



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: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.' 29th October 2020
The Rt Revd Matthias Der, Dean

Peace be with you. Welcome to the Message of Hope at St John's Cathedral, Hong Kong. I am Bishop Matthias Der, Dean of the Cathedral and Bishop Coadjutor of the Diocese of Hong Kong Island.

During WW II, when Europe was being ravaged by the war, many places were facing food shortages. In a little village in the Netherlands, food was running very low and its citizens were on the brink of starving to death. After some discussion, the villagers decided to ask each household to bring forth what they had, and the collected food was redistributed among all the villagers. The scheme proved to be a success at the beginning as people were able to share food and no one was starving. However, it only lasted for a short time and the food was running low again. People became worried and anxious, and lived in great fear.

One day, an elderly lady approached the food distributor and said, 'This is my last portion of food, which I have kept for emergency use. Now this is an emergency, please share it with those who are in need.' The amount of food she offered was not much and could not feed the entire village. However, when others heard what she did, she became an inspiration for others. Other people began to follow her example and offer whatever food they had kept for their own use to be shared with others. The food collection was refilled again, and it was enough to last till the end of the war. The kindness and generosity of this one lady had transformed the hearts of many and it saved the entire village from starving to death.

This story reminds me of the story in the Book of 1 Kings in the Bible. Prophet Elijah was on the run from King Ahad after he criticized him for his despicable acts and worship of pagan gods. Elijah was facing a dire situation as he was quickly running out of food and water. He cried out to God. God then sent him to find a Gentile woman. When he arrived, he found her gathering sticks to make her last meal for herself and her son, as they were also suffering from a drought. However, this widow listened to Elijah as she believed he was God's messenger. She used the small amount of flour she had left to make bread for Elijah. Miraculously, after her selfless deed, the jar of flour and oil at her home never ran empty again. God had provided for her and Elijah because of the great faith and kindness she had.

As the pandemic of COVID-19 continues much longer than we had expected with no end in sight, more and more people are becoming increasingly worried about how this will impact their lives. Sadly, businesses and companies, both big and small, have begun to lay off their staff due to the poor

economic situation. Many people have lost their livelihoods and consequently, their stability and security in life.

The two stories I shared are good reminders for us. There are enough resources for us if we are willing to share. If we only selfishly look after our own interest, it will never have enough to go around. However, if we are willing to look after the interest of others, something unexpected will happen and we will have enough to not only survive but we will come out as a stronger community. We will become a stronger community because we have learned to share and look out for each other following what Christ has taught us.

Our hope is in God who is faithful and caring. He is here and he will never abandon us. , With the grace of God, he had provided enough for all of us. How true it is as the Bible says 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.' Let's find ways to share with each other, especially to those who are facing dire needs, so that all will be well-taken care of in this challenging time.

God bless you all.