

Reflection on 2 Corinthians 9.6-15: 19th July 2020: Rev Alexis Mahoney.

There hasn't been much to celebrate during this long period of lockdown, but there is one thing in particular which I have absolutely loved... And that has been seeing and experiencing how wonderfully generous people have been!

When lockdown first started to take effect, people I had never met before contacted me to ask if I knew of anyone who needed help with shopping being brought to their door. I also witnessed local streets uniting to make sure vulnerable neighbours were cared for...

In my street a local residents WhatsApp group was started so that neighbours could communicate with each if they, or someone they knew of, needed any specific help. Whether they needed a quick call for a chat, or whether they needed medicine collected for them, or food picked up from the supermarket and taken to their home. Seeing all this generosity of time and spirit happen around me was so wonderfully uplifting and heartening!

And I saw this generosity being expressed in our church families too. I know our pastoral visitors have been so very active and generous with their time and care, making sure that those in their direct care are safe and well by calling them up and having a chat and a laugh!

And there has also been a very generous response from our church families to the call for help from the Foodbank being run at the school my Sian teaches at, at St Teilo's School. And one of the things which really made an impression on me was not just the generosity of those who took the time to buy the necessary stuff that was particularly needed at the time, but by the manner with which the donations were made. There was no dutiful weariness in how the laddened shopping bags and boxes were handed over at the door of the manse. What I saw were beaming, smiling, cheerful faces! All happy to be giving.

And when I looked at our passage of Scripture for today I smiled because I have witnessed the cheerful generosity of so many good people that have responded to a variety of needs without feeling reluctant and compelled to do so. Instead everyone responded to a variety of needs with a cheerful readiness which Paul speaks of in the passage we are looking at today.

And I also smiled as this passage uses imagery of the bountiful and generous scattering of seed, and this brings to mind a passage of scripture from last Sunday when we looked at the parable of the sower in Matthew's gospel. Where God the sower doesn't just think about sowing the seed, or imagine it, or worry about it, or anything else. God just sows the seed! Throughout the whole world the sower goes, casting seed in every direction. And I can imagine Him doing that with a smile on his face...

And we are called to be like our God. Not only working along side him in the best way that we can to build his Kingdom and his Church in this world, but to do this like Him too. To be generous without thinking. To let the generosity of God flow through us with His joy, especially whenever and wherever there is need! And what's more, this kind of giving is not only seen by God as an act of praise and thanksgiving, but he also promises us that we will also benefit by giving in this way! In verse 11 Paul says that, we 'will be enriched in every way', through cheerful giving.

And right now, there is still a need. God still calls us to carry on giving in whatever way we can, but right now there is still a need for our church, the wonderful place where we congregate and love God and each other; where we worship God and lose ourselves in prayer and song and praise; where we come together to learn more about our God and each other... This still needs our giving. Not only with our love for God and each other, but also with whatever the Holy Spirit moves us to give of our money to His church too.

Due to lockdown, I have certainly seen so much wonderful and cheerful generosity in many different ways, and for this I thank God and am also personally very moved and grateful. But now I ask of you one more gift of your already generous spirits. Please prayerfully consider how you can help our church, *your* church, God's church here in Cardiff, recover from the financial battering it's received. Please prayerfully consider if you can manage to give a little more in your weekly or monthly contributions to our church life. Or please prayerfully consider whether you can manage to give a one-off donation to help our church balance the books and to carry on its mission of being a witness to God's love to all through Jesus Christ, in the Holy Spirit.

Please do this prayerfully, thoughtfully, and cheerfully! And when you know in your heart and are moved to give as you are able, know that you will be sowing the seed of God's love and righteousness in our lives. No matter how small, or large a contribution that may be. And I ask all this, in Jesus name. Amen.