

**My dear Clergy and People of False Bay,**

We thank God for drawing us into the embrace of sacred community, in the midst of challenges, threats, fear and fright of Femicide and Gender Based Violence, murders, rapes, Xenophobia. Out of this tragedy, a feminine movement of aliveness has arisen and a male movement of taking responsibility as perpetrators. Troubling exclusivity has turned into a partnership that invites us into both inward and outward transformation.

Being in the Holy Land, the land of Jesus, on a 11 day Anglican Communion Pilgrimage during August, with bishops from Africa, Asia, North and South America and Oceania, helped me to reflect not only on Lambeth 2020 but also on our own Diocese of False Bay and Province (ACSA). The invitation was extended by the present and past General Secretaries of the Anglican Communion, namely Bishop Josias and Canon John Peterson.

After such an experience, one can never hear Biblical texts the same again, the lamenting of Jesus over Jerusalem is the same Jesus lamenting over South Africa. The confrontation of Jesus and Pontius Pilate, the Foot washing at the end of a long walk through the desert; forgiveness deepens our humility as we recognise afresh that God became human, one of us. We saw and drank water from the same well that the “woman at the well” drew water from. We visited some of the oldest churches in the world. We had a Eucharist service under the trees on the Road to Emmaus. My heart was certainly burning within me. We renewed our Baptism vows at the River Jordan. We walked the Way of the Cross. On our last day, the Archbishop of Jerusalem, celebrated Mass in St George’s Cathedral in both English and Arabic. A poignant moment for me was seeing the Garden of Gethsemane.

The contemporary issues touched us deeply. The cycle of violence and counter violence, the sense of injustice, issues of basic human rights, inter religious dialogue is in the Holy Land as it is in our land. Leaders are to be made accountable and answerable.

One of the themes of Lambeth is *‘Intentional Discipleship’*. Who are you/we? The temptation is to be other than who we are. Is it true, that we sometimes want to listen to the subtle voice of Satan ...*‘if you are?’* Under the theme of Intentional Discipleship, the invitation is to follow Jesus, to deny ourselves and take up our cross and follow him. Each of us has a cross with our name on. We don’t get to choose.

Another Lambeth theme is *‘Poverty’* based on the Multiplication of the Loaves. Recommended reading is David B. Hart: *Atheist Delusions*, Yale 2009. In particular, read Chapter 13, *The Face of the Faceless*.

Theology and Mission is a Lambeth theme. We ask ourselves the question, *‘Are we a maintenance minded or mission minded church?’*

Each Bishop present had an opportunity to talk about their Diocese and context. We formed friendships across the Anglican Communion, multi-cultural and multi-lingual. I have only given you a taste of a life changing Pilgrimage. There is much more to tell.

In conclusion, let us light a candle for all who are marginalized, dispossessed, vulnerable, hungry, desperate to know they are not forgotten. Let us join them in their vigil of hope – waiting for news of great joy for all people.

Love, Peace, Prayers and Blessings,

*Bishop Margaret B Vertue*  
*Bishop of False Bay*