

LOCKDOWN DAY 97 – 1 JULY 2020

Molweni dear family of False Bay and our dear friends,

Scripture: Matthew 10:37-42 Song: *Seek ye first the Kingdom of God*

It is a new day, it is a new month. The Coronavirus is a reality in our lives. We all know someone who has been infected with this respiratory disease and someone who has died. As from today travel within the Province is allowed and that eases things up a bit in the Diocese. However, visitations are not allowed. Please do not compromise the health of our clergy by expecting home visits in the current situation. The new day and month is wild with wonder and splendour. God comes to break the stormy dark apart, to soothe our needy hearts with hope. Seek ye first the Kingdom of God.

The gospel reading reminds us that Jesus must be given first priority in our lives and when we do that, everything else will fall into place. It is a challenging gospel text. I am inviting you to pause, to take time out and analyse this text and see what Christianity actually is? May the Lord open our hearts to accept the word of God.

The Triune God must be given first priority as the source of our lives and love. Jesus uses the expression: "Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and whoever loves son or daughter more than me, is not worthy of me; and whoever does not take up the cross and follow me, is not worthy of me." Jesus is saying that we cannot replace God in our lives by making anyone or anything else a priority over God.

Jesus further says: "Those who find their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it." The whole purpose of our life is destroyed, doomed when we do not choose to put God first. As a priest at the deathbed of a believer, I more than once had the experience of the dying person lifting their eyes and looking beyond those around the bed. When gently asked what they were seeing, they would not respond 'why am I dying?' but 'why was I living?' Death puts life into perspective. Death takes us into new life.

We are becoming more familiar with the Catechism in An Anglican Prayer Book. I refer you to the section on Baptism, on pages 438 and 439 and I quote: "The inward and spiritual grace in baptism is union with Christ in his death and resurrection, birth into God's family the Church, forgiveness of sins, and new life in the Holy Spirit." We are baptised into the death of Jesus so that we can rise with him. When Jesus is our first priority, the things of the world grow strangely dim. Only God is God. No one and nothing is more important than God. Seek ye first the Kingdom of God.

The totality of the love that we give to our loved ones can never be our final hope, final security. We cannot make false gods and idols of partners, spouses and children. Pop songs have words like "You are my everything! I am nothing without you! You are my meaning!" When this is our attitude, what is left to give to God, to other people? And when they betray us, they shrink in our estimation and even worse, our lives fall apart.

We are challenged not to suffocate our loved ones, to bring ruin on their lives or our own lives by making them our absolute goal. The cross is the sign of love, the sign of joy, the sign of unity of family life. The cross is a sign of true love. When we realize that, it is easier to love ourselves and our families more freely. We will be less likely to want to dominate or control our spouses, partners, children and other loved ones.

Secular love will occasionally fail us. Let us ask God to empty us from counterfeit love and allow God to pour God's life and love into our hearts, minds and souls today. God stands at the door of our heart and knocks. The handle is on the inside. Do you choose to invite Jesus anew into your heart today? When we do that, we will know the reward of true life, true love. I encourage you to pause and welcome Jesus afresh into your hearts and life. When our lives and love finds its origin in the love and life of God, when we discover this life and love anew, it is this love and this life that we share with our loved ones. As I learnt alongside the deathbed of a parishioner, life and love is heaven bound.

I end this reflection with an important question. Who has priority in my life?

The truth of Christianity and the truth of God's message that liberates the soul is joyfully proclaimed in the Creed on page 108 of An Anglican Prayer Book.

Today, please **reach out** to a loved one between the ages of 40 and 50 in your family, church or community.

We come to the Lord of life with **our prayers**: We pray for the leaders of the nations, that they will receive God's guidance. We pray for the sick in hospital, clinics and at home, that they may have the gift of God's strength. We pray for our brothers and sisters in Mozambique who are experiencing the tragedy of terrorist attacks, people being butchered and set alight. Pray for our Bishops Carlos, Manuel and Vicente in Mozambique and all religious leaders that they may receive God's wisdom. Their religious institutions are also in lockdown. We pray for liberation, freedom, healing, peace and righteousness for all God's people. Amen

It is to poverty stricken Mozambique that our Lenten Appeal is being sent this year to rebuild their churches destroyed by recent earthquakes. It is not too late to send a clearly marked donation for this purpose to our Diocesan Administrator.

I am, Because we Are, Because God is.....Opening hearts to heal God's world. *Seek ye first the Kingdom of God*