

LOCKDOWN DAY 60 – 25 MAY 2020

Molweni beloved of False Bay Diocese,

Scripture: John 16: 29-33 Hymn: *When I needed a neighbour*

I salute you for your resilience and endurance during 60 days of lockdown. Our State President has announced that the whole country will be moving to level 3 as from 1 June 2020. Sadly, our churches remain shut and I quote from the President's speech. He said: *"We have had fruitful discussions with interfaith religious community on their proposals for partial opening of spiritual worship and counselling services subject to certain norms and standards. We have all agreed to have further discussions on this issue and are confident we will find a workable solution."* Funeral regulations with only 50 people still stand.

The last words of Jesus in today's gospel reminds us that we may be scattered to our own homes, we have much tribulation to endure because of Covid-19 pandemic, yet as believers and as a Diocese we remain united with Jesus and each other. As our young people reminded us again yesterday with *#SundaysinYellow*, joy cometh in the morning. Never fear, God will deliver us. It is a source of strength to us that our Risen, Ascended and Exalted Christ continually intercedes for us. There is nothing, absolutely no thing, that can separate us from the love of Christ.

Our teachers also return to school today. We want to assure them that Jesus can read their thoughts, knows their fears and will give them divine insight. Jesus meets us at our point of need. You are returning to school on the day that we remember the great, holy and humble scholar, The Venerable Bede, Teacher of the Faith. He wrote many books, which became standard works in the schools of the Middle Ages. For all of us, it is important to remember that as important as our education is, primarily our lives are the books that others read. What is written in the pages of our lives that others see and read?

Africa Day is celebrated in the entire Continent today. We celebrate our African culture. We would normally dress us but our weather today with gale force wind, snow on high lying areas, cold front approaching and high fire danger in some areas, may prohibit us from dressing up. Look through your photos of last year and put some on social media. Be creative, there are other ways of celebrating. Our State President is at the helm of the African Union (AU). He will be giving a keynote address during the day. The theme for 2020 was to be *"Silence the guns. Restore Peace and Security in the Continent."* Covid-19 has come in between. What remains is the celebration of *"Prepare, Protect and Prosper"*.

Having celebrated Anglican Communion Sunday yesterday and Africa Day today, we are mindful that our Anglican Church of Southern Africa (ACSA) includes Angola, Swaziland, Mozambique, Niassa, Namibia, Lesotho and South Africa. ACSA and our own Diocese of False Bay has a rich, yet complex landscape.

I do encourage us to use this time of our churches being shut to read the books written by Archbishops' Emeritus Tutu and Ndungane and our present Archbishop Thabo Makgoba who take us on a Spiritual journey from apartheid to freedom, even though the "rainbow nation" has become tarnished. We remember that an Arch for Arch Tutu stands between the Anglican Cathedral in Cape Town and the Houses of Parliament, a stark reminder that South Africa belongs to all.

Sadly, social justice and fundamental rights are not equal. Can each one of us honestly look in the mirror and say that we are the Good Samaritan? Do we look out and care for each other and not hoard more than we need? Are we opening our hearts to the lonely and grieving? On Africa Day we ask ourselves how can we at ground level address the really basic needs of our African continent – meaningful work that contributes to the well-being of whole community of people's – healthy living conditions with the basics of a fruitful life – fresh air, clean water, earth friendly waste disposal, food and the list goes on. On Monday 8 million people will return to work but many remain unemployed. "This lockdown has given us an opportunity to reflect on how materialistic we are at times and how much need is out there."

We lay all of this at the foot of the cross. When I needed a neighbour, were you there?

Today, I invite you to **reach** out to anyone with whom you were or are at school, college or university with.

For our prayers, we say or sing: A Plea for Africa. Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika. Dear Jesus, we praise you for your compassion for others.

I am, Because we Are, Because God is....Opening Hearts to Heal God's World. *Happy Africa Day.*