

LOCKDOWN DAY 81 – 15 JUNE 2020

Molweni False Bay family and our friends,

Scripture: Jeremiah 1

Hymn: *The Power of your love*

Today is world elder abuse awareness day. Tomorrow is Youth Day. I will not be doing a reflection tomorrow as it is a public holiday, so will begin today to focus our attention on Youth Day.

Youth Day commemorates the Soweto uprising which took place on 16 June 1976 where thousands of students were ambushed by the apartheid regime. On Youth Day, South Africans pay tribute to the lives of those students and recognises the role of the youth in the liberation of our country.

In these uncertain days of Covid-19, we never know from one day to the next what our Lord will call us to do. Young people, you cannot say as Jeremiah said: "I am only a youth." Your Bishop and Diocese knows your worth. As young people you have power and influence. God is disturbing you to get up and do something. We need to hear your voice.

We are aware that our young people are dealing with a lot. It is not easy for our learners and students to be dealing with academics as well as other burdens placed on their shoulders, like caring for a relative in hospital or ill at home, not having enough to eat, peer pressure, abuse, violence, bullying, unethical social media, human sexuality etc. With the rate of violence and murders escalating, security needs to be improved in our homes, streets and schools. Young men please have a positive attitude towards young women. Be the first man standing to break the silence and speak out.

It was the wish of the late President Nelson Mandela that all children should have ten years education. One good thing is that there is equity in schooling as girls attend school in equal numbers to boys. With the reopening of our schools in the peak of the pandemic, we support our learners in their decisions whether to stay home or return to school. We pray that they do not walk away from education. Young people, we appreciate you, cherish you and we believe in you. Please remember that we need artisans as well as academics. Take up your place in society. The legacy of apartheid has left many people having an absence of identity.

Many of our young people are experiencing physical, spiritual, mental and emotional strain. This lockdown period is hard for people with depression and anxiety. Please make a note of a 24 hr Helpline 0800 456 789. Whatsapp 076 88 22 775. Please engage with the clergy, with a trusted friend or family member, your teachers and lecturers. Our young people are good at peer counselling. Let us help each other to become more aware of the reality of God's presence in our experiences of the day. Clergy and adults please be attentive and show concern to our young people. Adults need to take charge and guide our young people without suffocating them. What are our values and priorities? Can our young people look up to us? Is our approval more than our disapproval? Are we out to catch them doing something right rather than something wrong? Help them, don't prevent them from reaching their potential in these times of hardship. Listen to them. "Once you replace negative thoughts with positive ones, you will start having positive results."

Where does our strength come from? Our strength comes from the Lord (Psalm 121:1). When we feel we are losing hope, remember that God's love is greater than our disappointments and God's plan for our lives are better than our dreams. Young people, leadership formation takes time, effort and serious commitment. Please do not allow lockdown to get you down and derail you. We all need to be led by God to let go of something familiar and risk a new future. With the grace of God, we are enabled to do far more than we ever thought possible by our own abilities.

Enjoy youth day. I look forward to seeing the art, music, poetry, inspirational thoughts and other Youth Day commemoration celebrations on our website. Let us see faith in action.

God willing, I will continue with a reflection on Wednesday on matters affecting young people. As the liaison bishop for gender in ACSA, I hope to be putting out a statement on social media in a day or two to address Gender Based Violence.

Today, please **reach out** to an elderly person and also to a young person.

In **our prayers** we give thanks for the miracle of healing in Deborah Meyer's life. She is now home from hospital. Deacon Dean is still in hospital but 80% better. How great is God! We pray for the well being of our elderly and our young people. We pray for the most vulnerable in our society. We pray for families who lost children in the Soweto uprising and all families who have lost young people due to violence, illness, suicide, accidents or other causes. We conclude our prayers with Psalm 121. Amen

I am, Because We are, Because God is.....Opening hearts to heal God's world. *Have a blessed and faith fuelled week beloved child of God.*