

LOCKDOWN DAY 131 – 4 AUGUST 2020

Molweni dear family and friends of False Bay Diocese,

Scripture: Rom 8:35, 37-39; Matthew 14:13-21

Hymn: *And can it be that I should gain*

A new day to surrender ourselves to God's service and praise.

The texts today speak about the longing in the human heart to come to the water, to come to the gentle stream of God's Grace. St Augustine, in his wisdom, put it very clearly when he said that the soul cannot find rest until it finds rest in the eternal heart of the Holy Trinity. People are thirsting for God, hungry for God's word and yet they refuse to come to God. That is the tragedy of the present age. Even though people do not come to God, God's love for them remains. Paul in Romans 8:38-39 tells us that nothing / no thing can separate us from the love of God made visible in Christ Jesus. The world needs to come to the water. Therefore, today we pray especially for all those who are searching for God, that they will have the courage to come to the water, to receive the Grace of God and to be fed by the Word of God.

Much anxiety surrounds food. Where food is scarce, finding enough of anything becomes an overriding responsibility. Every day we see images of people perishing from physical hunger, suffering the consequences of Covid-19 lay offs and unemployment. Yet if we look around us closely, we will also see people who are perishing from spiritual hunger. Let us remind ourselves that there are many people dying for lack of just a few crumbs of food and there are also many people who are dying for lack of just a few crumbs of that bread of hope and life. When we eat and digest, we take in the nutrients which build up our health and strength. With so many going hungry, let us not waste food. With the living bread of Jesus Christ, nothing is wasted. Everything we eat and digest is for our eternal life.

Sometimes at the Institution of a new priest to a parish, I take out a piece of bread, break it in half, pass it on to the priest and say, 'Share it, and go and do likewise', meaning sharing physical bread and spiritual bread. The new priest starts doing it there and then with her/his new community. We are all called to share Christ, the bread of life.

In the miracles of the loaves and fishes, food is a sign of blessing and abundance. There was no absolute need to feed the people gathered by the shore of the lake. Even though they were in a lonely place the disciples suggested dispersing the crowd to the villages to buy their own food. But Jesus suggests otherwise; he responds to the need, among their other needs. They were hungry and they needed to be fed. Once again, the presence of Jesus is a blessing in more ways than one. From meagre resources a large crowd is satisfied with plenty left over. Indeed, twelve baskets, which signified abundance for each of the twelve tribes of Israel.

The solution that Jesus offered, is a solution steeped in compassion, care and concern. Jesus' reply to the disciples, still speaks to us today: *"There is no need for them to go: give them something to eat yourselves."* Jesus invites us to bring what we have to Jesus. The spectre of hunger stalks our world. Every four minutes someone somewhere in the world dies of hunger. We certainly cannot solve the problem of world hunger ourselves. But we can bring the little that we have to Jesus. A little placed in Jesus' hands is always much! Jesus works the miracle. We cannot break bread or break through to those in need without in some way breaking ourselves.

Where people are anxious, Jesus brings reassurance. Where they are confused, he brings enlightenment. Where they are sick, he brings healing. And where they are hungry, he brings bread. It is clear that the ministry of Christ is not just for the spirit and the soul but to the whole person. Jesus is not just food for the spirit, but food for the body also. The Good News is not merely an idea but a complete renewal of life.

So, where there is anxiety about food, where food seems to threaten as well as nourish, Jesus' use of food points the way. Here he brings together much of the symbolism associated with food. As in the desert of old, food here represents God's provision for people. Food represents deliverance and Jesus' concern for the marginalised.

When we are anxious, hungry, and in any kind of need, we remember how the Lord provides and how we too should provide for others in the Lord's name.

In this Month of Compassion, may God's love inspire us to care and share. In this Women's month, who are the women in your life that you often overlook and need to spend some time relaxing with?

God willing, I will tomorrow continue with a reflection on this reading.

I close with a beautiful quote from Pope Francis: *"Rivers do not drink their own water; trees do not eat their own fruit; the sun does not shine on itself and flowers do not spread their fragrance for themselves. Living for others is a rule of nature. We are all born to help each other. No matter how difficult it is ... Life is good when you are happy; but much better when others are happy because of you."*

Today, please **reach out** to someone who you remember that you shared a picnic with. As a Diocese we miss those picnics shared when we had gatherings for various events. Why not pack a picnic for some family in need? Put in something nice for gogo / granny and the children.

Prayers

My dear Sisters and Brothers, know that nothing can come between us and the love of God made known in Christ, we turn to God our Parent and pray. For the Church, that through her ministry she may stir in the faithful that thirst that only God can slake and quench. *Lord hear our prayer.* We pray for the world, that the leaders may open their hearts and hands to help those countries that suffer from need and want. *Lord hear our prayer.* We pray for ourselves that we may readily offer even the little we have to the Lord, knowing that little is much when placed in the powerful hands of God. *Lord hear our prayer.* We pray for scientists and academics that their research may be blessed to find a vaccine and cure for the Coronavirus, to make our world happy and healthy. *Lord hear our prayer.* Heavenly Parent, you open your hand and grant our desires. Teach us to share what we have with those who have not and to make your blessings to us more fruitful. Through Christ our Lord. Amen

I am, Because we Are, Because God is ... Opening hearts to heal God's world. *Be an image of God's goodness*