



Diocese of Johannesburg

FROM THE OFFICE OF THE ANGLICAN BISHOP DIOCESE OF JOHANNESBURG



Our Vision is: To Achieve the Practice of the Ministry of All Believers

Pastoral Letter Vol 1 05 March 2020

I write this letter to you on the first Sunday in Lent which is also St David's Day. St David is not one of the Saints of whom we often speak but in meditating today about his ministry some of the words for which he is remembered came back to me: "Be joyful, keep the faith, and do the little things that you have heard and seen me do."

Lent is traditionally a season of introspection, penitence, reflection, tiredness, discouragement and death. It is a time during which Jesus' ministry, as in his dismissal of the devil's temptations, breaks the power of sin and casts it far away, offering forgiveness, gifts of love and grace. It is with these things in mind that I wish to draw to your attention three matters that are key to the diocese fulfilling its ministry this year.

1. The success that we have achieved since the last Synod in the three focus areas in my Charge - **Intentional Children and Youth Ministry, Intentional Discipleship, and Intentional Clergy Formation** - is substantial. I hope you can share my pleasure in saying that I have seen genuine attempts to address these ministries throughout the diocese. Consequently, there is now renewed life in many places in which Anglicans gather together, and where they minister in the broader society. Parishes, our diocesan schools, organisations and individuals have all played their part. Not least has been their exceptional generosity in response to my pastoral letter at the end of last year to assist the diocese in bringing in additional funds so that we can tackle the urgent matters of ministry that we face. An amount of almost half a million rand was raised - R470 000 to be precise. Your graciousness in sharing your gifts and tithes with us is surely a sign of the gentle but fervent Spirit working in us all. Thank you!

2. Our ministry must be sustained so that God's Vineyard in which we labour can continue to bear good fruit. The three focus areas need strengthening still more to ensure we have a dynamic diocese. They have provided clear guidance of where our energy and initiatives should be placed. As a result, in consultation with the Diocesan Council, we had decided that the theme for this year's Synod will be **Sustainability**, however the **Synod Advisory Committee** have suggested that we should use a more positive theme which is **Our Diocese: A Gospel lighthouse in a changing world**.

As we lead up to Synod, and in preparation for new initiatives by the diocese in the 2020s, we have also set a new goal which I invite you to share - to raise R1-million by the end of this year. This sounds daunting. But think of it this way: if each of the 30 000 Anglicans in the diocese contributed an average of R100 each, we would more than meet this goal.

This **Bishop's Appeal** is primarily to raise funds for the School for Ministry which will ensure the continued development of work in the three focus areas. It is faith driven and worthy of our attention at Lent and other seasons of spiritual experience this year. It is in that spirit of faith and sharing that I again make an appeal to our organisations, parishes, schools and individual parishioners to make their contributions. We have a team that has developed a full plan of action and giving associated with the Synod's *lighthouse* theme. You will hear from them throughout the year as they share their excitement in enabling this outreach to happen.

3. These plans are straightforward, and therein lies their beauty and, I think, ultimate success. They comprise what St David would have called "the little things"; small actions of love and goodwill, the result of which leads to genuine Christian community.

It is the type of Christian community that is illustrated in the story of the Prodigal Son, one of which we are all aware. As the Bishop's Appeal continues I shall share the story of the Prodigal Son further, setting it in the context in which we live, and illustrating how its wide message is one that enables the Gospel lighthouse to brightly cast its beams over our diocese.

Let me conclude by raising two other important matters that occupy our minds.

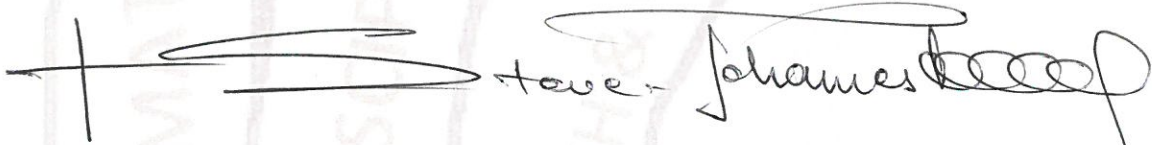
The recent budget presented by Mr Tito Mboweni attempts to address the dire economic straits in which South Africa finds itself. Some believe it fails, some think it is courageous. I think it is an honest attempt, within the parameters in which the Finance Minister can act. There may well be labour action, even civil strife, if matters don't pan out the way the Minister and the government believe it should. Our prayer should be for peace and a commitment to dialogue so that we don't see violence on our streets and poor people suffering as a result. I hope it doesn't come to that, but as Anglicans our role must be to continue to pray and act so that good can be done for all our citizens.

The second matter is the devastating Coronavirus that is having such a mortal impact in an increasing number of countries in the world. At the time of preparing this letter for distribution the first confirmed case in South Africa has just been confirmed. We must uphold all impacted by this virus in prayer: doctors and nurses, government officials, scientists seeking a cure and immunization, those who are stricken with the disease and their families, those in quarantine, and the loved ones of those who have died.

Allow me also to draw to your attention the circular sent to Anglicans by our Archbishop about hygienic ways in which we can deal with the virus, the manner in which we can minister pastorally, and hygienically administer the Eucharist. Please see our website and Facebook page for details.

During Lent until Holy Week we reflect on the journey that took Jesus to the Cross, for our sake. How will we walk the path of faith during this time? St David urges us to do the little things, like showing the simple emotion of loving with all our being. It is really a simple, little thing, that nevertheless has bountiful and large consequences.

Liziwe joins me in wishing you Grace and Peace during your Lenten journey.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Steve Moreo". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping flourish at the end. To the left of the signature is a simple line drawing of a cross.

The Rt Revd Dr Steve Moreo
Bishop of Johannesburg