

THOUGHTS AND PRAYERS FOR THE DAY:

DAY 21 OF LOCKDOWN REFLECTION – 16 APRIL 2020

Hello again dear family and friends of our beloved Diocese of False Bay,

The Scripture reading that I have chosen for this morning is Matthew 25 vss 31-40. The hymn and song I invite us to sing and pray is: *“When I needed a neighbour; and Kumbaya, My Lord”*.

We are bound by many Government regulations when it comes to food distribution. For now, we are working with Community Nutrition efforts and NGO's. I am very grateful for ecumenical church and inter faith programmes, as well. Please do keep an eye on our website (www.falsebaydiocese.org.za) where any food assistance possibilities are uploaded on a daily basis. It is possible to make money or food voucher transfers through some shops. Yesterday I did one at Shoprite for the woman who would normally assist me at Bishopsholme.

As the lockdown continues, I want to encourage us this morning to continue to create an environment where our faith life can grow. You are valued and I thank you for the new ways of ministry and service that you are expressing from your homes. I can smell the incense of your prayers. I can hear your kindly voice encouraging and inspiring a neighbour or friend.

Food insecurity is a huge challenge. It escalates into violence on many fronts. As we watch the desperate scenes on social media; on our TV screens; or even through the windows of our homes; please see our Resurrected Christ coming out in these broken and vulnerable brothers and sisters of ours. Christ is present in those who cannot go to sea to earn a living. Jesus is in the truck that collects our garbage. Christ is hidden in thousands of places. The all-powerful Jesus is in our homes and walking the streets.

The Gospel reading that I have chosen reminds us that every human person deserves respect – none of us is worthless. When we realise quite how much God cares for us, and quite how much he loves us, then we realise how much we are worth. The Covid 19 pandemic has dented and weakened the self-image of many of our people. Even though we are feeling weak, we need to reach out to others in the midst of much confusion and pain.

Today's gospel and songs, remind us that we must care for the sick, visit the imprisoned, feed the hungry and welcome the stranger. Let us do so with great joy. God wants our lives to overflow with mercy, love and compassion – the marks of God's kingdom. As followers of Jesus we have a choice: either to respond to unsettling realities in fear and withdraw, or to follow God in responding to the greatest needs of our day with love and hope.

Today, I ask that we reach out to someone who is grieving their loss of income. Pray with them over the phone or send an encouraging message, that God will make their pain bearable:

Let us Pray:

Calming Sea of Peace, surrounded by the intensity of the scourge of Covid 19, bits of anxiety rankle out spirit. Wrap your care around our worries and allow us to absorb your peace. Take hold of our hands, press firmly. We need to feel your closeness and believe in your nearness. Draw us into the stillness of your heart.

Jesus responds to us: Lift up your hands to the holy place, and bless the Lord (Psalm 134:2)

See I have inscribed you on the palm of my hands. (Isaiah 49:16)

I am, because we are, because God is ... Opening hearts to heal God's world. **Amen**