



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: Living with uncertainty

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I'm Will Newman, a chaplain at St John's.

We are living in uncertain times. Here in Hong Kong the political future is uncertain, and we do not yet know how the new national security law will be implemented, or to what extent it may impact on our lives. And in Hong Kong and all around the world there is great uncertainty about the future course of the COVID-19 pandemic. On one hand as restrictions are gradually lifted it seems that life is returning to something like normal; yet on the other hand we await a possible second wave of infections; and we do not know when our borders will reopen and travel will be possible again as it was 6 months ago. Even when travel is possible, how safe will it be? And will life really return to how it was, or will the pandemic force us to change how we work and live in years to come? When will it even be safe to go out without a facemask? We don't know.

Learning to live with uncertainty is not easy. We are mostly used to making plans for the future with confidence, but now that's no longer possible. Uncertainty can create tension, stress, and fear of the unknown. There is no joy in uncertainty.

In uncertain times the natural human instinct is to seek certainty, to look for a rock to cling to, a refuge that will provide safety. For Christians, the rock is Jesus Christ: Jesus who was the calm in the storm, and the light of the world; Jesus whose presence is with us as the Holy Spirit, comforting, supporting and guiding us.

In 1939 Britain was at war with Nazi Germany. King George VI, father of Queen Elizabeth, gave a talk on the radio at Christmas, and he included this poem, called the Gate of the Year.

I said to the man who stood at the gate of the year:
"Give me a light that I may tread safely into the unknown."
And he replied:
"Go out into the darkness and put your hand into the Hand of God.
That shall be to you better than light and safer than a known way."
So I went forth, and finding the Hand of God,
trod gladly into the night.
And He led me towards the hills and the breaking of day
in the lone East.

In uncertain times we do not have a known way, and the light we have shines only dimly and for a short distance ahead. But trusting in God, putting our hand into the Hand of God, will not fail us, whatever may lie ahead. This is our certainty, our hope and our joy!

Peace be with you.