



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: Because he lives!

26th November 2020

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Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ! Peace be with you!

Before I share my message of Hope, I would like to ask you.

How are you?

How do you feel about the situation? How are you feeling under the pandemic?

I guess in these days, when we are seeing the number of confirmed cases in Hong Kong is rising again, we suddenly feel anxious and worried and sometimes even quite scared. On one hand, we worried about how the situation will become? Will we be infected with the virus? On the other hand, we might also worry about the further restrictions upon social distancing, whether churches or schools or restaurants might be closing again.

Alongside with worries and fears, there is also for some of us a feeling of grief. Because there are some people who are close to us, they might be directly impacted by the pandemic. Some of them have lost their jobs, some of them have even lost their loved ones. Around 6 months ago, my uncle living in Canada passed away due to COVID-19. He was living in a long term care home, and in the long term care home, where he was staying, there are 25 elderly passed away due to COVID-19, and my uncle is among one of them.

Therefore, when we are worrying about the restrictions, feeling scared about if we will be infected, we must remember those who are going through the immediate impact of the virus situation. Let us keep praying for them and show our concern and care for them.

This situation of anxiety and worries, fears and grief, has also been a circumstance for the disciples of Jesus on the day of his resurrection. According to the Gospel of St John, Chapter 20, there are three occasions that are quite similar to what we are experiencing.

The first one is 'weeping'. In Verse 11 of Chapter 20 in St John's Gospel, when Mary went to the tomb of Jesus, as she didn't find the body there, she cried outside the cave.

Apart from weeping, the second one is 'fear'. When Jesus is dead, his disciples having lost their leader and teacher, they were so afraid, especially fearing that the Jews would come after them. Because of

that, they also locked themselves up at home, just like what the world is undergoing. Due to fear, we also locked ourselves up at home.

The third one is 'doubt'. In Verse 25, one of Jesus' Disciples said 'Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands, and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe.' Sometimes during the pandemic we will as well question the existence of God. Just like Thomas, we want to find some evidences to prove to ourselves that God is there.

However, the focus of this passage in John Chapter 20, is not about showing how fearful his disciples are when Jesus left them. It is a passage about the reaction of Jesus, when he saw what his followers were facing. We could see Jesus did a very a simple act. In Verse 19 the Gospel says: in the evening, when the disciples were locking up for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, 'Peace be with you.' Jesus didn't ignore them and disregard of what they were experiencing, but Jesus was willing to go into their fears, and stood beside them telling them, I was here, do not be afraid, Peace be with you!

And even for Thomas, when he was in doubt, Jesus was willing to come to him again to confirm his faith, comfort him by showing Thomas his hands and his side. Telling him the truth that his resurrection is real!

In the Christian faith, we believe in a living God. We will have doubt, anxiety, fears and worries, and sometimes even tears when we face the difficulties in our lives. During this time we must hold on to our resurrected Lord Jesus Christ, firmly believe that he will manifest himself to us, in his time and in a manner surpassing all understanding, so that when we experience the reality of his presence and the peace he has given us, we will have hope and faith and love to face our situation and any challenges that lie ahead.

Before the end of my sharing, I would to share with you a stanza of a Christian hymn:

Because he lives, I can face tomorrow

Because He lives, all fear is gone

Because I know He holds the future

And life is worth the living just because He lives

May the living God grant you his peace.

And the Blessing of God almighty, Father Son and Holy Spirit, be upon you and remind with you always!
Amen!