

LOCKDOWN DAY 71 – 5 JUNE 2020

Good day dear family and friends of False Bay Diocese,

Scripture: Mark 9:33-37 *The Servant Song (Will you let me be your servant)*

As the National state of Disaster has been extended by a month after 14 June, I encourage you to read the open letter of Prof Thuli Madonsela to the State President about the rationality of some of the Regulations. Please note that alert level 3 regulations remain in place. On Thursdays we have been observing '*Thursdays in Black*' towards a world without rape and violence. May I encourage you to heed the call to observe '*Fridays in Black*' in support of *#Black Lives Matter*.

We continue to pray for a South Africa with zero child abuse. I take the following extract from the **Think Twice Website**. They have a good resource for Sunday Schools in the form of the Jerry Giraffe programme. They particularly address healthy sexuality for children. This means:

- That children have a voice
- That they are free to express themselves
- To have the courage to speak up against any injustice towards them
- Protected from abuse and neglect
- And empowered to grow to their full potential.

As adults, how are we helping children to exercise their rights responsibly? All people are precious in God's sight. We are all in need of the grace of Christ. One thing that has changed over the centuries is the way that children are treated. Children in first century Palestine had no economic or social status. Children were at the very bottom of the pecking order with no voice. But Jesus teaches that God loves everyone equally.

The disciples ached to discover where they fitted into it all. In using a little child to illustrate his point about his disciples' service to the community, Jesus was choosing a stratum of society which had no voice, no influence, no material wealth, no power, the littlest of people in all respects. But this is not sentimentality. To be Jesus' disciples, then and now, means serving the needs of those who have nothing to give back, for which there is likely to be no reward, except from the "*one who sent me.*" (Mark 9:37)

In these uncertain times, we need to help our children to see that God has chosen them and will uplift them to greater things, beyond their imagining.

Children are also Jesus' metaphor for those whom society regards as "the bottom of the heap": drug addicts, those who sleep rough, those who sell sex, etc. Let us not relegate demanding groups to the back of our minds. Just as we have a duty towards our children, so Jesus tells us, we have a duty towards those who feel their lives are **less** worth living. Let us live lives free of judgment and help others to find a way through their fears and make their lives **more** worth living.

Have we interiorized Jesus mandate to be "*servants of all?*" We may find ourselves instead falling prey to the subtle desire to be the **greatest** of servants. Jesus redirects our attention to those who are most vulnerable and whose gifts are undervalued and least developed.

As we conclude this Child Protection Week, raising our awareness of the rights of children; As our schools reopen on Monday for Grades 7 and 12, with the fears of our learners having to use public transport, scared about catching the Coronavirus and wondering whether they will pass their yearend examinations; As the Western Cape remains the epicentre of the Covid-19 Pandemic, I sincerely remind all of us that we are in the sacred circle of God's love.

Please **reach out** to anyone who Jesus wants you to pull into the very centre of the circle.

We pray that the Spirit will purify in us any desires for greatness and recognition. We pray for our schools gradually opening for teaching and learning. Bless and comfort older persons, many who are isolated and unable to physically embrace their closest relatives and friends. We pray for our Government. We pray for peace in homes where children are abused, disrespected, dismissed and violated. May we bring assurance to children who feel unloved, unsafe and uncared for at this time. O Lord Jesus Christ may Thy kingdom come Within our Hearts, Within our Homes, In all the world. **Amen**

I am, Because We Are, Because God is ... Opening Hearts to Heal God's World. *God be with you this weekend. Goodbye.*