

LOCKDOWN DAY 32 REFLECTION – 27 APRIL 2020 – FREEDOM DAY

Good day, dear family and friends of False Bay Diocese,

Scripture: Mark 4: 26-34 (Parable of the Mustard Seed) Hymn: *Plea from Africa*.

Today is **Freedom Day**, the day in 1994 when the first democratic election was held in South Africa when for the first time every one of voting age of over 18 from any race group was allowed to vote. It is the day which saw Nelson Mandela elected as President. It is important to commemorate and never forget the country's history and the dawn of democracy from a long period of colonialism.

It seems bizarre and ironic in some ways to be celebrating Freedom Day amidst a lockdown and a world-wide pandemic that is taking lives and seeing increased infections in the Western Cape.

Many lives were lost in the struggle for **freedom** in South Africa. The evil system of **apartheid** raised people from all faiths and backgrounds to unite and fight against apartheid and the struggle for liberation. I can hear Senzenina, Rolihlahla Mandela and other struggle songs of the time being sung throughout the country today. Across the globe, St George's Cathedral in Cape Town is still known as the People's Cathedral or Tutu's Cathedral. Archbishop Desmond Tutu was the Archbishop of Cape Town from 1986-1996. False Bay Diocese does not as yet have a Cathedral or a Collegiate Church. A Cathedral is a place of worship, a place of solace, a place of lamentation, a place of protest, a place of consolation, a place of healing and hope and so are all of our churches.

Apartheid was overcome through people being united, disciplined, committed and willing to sacrifice themselves. Covid-19 also calls on us to be motivated by our faith, to be committed and willing to sacrifice ourselves for the greater good. Even shutting our church buildings and carrying the church in our heart and soul. Apartheid taught humanity what they needed to know to survive and to thrive. We don't always get it right. We remember our national heroes: our late State President Nelson Mandela (Madiba), Oliver Tambo, Walter and Albertina Sisulu, who were leading politicians in the fight against apartheid. Some top women anti-apartheid activists were Helen Suzman, Helen Joseph, Brigalia Bam and Cheryl Carolus. Leading clerics are Michael Lapsley, Archbishops Emeritus Desmond Tutu and Njongonkulu Ndungane. We thank and stand on the shoulders of these great leaders but not forgetting the ordinary, yet extraordinary people like many of you listening to this voice note and a long list of others who carried the wounds of the apartheid struggle. For the living, the wounds have turned into scars.

Like apartheid, the wounds of the coronavirus will be remembered for generations to come. Our current State President, Cyril Ramaphosa together with his cabinet and our present Archbishop Thabo, are doing their level best to create a more equal society, to bring healing to the nation. They cannot do it on their own. They need our help. We cannot always cure but we can always care. We can act with kindness, generosity and compassion. I appreciate and value your ministry and witness.

As we celebrate **Freedom** day, let us choose the **freedom** of loving as God loves. **Freedom** to choose to look out for the other before oneself. **Freedom** to serve as Jesus serves. **Freedom** to nurture and not to exploit the earth. We are seeing the poor person sharing his piece of bread with another and the gangster choosing to nurture, not to grab.

On this **Freedom day**, as we remember that we are set **free** from apartheid, let us pledge and commit to prayer that we will never live **apart** again. **Sowing** tiny **seeds of hope** has unforeseen effects that go far and wide. Everyday choices to **scatter the seeds** of **Christ's love** unleashes a power that can transform the world.

Reach out today to any friend or family member who was **with you** or, if you are younger than 26, **for you** in that long line of people at the voting polls in 1994.

For our prayers today we say or sing: *Thula sizwe* (Hush Nation, do not cry, our God will protect us). *Nkosi sikelel iafrika* (National anthem of South Africa). Video call a friend or colleague and sing along with them.

I am, because we are, because God isOpening hearts to heal God's world. Happy Freedom day. God bless and protect you.