were grateful for last year?

There were silver linings. Due to social distancing, we had to transfer our services to WhatsApp, Facebook, and the phone. However, although this new approach took some getting used to, domestic workers who were unable to come to our office could still reach out for assistance. In particular, we have been able to rescue domestic workers trapped by human trafficking and forced labour or stuck in violent situations.

We hope to strengthen our online services this year, knowing the extent of the opportunities they offer, and especially because they allow domestic workers the option of seeking advice and guidance without losing precious time-off.

Moreover, several high-profile cases in which domestic workers received compensation for the abuse suffered were concluded last year. As of October 2020, HELP assisted domestic workers receive over HK\$800,000 in compensation, representing over 98% of the total amount of money claimed.

In addition to the support of St John's Cathedral in assisting us deliver our mission, I'm most grateful for the HELP team, which includes many dedicated staff and volunteers. Without their hard work over this past year, I couldn't have taken on this role as Executive Director. By supporting domestic workers in crisis long into the night, after their official duty hours have finished, or stepping in to take on additional duties because we were low on personnel, the team makes HELP for Domestic Workers what it is.

I cannot be prouder of what we have accomplished, and I know that whatever 2021 brings, the HELP team will face it together.



Rowan Williams Luminaries: Twenty lives that illuminate the Christian way

Text by The Reverend Amos Poon

When we venture into a church, with its interior dimly lit, what we see is light that passes through the stained glass, while the church (with the help of the sun) is filled with different colours of light. Once a priest saw a boy sitting at one of the pews looking at the stained glass. The priest went forward and asked the boy, 'What are you doing?' The boy answered, 'I am looking at the Saints.' 'Who are the Saints?' the priest queried. The boy thought for a moment and answered, 'Saints are people who let the light shine in.'

There are many faithful Christians, who allow God to shine through them to illuminate darkness in the world, and they become Saints. In his book, 'Luminaries: Twenty lives that illuminate the Christian way', published two years ago, Rowan Williams, the former Archbishop of Canterbury invites us to journey with him into this church. Here we can observe the lives and legacies of twenty great witnesses, including Saint Paul, Augustine of Hippo, Thomas Cramer, Charles Dickens, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, and Saint Oscar Romero.

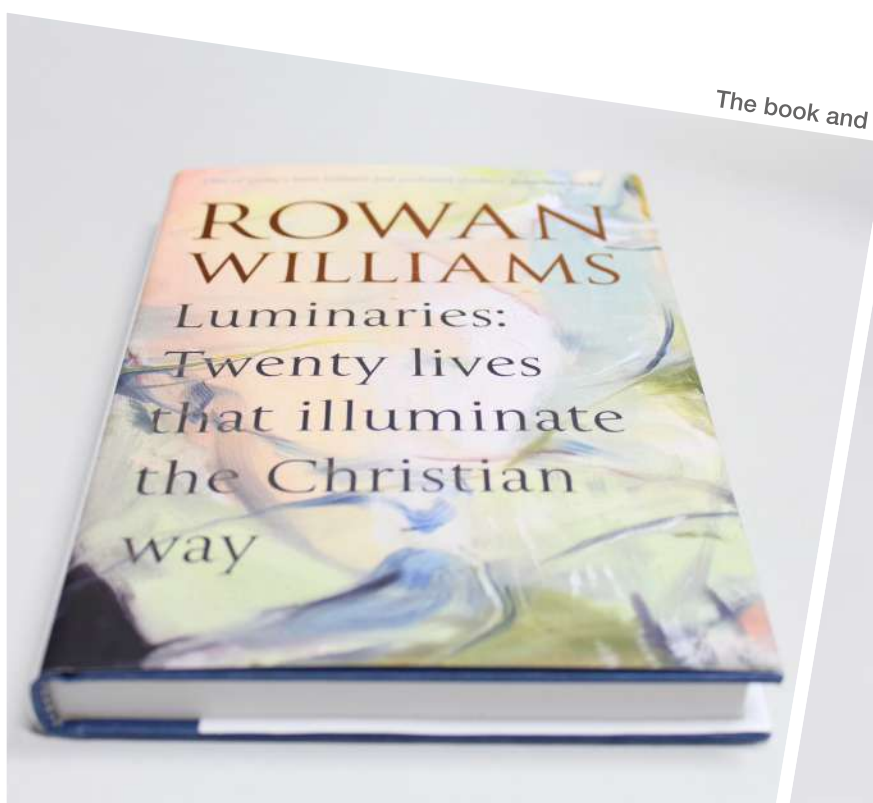
This is another extraordinary book by Rowan. 'Luminaries' is a collection of sermons and articles he has given over the last 20 years. At first I thought it was only a collection of biographies of these people of great faith. However, when I read through the stories, Rowan does not only give us the timeline on the events happening in their lives, but

also has tried to help us look beyond them; to see how events made them who they were, and more importantly, help us to reflect on how their lives influenced their journeys of faith. For example, in the story of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Rowan focuses on his search for true freedom, which is 'the freedom to do what we know we have to do.' He then connects this definition of freedom to our times. The world we live in sometimes gives us much information about what we should do, when what we really need is not only to follow our own passion, but also to discern the will of God and then take risks to do what we need to do.

