

**BISHOP MARGARET OPENING ADDRESS TO  
LAYMINISTER'S BISHOP'S FORUM  
WORCESTER 2019**

**WELCOME AND THANK YOU**

46 of the 49 Parishes of the Diocese were represented. Everyone who worked alongside our Senior Priest in the organisation and planning of the Forum were thanked, as also the host Parish for their hospitality and catering, Mr van der Ross for arranging the use of the school, facilitators, those responsible for talks and workshops.

**BACK TO BASICS**

Lay Ministers were reminded that their licences were granted on the basis that we are assured of their faithfulness, knowledge and integrity. Furthermore, they were licenced to specific parishes in the Diocese of False Bay. They cannot cross boundaries without the permission of the Incumbent of the Pastoral Charge to which they are licenced. Likewise, when a lay minister moves from one Parish to another, the Incumbent of the new Parish needs to ascertain whether the previous incumbent is aware of the move. Only then the licence can be transferred from one Parish to another.

Lay Ministers all sign a declaration before being admitted that they promise to render due obedience to the Bishop and the Priest under whom they are appointed to serve. They also subscribe to the Pastoral Standards. Copies of the Pastoral Standards are available for purchase from the Diocesan office.

The importance of faithfulness, integrity and loyalty means that lay ministers will be conscious of inclusive language, body language, not be disruptive and that there will be no discrimination. They need to respect the clergy and all members of the congregation. Our actions can so easily cause disunity and division in the Parish. Lay Ministers are junior partners who work under the direction and authority of the Incumbent. The fact that clergy come and go, does not give any lay minister the right to think that they are superior.

**CALLED TO SERVANT LEADERSHIP**

Lay Ministers are called to Servant Leadership

- Serving clergy and people who are made in the image of God
- Serving those who are more educated, or less educated, richer or poorer
- Nobody is to be left behind.
- Know the sin inside and outside of ourselves
- Our Strategic Plan and Commissions out of Synod, continue to unfold.

Lay Ministers are to know their context and community. What are the social ills? Murders, bullying, drownings, substance abuse, fatal shootings, gender-based violence, social media, gangs. We are to suffer with those who suffer as Christ suffered for us. The church is to be seen as a beacon of hope, a safe and sacred space.

There is to be no sense of entitlement amongst Lay Ministers.

- Everything we do and plan is from the basic truth that we are loved by God
- Our call to mission is to exercise a ministry of love, truly rooted in Christ.

- Lay Ministers to have an attitude of gratitude and humility that they have been chosen to be a lay minister.
- “Be still and know that I am God”
- We never draw attention to ourselves
- See and live out Values of Christ.
- Opposition is to be expected. Be prepared. Nurture inner wisdom.

We have entrusted our lives to our Lord and that is very profound.

- Experience love of God very deeply.
- Anyone in Christ is a new creation. See the divine image of God in all persons.
- Mentor new lay ministers
- Raise up younger in age lay ministers.
- May we love everyone, especially our clergy, unconditionally.
- Love to the extreme, even those who misunderstand us.

#### **REFLECTION ON SERVING CHURCH AND COMMUNITY**

- Ask ourselves, what have I done for Christ today? Christ who forgives, who became one of us, even to death, death on a cross.
- What we are called to do, we need to do well and to the glory of God.
- Is our ministry truly to the greater glory of God, or in service of our own ego?
- When serving the chalice, lay ministers to keep up with each other.
- Foster Spirituality (Fr John Goliath presentation)
- Keep up with pledges. First money belongs to God. Freely give what you have freely received.
- Do not be sloppy, shoddy or sulky. Pray for serenity.

#### **PRAYER OF ST FRANCIS, ANGLICAN PRAYER BOOK, PG 91**

Lay ministers are encouraged to learn this prayer by heart and be mesmerised by the memory of it. We beg the Lord that we can respond to darkness with St Francis energy.

#### **GENERAL**

- Police clearance certificates are required for new and renewal of licences.
- Familiarise yourselves with the Order of Distinctive Deacons.
- Support family and church functions. Err on the side of family responsibility. Do not neglect them.
- 2020 will be a Year of Training in the Diocese.

#### **GRATITUDE**

Thank you lay ministers for your goodness and generosity, for your enthusiasm and energy. Thank you for being junior partners of God and our clergy in this our beloved Diocese of False Bay.

**The Rt Revd Margaret B. Vertue**  
**Bishop of False Bay**  
**22 June 2019**