

The Bishop of False Bay
The Rt Revd Margaret B Vertue
Diocese of False Bay Bisdom Van Valsbaai Idayosisi False Bay

P O Box 2804
Somerset West
7129 RSA

Tel: + 27 021 852 5243
Fax: + 27 021 852 9430
Email: bishopm@falsebaydiocese.org.za



Thursday, 02 April 2020

Ad Laos

A PASTORAL NOTE TO THE PEOPLE OF FALSE BAY DIOCESE

Dear People of God spread throughout the length and breadth of the Diocese of False Bay.

Greetings in the Name of Christ our Healer and Saviour.

I trust that this letter finds you all well on day six of this lockdown. Things do not feel normal because they are not. We are all suffering from some form of grief – individually as well as collectively. It is not an easy time for anyone but we will learn valuable lessons and good will come out of it.

The laughter of children lifts my spirit. My dog Yeshe enjoys having me at home.

DREAM BIG AND BELIEVE IN YOURSELVES

My dear **Confirmation candidates, learners and students**. Do not let this period of lock down stop you from dreaming big. I believe in you...believe in yourself. Your education may take a little longer than anticipated. We are not sure. Keep befriending your books. Do your best. We are looking forward to the post Covid 19 era. God's story is emerging through you, the young adults of our Diocese. Please let your voice be heard on Social Media. We want to see your poems, your prayers, your podcasts, your art. Express your deepest feelings. I believe in you to help us focus on God as you have the capacity to engage the whole person – mind, body, emotions and spirit. What is the legacy you wish to believe behind for others as you navigate your way through this challenging time?

PAIRING UP

To our **Parish Organisations and Ministry groups**: My appeal to the leaders is to pair your members as Prayer partners and to check in with each other on a regular basis. **Confirmation and Bible Class Instructors**, please do the same with your classes.

NATIONAL LOCK DOWN REGULATIONS FOR FUNERALS

Please co-operate with your clergy. Only a limited number of clergy have Essential Services Permits to conduct funerals. We understand the need for the church to minister to those who have lost loved ones but there are regulations pertaining to funeral services during this national lockdown.

- The regulation of maximum number of people attending a funeral is 50. This includes family, mourners, children, priest and undertaker. It is suggested that a family member stands at the door. No need for sides persons or altar party.
- To meet this condition of 50 people, a family member of the deceased is required to issue an **invitation** for the funeral and prepare a list of attendees and their complete contact details.

- Entrance and movement may only be allowed on presenting the invitation when stopped on the road as well as being given as admission to the funeral service.
- A register with full contact details must be kept of all attendees, including the priest.
- All guidelines of and directives of funeral homes and enforcement officers must be complied with. At present the total time allowed for a funeral is one hour. If the funeral is at a place other than the graveside, travel time is included in the hour.
- It is encouraged that the family go to the mortuary for private viewing of the body before the funeral.
- **No night vigils, prayer meetings, memorials or other services of comfort are allowed.**
- No social gatherings following the service may be permitted and churches may not be used for this purpose. Such a gathering would be in violation of the lockdown provisions.
- Social distancing and the maintenance of recommended hygiene practices is to be adhered to.

Please also be aware that any person that does not observe the restriction of the movement of persons during the lockdown, including the regulations for funerals, or opens a place of worship for any purpose other than to conduct a funeral service is guilty of an offence and on conviction, is liable to a fine or imprisonment for a period not exceeding six months or to both such fine and imprisonment.

Movement between Metropolitan (not the Archbishop) and District areas is prohibited. Thus, no movement across the Western Cape Province! And likewise no inter Provincial travel.

Please my people, stay home! Confine yourself to your place of residence, except when you need to go out to buy basic foodstuffs and attend to essential needs regarding your health and wellbeing. Let us do all we can to prevent the spread of the virus.

