



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: Opportunity to rediscover ourselves

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I'm Will Newman, one of the chaplains at St John's Cathedral Hong Kong, here with a message of hope in our troubled times.

A friend of mine recently posted this message on Facebook:

Sometimes you find yourself in the middle of nowhere;

Sometimes in the middle of nowhere, you find yourself.

It's written on a sign attached to a tree in the middle of a forest somewhere on the Camino de Santiago, the popular pilgrim route across Spain to the shrine of St James at Santiago de Compostella.

Sometimes you find yourself in the middle of nowhere;

Sometimes in the middle of nowhere, you find yourself.

The story of the Exodus is one of the foundational stories in the bible, telling how God sent Moses to lead the Israelites out of slavery in Egypt on a journey to freedom in the Promised Land. But before they could enter the Promised Land, the people spent 40 years wandering in the desert. And this was when they started to learn who God is. When they started the journey it seems they didn't really know God at all. At times it's almost as if they thought of God as Moses' God, not theirs. It was through all their trials and mistakes and difficulties and arguments on their journey through the desert that they started to find their identity as God's people. In the middle of nowhere, they found themselves.

All of us in Hong Kong and around the world are, in a way, wandering in a desert in this strange year 2020. We are in the middle of nowhere. We are unable to make plans – or only very tentative plans for the future. Week by week we adjust to new restrictions on our lives, where we can go, who we can meet, how we can spend our time. We look ahead and wonder when will we see our loved ones again? Will 2021 be the same as this, or will life return to normal? Without a sense of the way ahead, it can feel as if our lives and our work are almost aimless. We hardly know what direction we're moving in, or if we're even moving at all.

We're in a similar position to the ancient Israelites in the desert. Everything could have fallen apart for them – but it didn't. In the wilderness they found that they were not in control of their own lives, and they learnt – they learnt the hard way, but they did learn – a new way of life: they learnt to trust in God.

In the middle of nowhere, with all the restrictions, and without our familiar routines and the ways we are accustomed to live our lives, like pilgrims on the route to Santiago, we too have the opportunity to rediscover ourselves.

So here is a message of hope for our times:

Sometimes you find yourself in the middle of nowhere;

Sometimes in the middle of nowhere, you find yourself.

Peace be with you.