

September 2024

Bishop Libby writes...

I've enjoyed the summer months - fresh air, warmer weather and a definite holiday feel. Many of you will no doubt have enjoyed time with friends and family, perhaps with children and grandchildren as they have relished the long holidays.

But for some, it will feel like there's been no break from the rigors and stresses of everyday life at all. For reasons that are well known, people are feeling increased pressures on their finances – the need to pay bills is there whatever the season and, especially for those who might benefit from free school meals, feeding a family over the holidays can be particularly hard.

Then, as autumn arrives and colder weather approaches, the pressures may feel intolerable for many. Some will have to make stark choices: how do you keep a roof over your head, pay the bills and feed yourself and your household? Something has to give.

Many of us in difficulty will turn, or may already have turned, to food banks for the first time to try to get through these difficult times. And be in no doubt, sudden changes in circumstances and prices can cause even those who consider themselves to be financially comfortable to have to make difficult decisions; parents will go without so that their children can eat. It troubles me deeply that right here and now, in Derby and Derbyshire in the 21st century, people are having to make choices about who can and can't eat.

As Christians, we pray daily the Lord's Prayer: 'Give us this day our daily bread'. When we pray this, we're not simply asking God to provide for us as individuals or family units, but we are reinforcing the commitment



to 'us' as a community, a nation, a world, human beings sharing a common space, planet Earth. And that means sharing generously all of God's gifts, and sharing means that we must do our best to make sure that everyone has enough. No-one should go hungry. All that we have depends on God's grace and generosity and we are called to be generous with our share.

At the moment, food banks and other projects combatting food insecurity are themselves struggling. Those financial pressures mean that people who would normally buy a few extra tins or boxes of food to donate are no longer able to do so – but the demand on food banks is already increasing sharply.

So this year my harvest appeal is 'Our Daily Bread' which is hoping to raise £10,000 to support food banks and other food projects across Derby and Derbyshire. Please take a few minutes to find out more, and donate, through the diocesan website: derby.anglican.org.

Being generous to one another in this way helps us to live out the Lord's Prayer as we respond to genuine need, show our solidarity and, at this harvest time, our deep gratitude to God.

+ Libby Derby

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