FINANCIAL CHALLENGES

In the wake of the national lock down and Moody's downgrade of our country, we all need to step up to become economic activists for a better, more equal and just SA post this Global Health crisis. I am sure that our Diocesan Finance Board, senior accountants, university academics, among others will help us to steer the ship. Let us all do what we can to keep up our financial contributions to our church as now more than ever we need each other. In our Diocese we have a huge number of unemployed. Service delivery requirements are not being met. There is a decline in the retail and manufacturing sectors. I know that I can depend on one and all to assist us to keep our Diocesan ship sailing and not floundering on the rocks.

Because of the lockdown, there is a high likelihood that many in our congregations would not be able to pay their bills or even buy food. The world is scary at the moment and getting scarier.

PRAY FOR THOSE ON THE FRONT LINE

Pray for all **doctors/nurses/ hospital staff/ SAPS and SANDF**/all others in essential services and those who guard State and private institutions.

AN ANGLICAN PRAYER BOOK

Use your APB alongside the Bible to pray the various prayers for the Holy Days alongside your own other prayers. I encourage you to visit our website (www.falsebaydiocese.org.za) . We are using this platform to give you daily updates. There are many liturgies and worship resources to be downloaded. I am finding meditation on the Te Deum, APB pg 47, comforting at this time, especially the last five verses that we are often tempted to leave out.

PALM SUNDAY

On Saturday April 4, we should all hang green palms on our doors, fences and gates in the form of a big cross. This is one way of preparing ourselves for Palm Sunday and remaining united in spiritual hope. Any greenery can be used if you do not have access to palms. The gospel of Mark refers to leafy branches. My interpretation is that they could have been Olive branches. Let me not confuse you but it is good to exercise our minds on these things as long as it does not disturb our faith. Please see the attached Call to Prayer.

CONGRATULATIONS

St Francis, Strandfontein give thanks for 40 years of ministry (29 March 1980). Archbishop Emeritus Njongonkulu Ndungane (79) and Bishop Brian (60) of George Diocese celebrate their birthdays today. As also **Revd Margaret Heyns**.

THANK YOU

My beloved **Chapter Members and clergy** have asked me to thank you for your support, love, calls, surprises at the door and encouraging messages.

I am sure that you would want me, in turn, to express your immense gratitude to them for all their care shown to you during this time. They have discovered skills that they did not even know they had to keep in touch via social media. We add sincere thanks to our Administrator Pieter Lourens and my Secretary Sandra Petersen for their part in helping us to stay connected.

We also pray for and applaud our **State President and his Cabinet** for their leadership. You are all special. Thank you for using your talents to uplift others.

IN CONCLUSION

The gospel for this evening, **Mark 10:17-31**, is about two people setting out on a journey: Jesus and the rich man.

Jesus knew where he was going, he was travelling light on his journey towards the cross. The rich man was setting out on a spiritual journey, a pilgrimage of discovery, as he turned away from Jesus, grieving, carrying his bulging suitcase of material possessions. The rich man was not a bad man. Many voices out there are trying to tell us that we are bad people and that God is punishing us. The gospel reminds us of the simple instruction of Jesus to us at this time... 'Follow me'. Jesus says do not let your wealth weigh you down. Now is the time to focus on the needs of others and a relationship with God.

It is all too easy to feel smug as a Christian. Let our baggage not become too heavy. Allow the message of Jesus to pierce our soul. For some, it will be to open the suitcase and hand out possessions to those who have little of their own. For others, ambition, pride, laziness and self-satisfaction are among the items we can remove from our packing list.

Lastly, Pope Francis says that we must bless one another. For this I bless you in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. I bless you, your heart, your family, your job, your finances, your plans, dreams, future and peace. In the name of Jesus. Now choose who you want to bless.

Much Love, Peace and Prayers,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "+ Margaret". The signature is written in a cursive style and is underlined with a single horizontal line.

Bishop Margaret B. Vertue
Bishop of False Bay