

**Archbishop Thabo Makgoba**  
**Provincial Standing Committee: Second Homily**  
**11 September 2009**

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Luke 6:39-42

<sup>39</sup>He also told them a parable: ‘Can a blind person guide a blind person? Will not both fall into a pit? <sup>40</sup>A disciple is not above the teacher, but everyone who is fully qualified will be like the teacher. <sup>41</sup>Why do you see the speck in your neighbour’s eye, but do not notice the log in your own eye? <sup>42</sup>Or how can you say to your neighbour, “Friend, let me take out the speck in your eye”, when you yourself do not see the log in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your neighbour’s eye. (NRSV)

Our discussions this morning concern the development of a common vision for the Anglican Church of Southern Africa, and an accompanying mission statement.

Yesterday I paid tribute to Glenda Wildschut and her team, for all the work they have put into this – let me repeat this today.

I sat in for a little while on some of their meetings, and it brought home to me again just how diverse the life of our Province is – and yet, how deep are the riches of the Christian faith, in its Anglican expression, that we share together.

Somehow, we are trying in our visioning process to bring all of this together – all that we share, through our common identity in Christ and our calling as Anglicans in Southern Africa; and the diversity which is both challenge and treasure.

Just think about yesterday, and the diversity of your discussion groups.

Who gained new insights, or new ideas, or learnt something fresh, from someone who is quite different from you? Raise your hand!

Now, would you have learnt any of this, if we were all the same?!

Perhaps we might look at it this way, in terms of our gospel reading – which we need to consider both literally and metaphorically.

If we were all the same, we’d all have the same big log in our eyes – and none of us would recognise it as being anything other than perfectly normal!

We would be blind to the narrowness of our own perspective, our own experience.

Instead, we have the joy of being able to shed light from a great range of perspectives, and so together we get a fuller, clearer, understanding of the whole picture, from every angle.

In this way we can all teach one another.

And we can all learn from everyone else.

It is as St Paul writes in his first letter to the Corinthians. Within the body of Christ, he says, 'to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good' (1 Cor 12:7).

Bishop Meshack in Evening Prayer last night said that we should pray for the person sitting next to you today.

Look at the person sitting next to you. Tell yourself – the manifestation of the Spirit is given to them, for our common good.

Now tell it to them – the manifestation of the Spirit is given to you, for our common good!

And listen while they tell you!

Yes, we must also say to ourselves 'the manifestation of the Spirit is given to me, for our common good!'

So, when we come to business, whenever anyone speaks, remind your ears – this person, to whom I am listening, has been given the manifestation of the Spirit for our common good!

I wonder how much that will transform our work today!

And, as we find it transforming our work, my prayer too is that the lessons we learn here, the experiences we have of living with our diversity – not grudgingly, but with celebration – will be a manifestation of the Spirit to the wider world.

Let us keep on praying diligently for the world-wide Anglican Communion.

Let us pray that they will dare to do as we are doing – opening our eyes and ears to see Christ dwelling in those who are different, to recognise the manifestation of the Spirit.

Yes, there are hard issues to be tackled.

No, there are no simple solutions to handling questions where people are drawing different, even incompatible, conclusions.

But how we go forward can only be found in Christ, as I said yesterday – in him taking out the specks and logs in our eyes, in him opening our eyes to our blindnesses, in him teaching us how not to be enemies to others who are also trying to follow him faithfully.

Jesus is not telling us that we must think and feel and act in exactly the same way on everything – the pictures in scripture of the Church as the body of Christ, with eyes and ears and hands and feet, tell us that.

But how much difference should we accept?

*[End with what Professor Antrobus said, feedback to ACSA: ACT]*