



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: Understanding and practising love

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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.

What message of hope can the Christian faith give to the world when so many are suffering from the COVID 19 pandemic? Is there much hope in our city as we experience the continuing conflicts of opposing political ideologies?

I think the message of Christianity is clear and simple. Christians believe that God is love and those who live in love live in God and God lives in them. On the one hand, this is pretty easy to understand. If you want to know God and to be with God, go and love one another. On the other hand, one has to ask the question whether it is actually that easy to a life a life of love as Jesus describes. Do we, honestly speaking, love one another as God has loved us?

The first disciples of Jesus experienced great difficulty in understanding and practising love. Jesus taught them a great lesson with the washing of their feet at the Last Supper and this shocked the disciples. Jesus told them that he had set them an example that they should do as he had done. Practice makes perfect. We can learn to love and to experience peace and hope when we love one another in service.

In his sermon preached in 1957, the famous American civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr said, 'The strong person is the person who can cut off the chain of hate, the chain of evil...and inject within the very structure of the universe that strong and powerful element of love'.

King encouraged his listeners to make the conscious decision to love. He pointed out that such decision actually allowed ourselves to examine our own values and practices. Violence cannot be defeated by violence. True reconciliation often comes when there is forgiveness given and received.

I think we need to recognise that whatever we do, we need to pay serious attention to those with whom we disagree, particularly their pains, their struggles and their fears. This is not to say that we cannot have strong convictions of our own. Yet, if we are to make any progress in peace, trust has to be restored first to allow everyone to listen respectfully.

We may not change our positions on certain controversial issues, but our relationships have been changed. We can change from not knowing much about one another to seriously appreciating each

other's concerns. We can change from being strangers to being friends. We can change from being filled with uncertainty and fear to being filled with trust and hope.

Our conversations may not solve all the problems we face, but the relationships are strengthened. We are at least on the right track to restore and sustain peace. Like any good human relationships, there are happy times, there are often bad times. There are agreements, but there are disagreements. It will be rather romantic to imagine that arguments and disagreements never occur in family. The peace of our world and the very hope of our lives do not come with uniformity of views. They come when we put our faith in the Lord and make the conscious and honest decision to love.

Jesus said, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind." This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: "You shall love your neighbour as yourself." On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.' (Matthew 22.37-40)

God bless you all. Amen.