



St John's Cathedral 聖公會聖約翰座堂

Anglican Diocese of Hong Kong Island
Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hui

Message of Hope: Put "Hope" into action

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The Revd Franklin Lee

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ, this is The Revd Frankie Lee, one of the chaplains at St John's Cathedral.

Over the past few months, many of us have suffered one way or another by the outbreak of the COVID-19. Nearly two million people across the world have been infected with the virus while tens of thousands have lost lives.

In response to this pandemic, many activities and businesses have also been cancelled, postponed and suspended. We are advised to stay at home, avoid public gathering and do not shake hands; stay away from social gatherings and basically avoid having any physical contacts with others.

For some of us, we might have stayed at home for weeks without seeing our own friends, family members, work colleagues and schoolmates. Week after week, we do online meetings, online lessons, online chatroom, online this and that.

This coronavirus has upset our normal everyday life.

It is quite natural to ask: How long this is going to last? What is living if we are trapped in our own place? How can we go out and embrace physically those whom we care, giving them a hug or a kiss?

The sense of losing the freedom to do the things we like combined with the uncertain feeling as to when this coronavirus pandemic is over, creates fear among many people.

Fear drives people to buy and stock bags of rice and packs of toilet paper at home. Fear intensifies the sense of insecurity as we tackle the coronavirus and its impact on our lives, such as the rising unemployment rate with the closing down of businesses. Fear pushes us towards protectionism.

In fear, people tend to turn inward and focus on themselves. They become blind to the needy and turn a deaf ear to injustice.

The Gospel of Jesus addresses these fundamental questions about what it means to be human and what it means to be free. Jesus speaks of the truth setting humanity free (John 8:32).

In the Easter story of the road to Emmaus, two disciples of Jesus were upset, angry and disappointed as they left the city of Jerusalem where Jesus was put to death. In fear, in doubt and in sorrow, they met the Risen Jesus but they could not recognize him. Their eyes were blinded by doubts, disappointment, fear and anger. Although they felt that their hearts were burning whilst talking with Jesus, they could not recognize him.

It was not until much later when Jesus broke bread in front of them that their eyes were open and they could recognize this Jesus. This Jesus who breaks bread with his disciples. This Jesus who breaks himself for all people. This Jesus who came to set free: free from doubts, free from the burden of sin, free from fear.

In Jesus, there is no fear. In 1 John 4. 18, 'There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear...'

As we face the challenges ahead in our city and our world, we need to learn to move forward in hope grounded on our actions in serving the well-being of all people.

Hope does not just appear from nowhere. It is given to us by God but we need to seek it and put it into action.

When the two disciples recognized Jesus, they did not just stay where they were or to continue their journey of sorrow, pain and anger. The Bible tells us that at that very hour, they got up and went back to Jerusalem to meet the disciples of Jesus and told them what had happened. They went back to proclaim the Good News.

The Lord is Risen Indeed! We have seen the Lord! Echoed by all the disciples. Joy, peace, love, faith, hope fill the house.

Life has meaning when we can embrace, when we treasure, when we hug, and kiss, and shake hands, when our Christian hope is put in action, serving one another in love.

May the peace of God be with you all. Amen.