

Message from Bishop Robert

23 April 2024



I suspect there will be a number of different answers to the question of what we think we are doing as we give week by week or month by month to our local church, be that in cash, an envelope or for most of us these days, through our bank.

Our giving probably begins with a strong sense that we do so because we belong. We belong to our local community, and we have a commitment to our shared life. We want to work together and play our part according to our ability, in ensuring its activity and ministry – the ministry of the whole people of God; lay and ordained, voluntary self-supporting and stipendiary.

This is indeed a good starting point, but as those who seek to be disciples of Jesus Christ, our giving comes not just from belonging to our community, but our belonging in Christ. We give because of our understanding that all we have and all we are is itself a gift given by to us by God. We give because the nature of the God we serve in Jesus is one of self-offering. In short, giving is simply what we, as Christians, do.

This does beg a further question. We give because it is what we do, but what does our giving do? Again, we can approach this in two ways. We might begin with our commitment to the work of the church, the ministry of the community to which we belong, our offering of pastoral care for the gathered congregation and the wider community.

We may be motivated by wanting to share the life that we have ourselves in Jesus Christ by what we do. Again, a good starting point, and these things matter.

But these too have a deeper purpose – a purpose that we can discern at the very heart of who we are called to be. We find it in the offering of worship and of the Eucharist in particular, where we are gathered to read and reflect on the scriptures and join in the breaking of bread, we encounter God, are changed and sent out in service.

We give because it is simply what we do. What we give to, is the very work of God which engages the whole of who we are and everything we do, as we seek to make the love of God known, and work for the coming of the Kingdom of justice, mercy and peace.

We give because it is what we do as Christians, and by giving, through the ministry of God's church and our worship, we join with the work of God who in Jesus comes to live with us, defeat death and bring life.

In giving we find ourselves blessed as we bless others.

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