

LOCKDOWN DAY 64 – 29 MAY 2020

Greetings family of False Bay Diocese and our dear friends,

Scripture: John 17:1-26

Hymn: *Come down, O Love divine*

Immense gratitude for your prayers for discernment for your Diocesan Chapter and Administrator yesterday. After hours of consultation and wrestling, we reached the conclusion that we will **not resume** our services at **present**. The Western Cape and our Diocese is the epicentre of hotspots of the Corona Virus and we are going into what is **predicted** as our **peak months of infection**. We are advising strengthening of virtual services and other means of ministry. I will be issuing a formal communique to the Diocese during the day. Please wait for this and do not yet post anything on social media. God willing, I will be recording a YouTube Eucharist service for Pentecost Sunday as also a video clip for Anglican Young People's Ministry of the Western Cape. We join them this Sunday by wearing something red: **#SundayInRed**. Their theme for the Pentecost season is *'Jesus our Healer.'*

Today, I invite you to recap with me, our reflection on Chapter 17 of John's gospel:

Firstly, **Jesus prays for us:** No prayer could be more **powerful and effective** than the prayer of Jesus for us. Jesus prays for us because we are his, Jesus prays for us because he knows that we are in the world with all its trials, troubles and temptations. Left to ourselves we would never be able to face the relentless onslaught of the Covid-19 pandemic. There are times when we feel so helpless and hopeless; times when we feel overwhelmed; times when given our meagre resources we cannot survive. "I pray for them" says Jesus in his great priestly prayer to the Father. These words should be a source of much **comfort and consolation** as we **battle** in the world. Jesus is praying that we commit to **spiritual support and social relief** of our sisters and brothers in **distress**.

Secondly, Jesus prays that we are **in but not of the world**. Just as our church buildings are **consecrated**, so are we as disciples of Christ **consecrated** – set apart exclusively by Jesus and for Jesus in the midst of the world. Our vocation as Christians is not to be removed from the world but to remain in it as **consecrated** disciples. Our only **saving power** is to remain Rooted in Christ. We pray that we remain **rooted in Christ** and **rooted in integrity**. We beg of God to give us the **power and grace** to wholeheartedly imitate Christ.

Thirdly, Jesus prays for **unity among the disciples:** Jesus came to unite, to gather together the scattered children of God. He came **to reconcile** us to the Father and to one another. We are divided by selfishness and sin; by pride, prejudice and pettiness. Unity among us as disciples of Jesus is the most convincing evidence that Jesus was sent by the Father even as we are sent by him. **Disunity** among the disciples of Jesus remains a **stumbling block and scandal**. It is **a wound** that has been festering for centuries. We must make it our prime priority to be agents of unity: to **bind** together what has been **broken**, to **bring together** what has been **scattered**; to **restore** what has been **rent apart**.

Today I ask you to **reach out** to any friend of yours in praise of our friendship with our eternal Father, Mother, Parent God.

This weekend we join the call for a **National Day of Prayer** on Sunday for comfort, for psychological, physical and spiritual strength during this roller coaster journey of the Covid 19 pandemic. We pray for the souls of those who have lost their lives and for those who mourn. We pray for God's **intervention** and **healing** of the world, that the virus will be stopped from spreading. It is important, more than ever, for us to pray for the gifts of God's Spirit. We prayerfully prepare our hearts to receive God's Spirit at Pentecost and allow these gifts to enter deeply into our hearts.

I am, Because we Are, Because God is ... Opening hearts to heal God's world. *Come down, O Love divine.*