2019 and 2020 have been difficult years. These reflections on how different people lived out the true faith in their times could illuminate us and show us what we should do in ours. I believe this book could certainly shed light on our faith journey in 2021.

'This book is a series of reflections on people's stories, and sometimes also their writings. It's not a book that tells people's stories or looks at their writings as a matter of historical interest alone. It's about deciphering stories: Deciphering stories and writings that themselves set out to decipher the world and help to illuminate it. It's an attempt to make sense of lives that make sense of the world, and which may also help us make sense of God.' Rowan Williams, the former Archbishop of Canterbury.

The book and its translated version in Chinese are available in SJC Bookstore.



Guest Books: Wedding / In Loving Memory



Tree of Life Bangle and Necklaces



Forthcoming Services at St John's & Daughter Churches

St John's Cathedral

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

14 MAR **Mothering Sunday/The Fourth Sunday of Lent**
9.00am Sung Eucharist

25 MAR **The Annunciation of our Lord to the Blessed Virgin Mary**
7.30pm Sung Eucharist

28 MAR **Palm Sunday**
9.30am Palm Procession & Sung Eucharist (Bilingual)
11.45am Responsorial Eucharist
1.30pm Sung Eucharist (Filipino)
5.00pm Tenebrae Service

29-31 MAR **Monday to Wednesday in Holy Week**
8.00am Said Eucharist
6.00pm Stations of the Cross & Said Eucharist

01 APR **Maundy Thursday**
10.00am Chrism Eucharist
8.00pm Solemn Eucharist with Washing of Feet followed by the Watch until Midnight

02 APR **Good Friday**
9.00am Morning Prayer
10.30am Liturgy of the Day (Mandarin)
12 noon 'Walking with Jesus' - A Family Service
1.30pm Liturgy of the Day

03 APR **Holy Saturday**
9.00am Morning Prayer
8.00pm Easter Vigil & First Eucharist of Easter

04 APR **Easter Day**
8.00am Holy Eucharist
9.00am Sung Eucharist
10.30am Sung Eucharist (Mandarin)
11.45am Responsorial Eucharist
1.30pm Sung Eucharist (Filipino)
5.00pm Festal Evensong

02 MAY **Outreach Sunday/The Fifth Sunday of Easter**
9.00am Sung Eucharist

13 MAY **Ascension Day**
7.30pm Sung Eucharist

16 MAY **Christian Unity Sunday/The Seventh Sunday of Easter**
9.00am Sung Eucharist

23 MAY **The Feast of Pentecost (Whit Sunday)**
9.00am Sung Eucharist

30 MAY **Trinity Sunday**
9.00am Sung Eucharist

31 MAY **Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary to Elizabeth**
7.30pm Sung Eucharist

Discovery Bay Church

SKH Wei Lun Primary School
Lantau
Tel: 2987 4210
URL: www.discoverybaychurch.org.hk

28 MAR **Palm Sunday**
10.00am Eucharist with Blessing of Palms

02 APR **Good Friday**
11.00am Walk to Stations of the Cross at Trappist Monastery

04 APR **Easter Day**
10.00am Eucharist of the Resurrection in Wei Lun School

St Stephen's Chapel

St Stephen's College
22 Tung Tau Wan Road, Stanley
Tel: 2813 0408
URL: www.ststephen.org.hk

01 APR **Maundy Thursday**
8.00pm Commemoration of the Last Supper, with Eucharist and Footwashing

02 APR **Good Friday**
10.00am Easter Story, Easter Garden for children
11.00am Stations of the Cross

04 APR **Easter Day**
10.00am Family Eucharist to celebrate Easter, followed by an Easter Egg hunt for children

Emmanuel Church

Béthanie Chapel
139 Pok Fu Lam Road, Pok Fu Lam
Tel: 2523 4157
URL: www.emmanuel.org.hk

28 MAR **Palm Sunday**
10.15am Blessing of Palms, Procession & Sung Eucharist

02 APR **Good Friday**
10.15am The Liturgy of Good Friday

04 APR **Easter Day**
10.15am Sung Eucharist of the Resurrection & Renewal of Baptismal Promises

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



ST JOHN'S CATHEDRAL
聖公會聖約翰座堂

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