

LOCKDOWN DAY 85 – 19 JUNE 2020

Molweni fathers, friends and family of False Bay Diocese,

Scripture: Psalm 100 Hymn: *Dear Lord and Father of Mankind*

Thank you for your feedback on yesterday's reflection. You have inspired me to continue with the thread of encouraging men to stand up and be counted and that change will come through them. Let us embrace the spirit of Bernard Mizeki who was ready to live or die for the name of Jesus.

Sunday is Father's Day. In our tradition, we celebrate fathers on St Joseph's day. We did this on 1 May. Father's Day is a day of honouring fatherhood and paternal bonds, the bond between a father and his child, as well as the influence of fathers in society. Some fathers serve as Churchwardens, as lay ministers, in various organisations, as sides-persons, in the teaching ministry of our church. The majority of our clergy are fathers with children. With the many calls on your time and attention, remember that you chose the vocation of fatherhood and it is therefore important to err on the side of family responsibility.

Whether your children are babies, toddlers, in their tween or teenage years or grown up, they look to you to be the wise ones, the mentors, the visionaries, the one who will swim side by side with them in their spiritual journey. We thank God for parents who have adopted children and we pray for children growing up in care facilities.

I have chosen Psalm 100, a Song of Joy, as our reading. You will know that it is part of our Morning Service. There are four phrases that stand out in this Psalm that point to the truth about God:

1. ***The Lord is God***, that is the Lord whom we worship.
2. ***He made us***. By saying this the worshippers were acknowledging that God came. God made us. We belong to God, we must give account to God of the way we use God's world and our own lives.
3. ***The steadfast love of the Lord endures for ever***.
4. ***God is faithful***. God keeps God's promises. God is steady, unchangeable, constant. We can rely on God.

Dear fathers, as you lead your congregations and as you care for your families, I ask that you meditate on this psalm and see how well you are doing as a father.

A good father is one of the most valuable assets in our society. A good father allows his children to make mistakes, teaches his children to appreciate things, leads by example, is reliable, is humble, spends quality time with his children, keeps his promises made at the child's baptism, is faithful to his marriage vows. Like Jesus, our earthly fathers should be ready to give up their lives for their children.

Fathers, you are the shepherd and guardian of your children. Your lives need to be squeaky clean. Be honest with yourselves. Do you need to clean up your act, ask forgiveness of your children where you have failed them and pledge to improve. Make peace with them. Not all fathers are married to the mother of their children. You may be divorced. Gender based violence is also economic. Are you up to date with your maintenance? If your father has passed away and you are still nursing wounds of a stormy relationship. Have a conversation with him in the presence of the Triune God to give him the opportunity to say sorry and then let it go.

Those in leadership positions in the church, need to be fathers and husbands who are above reproach. Any misdemeanours, misdeeds however small or big, will be investigated. The church cannot turn a blind eye, or we will have no message to give to the world. We have to stand on our integrity.

I pray that fathers will unite in the fight against Gender Based Violence to protect their families, to restore justice and dignity in our society. Fathers who are husbands, do follow the Jewish tradition of touching your wedding band every morning and renewing your commitment to love and pray for your spouse and children as you remember your marriage vows.

As you celebrate Father's Day on Sunday, I challenge all fathers who can afford to, to buy bread and spread to donate to a soup kitchen or to give to someone begging on the street or sitting on a street corner, hoping for a job for the day.

I remind all of us of the services in An Anglican Prayer Book on pages 405 following.

Have a blessed and happy Father's Day. Congratulations! Enjoy the celebration!

Today, please **reach out** to fathers and those who are father figures. When a family is one, there are no outsiders, except by choice.

We pray for our earthly fathers that they may be like God, our Heavenly Parent. May they know that their names are written on the palm of God's hand and that God loves them without reason. When something frightens them, may they be covered with the tenderness of God's presence. Give them peace when dark currents of anxiety and apprehension want to drag them into unknown worlds. Dear God, go out with them on the street and remain at their side where they are engrossed in work or in the agony of wishing for work. We place fathers in the circle of the sacred love of God. May all fathers enlighten their children and respect the mother of their children. Watch over them when they sleep, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

I Am, Because we Are, Because God is ... Opening hearts to heal God's World. *Make a joyful noise.*