



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 4 03 April 2020

From Steve, your Bishop in lockdown in Bishop's House, Johannesburg, to the faithful followers of Jesus Christ in the Diocese, living your daily lives under the duress of the coronavirus.

I write to you on the eve of Holy Week to wish you Grace and Peace as you walk the journey with our Lord and Saviour to Calvary, and thence to the empty tomb and Risen Christ. There is joy in my heart, even at this time of great challenge in our nation as we all struggle with the reality of the coronavirus and as people become ill with Covid-19.

I am happy in my heart because ever since our decision as a Diocese to suspend worship until after Easter, followed by the announcement by President Ramaphosa of a three-week lockdown, I have watched my fellow clergy in the Diocese respond with a creativity that has been inspiring and of great comfort to our people. I thank each of them sincerely. I pay tribute to Anglicans in the Diocese who have responded so well and taken part in the new initiatives of ministry that have evolved and are still developing. There will be renewed needs, as well as the day-to-day challenges regarding resources in our ministry. Your continued financial giving to your parishes will ensure that we are able as a Church to respond to all the calls made on us.

Digital, or online, worship, has become a reality for us in these times, and indeed around the whole world. In fact, it seems to me that the great festival of Palm Sunday will be marked by a "digital procession" that will "march" around the whole globe as the sun rises in the East on Palm Sunday through to its setting at the end of 24 hours in the West. What a wonderful opportunity to proclaim Christ as the Saviour of the world! Such is the creativity with which our clergy have propelled us, even as people are also shown simple tasks online such as making Palm Crosses in their homes.

We cannot ignore during Holy Week the reality of what is happening around us. Most demonstrably we see the number of coronavirus infections nearing the one million mark worldwide.

The steps taken by the President and his Cabinet in South Africa have been decisive and courageous, and give cause for hope that we can defeat this virus. I urge you all to follow the guidelines set down strictly.

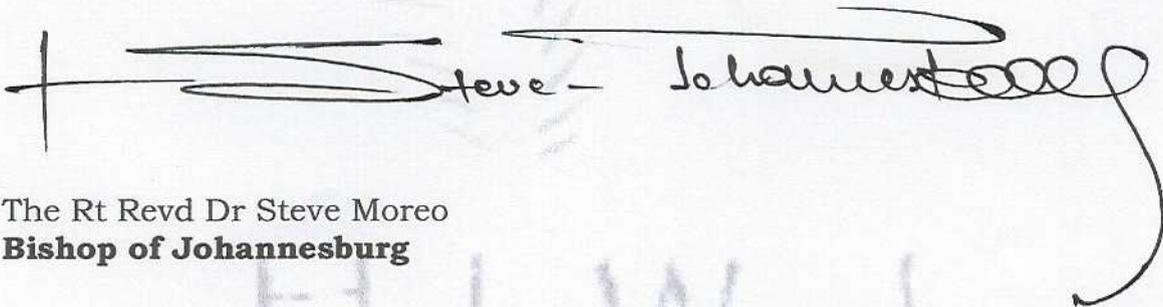
Stay at home! Remember that anyone can spread this virus. You don't have to be infected to do so.

I am pleased to tell you that I have recorded the services for Palm Sunday, Good Friday and Easter Sunday, and these will be available to you online by video link. The Diocesan office has sent out information as to how to access them. Please share these links with your family and with others who may not have access to services at all.

As I end this letter to you, I am moved to reflect that in many of his letters, St Paul was writing from a situation in which he was in solitude, sometimes in prison, and certainly under considerable duress. Yet he was consistently positive in his messages, which we can read even today. He writes to us in 2 Corinthians 2, verse 15: "For we are the aroma of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing."

As we complete our Lenten journey, may each one of us show the fragrance of Christ. Let this be a fragrance that lingers in faith, hope and love as we turn our eyes to the great festival of the Resurrection.

Yours in His Service

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Steve - Johannes". The signature is stylized with a large, sweeping flourish that extends downwards and to the right, ending in a small loop.

The Rt Revd Dr Steve Moreo
Bishop of Johannesburg