



THE PROVINCE OF THE ANGLICAN CHURCH IN SOUTH EAST ASIA

20 March 2020

Pastoral Letter to the Province of the Anglican Church of South East Asia

Dear sisters and brothers in Christ of the Province of South East Asia.

Greetings! Peace and grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

Our world is being confronted with unprecedented challenges today. The pandemic of Covid-19 virus is affecting most of the nations in many ways. The Covid-19 virus not only threatens human lives, it affects human relationships, economy, society at large and even our worship. It is a fact that Covid-19 causes panic, fear and uncertainty to many. You may wonder and ask, "Why does God allow Covid-19?" "When will it end?" "What we are to do?"

With these and many other questions in mind, I together with all the Bishops, would like to draw your attention to the Word of God in 2 Chronicles 7:11-14:

When Solomon had finished the temple of the Lord and the royal palace, and had succeeded in carrying out all he had in mind to do in the temple of the Lord and in his own palace, the Lord appeared to him at night and said:

"I have heard your prayer and have chosen this place for myself as a temple for sacrifices. "When I shut up the heavens so that there is no rain, or command locusts to devour the land or send a plague among my people, if my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land."

It is clear from these words that it was God who "shut up the heavens, commanded the locusts to devour the land, or sent a plague". Why would God do that? Was it not because of the sins of the people who lived in the land? The God of love and mercy also provided key to healings and restoration. If God's people who are called by His Name would humble themselves, pray and seek God's face, and turn away from their wicked ways, repent of the very sins that have brought about these calamities, God promises He will hear from heaven, forgive their sins and heal their land.

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This is the time we examine our ways individually and collectively. We are not only to turn away from our wicked ways, we must return to God's way. We must learn to acknowledge Him as Creator and Lord, to honour and worship Him, to acknowledge Him in all our ways. I believe God is calling us to come to Him and enter into intimate relationship with Him, seeking Him in humility, repentance and submission. His plan and purpose for us, is to give us hope and a future, to enjoy His love and mercy.

Therefore, I wish to call upon all of you, and earnestly persuade you, as God's people who are called by His Name, wherever you are, **to pray at a synchronised time from 12:00 noon to 12:15pm daily**, at the least. Together, let us call upon the name of Jesus, humble ourselves and pray and seek His face and turn from our wicked ways (repent) and claim His promise that He will hear from heaven, and will forgive our sins and heal our land. Let us pray for healing for those who are infected with this virus, and all those who are adversely affected by this pandemic. I append some suggested prayers with this letter for you to consider using.

May the Lord grant us His grace and strength, as we seek Him in this season of Lent. Let us fix our eyes on the Cross of Jesus, our sure hope of victory over the power of sins and darkness. To Him be the glory, honour and majesty!

Your sincerely in Christ's service,

The Most Revd Datuk Melter Jiki Tais
Archbishop
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