

LOCKDOWN DAY 57 – 22 MAY 2020

Molweni dear family and friends of False Bay Diocese,

Scripture: Luke 24:44-53 and Acts 1:1-11

Hymn: *All hail the power of Jesus' name*

Our Muslim neighbours and friends are coming to the end of the holy month of Ramadan this weekend and look forward to the celebration of Eid. It will be different this year due to lockdown. As is their tradition, they will make a way to help needy families. We congratulate them and pray God's blessing upon them. As Anglicans, we celebrate Anglican Communion Sunday.

Our reflection today continues to focus on the love of our Risen, Ascended, Exalted Lord. The opening verses of the Acts of the Apostles pick up the thread of the narrative from the ending of Luke's first volume (the Gospel of Luke). Both are addressed to Theophilus (Luke 1:3; Acts 1:1), whose name means "**beloved of God**" or "**lover of God.**" The symbolic meaning of his name **allows** every **hearer** of the Lukan story to insert her or himself into the **role of the beloved** to whom these words are addressed.

Even though the disciples do not receive all the answers they seek and even though their transformation is incomplete, the ascension marks the point at which they must take up the mission begun by Jesus. The disciples and ourselves are reminded, that there can be no idle looking up into the sky. We are to be witnesses "to the ends of the earth". We reflect, ponder and pray today whether our witness to the Risen, Ascended, Exalted Christ is spreading in ever widening circles "to the ends of the earth." This is our awesome privilege and responsibility. Your mission field begins where you are – at home, in the family, in your own village or town, school or place of work. Our message is to include repentance and that through faith in Christ, forgiveness is available from God. As Christians, we are to **practice forgiveness** if our message is to have any credibility. It is not easy. God willing, I will help us to reflect on **forgiveness** on some other day.

The blessings poured out on the disciples on the day of Jesus' ascension, continue to be poured out on us; their response and ours is to **worship and praise God with great joy**. We are **joyful** because it prepared the way for Jesus to be with us always, as he had promised through the Holy Spirit.

In the Acts passage we read of the desire of the disciples to know what the future holds. As we are in day 57 of lockdown, we share this common weakness of wanting to know what the **future holds**, what will post Covid-19 look like? When will the Lord rescue us? Jesus assures us that people matter and that the Holy Spirit will empower us to be **witnesses** to keep up the morale of each other in this period of waiting and not knowing. The Holy Spirit cannot be manipulated. The Holy Spirit helps us to know God more deeply. Without the revelation and wisdom of the Holy Spirit, our **knowledge** of who God is and what God does for us will be **shallow and weak**.

If we love God and show our willingness to obey his word and be his witness, God will transform us. The essence of love and our availability transforms us, does something to us. Real love goes beyond emotion. God's love transforms us into **selfless** people. The question each of us can reflect on today is "If you were accused of being a Christian, is there enough evidence to convict you." Those who have children living at home, "Do your children see you praying."

Let us work together for the common good of all our people. In transformational leadership, our task is to develop our greatest asset, our people. As witnesses of the Resurrected, Ascended, Exalted Christ, we are to live God-centred and people-oriented lives. May God strengthen our love for God and others.

Today please **reach out** with gratitude to any person who, as a Christian witness, has had a positive influence over your life.

Our **prayer today** is based on Luke 24:45-47: *Lord Jesus, as you opened the minds of your disciples, open our minds that we may understand the Scriptures; and with understanding give us the desire to serve you, and to share the message of love, repentance and forgiveness. May we glorify you in all our doings. Amen*

I am, Because we Are, Because God is.....Opening Hearts to heal God's world. *Blessings on your weekend.*