

## **Lenten Devotional Reflection** **3 April 2020 (Lent Day 33)**

### **Scripture: Hebrews 13: 1-16 New Revised Standard Version**

<sup>1</sup> Let mutual love continue. <sup>2</sup> Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it. <sup>3</sup> Remember those who are in prison, as though you were in prison with them; those who are being tortured, as though you yourselves were being tortured. <sup>4</sup> Let marriage be held in honor by all, and let the marriage bed be kept undefiled; for God will judge fornicators and adulterers. <sup>5</sup> Keep your lives free from the love of money, and be content with what you have; for he has said, "I will never leave you or forsake you." <sup>6</sup> So we can say with confidence,

"The Lord is my helper;

I will not be afraid.

What can anyone do to me?"

<sup>7</sup> Remember your leaders, those who spoke the word of God to you; consider the outcome of their way of life, and imitate their faith. <sup>8</sup> Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever. <sup>9</sup> Do not be carried away by all kinds of strange teachings; for it is well for the heart to be strengthened by grace, not by regulations about food, which have not benefited those who observe them. <sup>10</sup> We have an altar from which those who officiate in the tent have no right to eat. <sup>11</sup> For the bodies of those animals whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest as a sacrifice for sin are burned outside the camp. <sup>12</sup> Therefore Jesus also suffered outside the city gate in order to sanctify the people by his own blood. <sup>13</sup> Let us then go to him outside the camp and bear the abuse he endured. <sup>14</sup> For here we have no lasting city, but we are looking for the city that is to come. <sup>15</sup> Through him, then, let us continually offer a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that confess his name. <sup>16</sup> Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God.

### **Message**

In the midst of the novel coronavirus pandemic, ECHO has uploaded some historical videos on online social platforms. One of the videos is the Thanksgiving Service of the 135<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Diocese of Hong Kong and Macau in January 1985. We can see late clergies in the procession, including The Revd Canon Simon Ho Sai-ming, The Revd Canon Dr David Leigh, The Ven Andrew Pang and The Revd Dr Samuel Wu, who passed away last month. Their teachings and doings are still role models for us today.

As mentioned in verses 7-8 of today's scripture, we can learn from the faith of former leaders who passed away. Jesus Christ, yet, is the same yesterday and today and forever. The writer of Hebrews reminds us to follow the examples of former leaders and at the same time we should keep in mind that Jesus Christ is the ever-lasting saviour.

In verse 9, the "strange teachings" could be understood as the secular teaching of satisfying our human needs. That conflicts with our Christian teaching of grace. The word "food" (brw, masin in Greek) has also been used in Hebrews 9:10. This food cannot benefit those who rely on it. In Chapters 9 and 13 of Hebrews, this food just emphasizes some religious rituals. In Hong

Kong, where food can be easily found, today's scripture is an important reminder for us. During Lent, we should practice a simple and self-denying life to receive grace.

The last part of today's scripture highlights that "to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God". This year, we are experiencing an unexpected kind of Lent during the novel coronavirus crisis. Let us continue to do good and share what we have with people in need, as encouraged by the writer of Hebrews.

### **Reflection**

1. By reading today's scripture, have you recalled some church leaders or seniors who guided you in faith? What are some of their teachings and examples that help you?
2. Are you someone who likes to eat and drink? How can you strike a balance between food and grace? Or how can the grace of God be revealed through diet?
3. How can we continue to do good deeds and share during the rest of the Lent? Is there any specific plan?

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