

A Message from Mary-Beth Harish

This is the time of year when we traditionally give thanks to God for the abundance of the Harvest. Fruit and vegetables are truly enjoyable right now because they are fresh and abundant. Going to the supermarket or to our favourite farm shop can be so special at harvest time.

But, this year, things are different.

The produce is still fresh and available, but a journey to the supermarket is not so enjoyable. No one takes time to appreciate fresh autumn produce on supermarket shelves. COVID infection is on the rise, everyone is wearing masks and shoppers are anxious to get their shopping done and get home.

So how do we look upon the Harvest in these changing times?

Consider our Gospel reading today, where Jesus took two fish and five loaves of bread and fed 5,000 people with it. This was one of his many miracles that demonstrated his power as the Son of God. It was a miracle which also showed the generosity of God through His Son.

Jesus' disciples were understandably astonished when they saw how many were fed from those few fish and loaves. It would astonish anyone who was there, including us.

If we look at the story closely, we see that Jesus performed the miracle, but he needed the assistance of his disciples to complete His work. He turned to them to distribute the food to the masses, to make sure all received nourishment.

Jesus supplied the food and his disciples ensured that the hungry were fed. It was a generosity which flowed from Father, to Son, to followers.

In our world, Jesus is asking *us* to be his agents of generosity, just as he asked his disciples to be, in Galilee, so long ago. We are his 21st century followers and He is asking us to help provide for those in need in our community.

We know that the pandemic has not only attacked human health, but also our nation's economy. Many people have seen their incomes fall through reduced or lost employment. Some have lost income through the death of a provider from COVID.

Someone who is very familiar with the situation in Cobham is Christina van Roest, who is the new manager of our local foodbank. She will be speaking to us about this in our Sunday service. We will have a chance to learn how people in our area have been affected by the pandemic and what we can do about it.

We will discover how we might respond to this year's Harvest as the generous agents of our Lord, Jesus Christ.

Mary-Beth

