

LOCKDOWN DAY 63 – 28 MAY 2020

Good day dear family and friends of False Bay Diocese,

Scripture: John 17:20-26

Hymn: *O thou, who at thy Eucharist didst pray*

In yesterday's reflection, I said that *"There are weighty responsibilities upon us and practical things we must put in place."* The nature of lockdown changes when we enter Alert level 3. Stringent measures must be put in place in order for us to protect our people from infection when we do re-open our churches for worship. Some are shouting for us to open immediately. Others are saying, don't be reckless. It is all a delicate balancing act. Your Diocesan Chapter and Administrator are meeting with me in a zoom meeting this afternoon. As we pray for you, please pray for us and trust us. In all probability we will not be opening as soon as Trinity Sunday. We humbly let go of and quieten our desire. We tune in to God's presence and become responsive to God's leading and desire. As Nat King Cole sings: *"Let us keep on smiling, life is still worthwhile."*

We continue with our gospel reading from John. Jesus prays as we do *"I ask ... that they may all be one."* Our hymn for today asks the same of us. In these 63 days of lockdown we have experienced that the church has been able to live out the love and unity for which Jesus prayed. There will always be differences within congregations and differences of opinion. Our calling is to deal with these differences in ways which seek understanding, tolerance, acceptance and a love for one another that transcends our divisions.

The theme of the prayer of Jesus is **the indivisible** unity between Father and Son. This unity is characterised by love, and Jesus prays that the **glory** of this **loving unity** will draw into itself his disciples, and those who become believers because of their witness, so that they will be one with God our Parent and Jesus the Son.

We, of course are included in this prayer since we have come to believe because of the witness of Jesus first disciples. It is worth **listening** to the words of Jesus, **holding** in our hearts the knowledge that we are **hearing** Jesus **praying for** each one of us and for the Church to which we belong. If we pay close attention, we may suddenly feel uncomfortable about the way we talk about each other sometimes, or the way we react when controversial issues arise or we find people behaving in ways that for us are difficult or unacceptable. We may ask the question of ourselves, "What are we doing to enable this prayer of Jesus to become the **reality** of our life together?"

We hear this prayer today in the light of Christ's "mighty resurrection and glorious ascension" and anticipating the gift of the Holy Spirit. If we are called to be one in the **glory** of the **loving unity** of God, then we are also **called to be one** in the **darkness and the pain** that this world is experiencing during this Covid-19 pandemic.

Jesus prays that we will **grow into unity** with him and the Father for our own sakes, that we will be at one with the God who is the source of our being. All of us yearn and have a thirst for a feeling of oneness with God. I encourage you to deliberately put yourself in the midst of God's stream of enduring love. May you experience spiritual refreshment today, like an energizing waterfall, or in a slender whisper, as God meets you at your point of need.

Please **reach out** today to offer your love and support to anyone who you know, for whom things are not going well.

For our prayers: Weighing heavy on my heart is the risk of increased infections in our Diocese which has many hotspots; Gender based violence, domestic violence and rape has increased significantly during lockdown and the grieving could not seek solace in our church buildings. Let us pray that we will be a manifestation of God's love. We pray for healing of divisions, we pray for the miracle of healing for Covid-19 patients and that a vaccine may be discovered. We pray this through the power of our God of love who wants to draw us into the glorious, loving unity of his being. Amen

I am, Because we Are, Because God is ... Opening Hearts to heal God's world. *The door of God's love is open to you.*