

Anti-Corruption March

30 September 2015

Remarks by Archbishop Thabo Makgoba

Wow! My heart leaps with joy to see so many here who not only share our anger, but mostly our sadness. Sadness that we have to express our universal frustration for the absence of moral leadership in South Africa by harnessing our collective voices to say, "enough is enough!".

I ask that we now observe a moment of silence, as we recall to mind our various journeys as South Africans, that have lead us here, as individuals, as a community of communities, and as a country. *(Allow a moment of silence).*

It's time to stop marching against corruption.

Yes, you heard me right.

It's time to stop marching, having discourses and debates, writing and repeatedly speaking about being anti-corruption. *(Pause)* **WHY?**

BECAUSE IT'S NOT ABOUT BEING ANTI-CORRUPTION...

IT'S ABOUT BEING PRO COURAGE.

Pro-courage.

I remember that when I was younger, courage was the single most important ingredient in the success of the Old Struggle. Yet today those same leaders who showed such courage in the Old Struggle have not only abandoned the concept of courage, today they punish anyone who tries to uphold the principles of courage.

Today we shouldn't be here rallying against corruption. Today we should be asking... Aren't we ready to fulfill our country's destiny, by showing the same level of courage that won our liberation from apartheid?

Nothing less will work.

Are we really so afraid of what our morally corrupt political and business leaders will do to us that we will be intimidated into silence?

How many times have you read Madiba's words, words that defined the Old Struggle, and felt your heart soar when he said:

"I learned that courage was not the absence of fear, but the triumph over it. The brave man is not he who does not feel afraid, but he who conquers that fear."

My friends, we need to face up to the reality of what corruption does to our society. We need what I call a cold shower of reality to shock our leaders to their senses. It is this:

THE PRICE OF CORRUPTION IS THE INEQUALITY OF EQUALITY.

Let me repeat these words, for they need to frame our New Struggle:

THE PRICE OF CORRUPTION IS THE INEQUALITY OF EQUALITY.

What do I mean by that? It is simple: while we and our leaders live under the delusion that we are promoting equality in our society, the corruption that is spreading its tentacles across our society actually entrenches inequality, step up step.

A little over a year ago, almost in this same location, I asked South Africans to turn themselves inside out and expose their sense of moral consciousness to the sun. Why? Because, the sun is God's disinfectant.

Our country, because of the ethical state of the nation, needs to be morally disinfected...

Morally disinfected so that we can recapture THE dream of the South Africa we want.

What's missing? It's not the ideas. It's not the realization that enough is enough. It's the determination that we need to begin a new era of courageous action. We will clean up and disinfect South Africa only when the courage and the will of all our people puts local action behind our words.

Over the last six months you have no idea how many South Africans have said to me, "Archbishop, I'm so tired of seeing the moral pollution. *(pause)*

"I am so tired of seeing the pervasive unethical contamination." (Pause and with a fist and emphasis)

As painful as it is to see the corruption, it's 100 times more painful to see the price of corruption... the inequality that is becoming embedded into the structures of our society.

I want to address President Zuma and our national leaders, our provincial leaders, our local leaders and the business people who corrupt them...

You are responsible for creating an historic era of sadness in South Africa ... Worse, we have allowed you to do it.

My hope, and the hope of my fellow spiritual leaders, is that in the coming days the spirit of these public rallies will become the stuff of our private conversations.

The pro-courage conversation must begin at every meal everyone has. We should rally once a month, or more often, once these conversations have begun. And then we must act on them.

First, *(slowly and emotionally)*:

How much longer must South Africa endure this daily existence of a lack of transparency? *(pause)*

Real-time transparency is an essential ingredient in trust... the absence of transparency results in a withering, pervasive sense of distrust engulfing us all. We need to ask: "Doesn't the distrust we feel in today's leaders feel more or less like the distrust we felt during the days of apartheid?"

When you cause the people of our communities to lose trust in our leaders, you not only cause them offence; more seriously, you show our communities that you distrust them:

- You are either afraid of their values, or distrust their values.
- You are either afraid of their ability to make informed, values-based decisions, or you distrust our constitutional values.
- You are either afraid of their opinions or do not trust them to act responsibly on their opinions.
- You are either afraid of their judgment, or do not trust them to exercise their judgment wisely.
- Or most seriously, you are either afraid for them to question your actions and motivations, or you do not trust them to understand.

I was never very good at maths at school. But I have worked out the maths of corruption. A corruptor plus a corruptee equals corruption.

I'm not pointing fingers at to who is doing the corrupting and who is being corrupted in South Africa today. But I do know this. It is time for the leaders, leaders of all kinds, whether in government, business, public service or civil society, to end their silence and to stand up publicly and to say NO to corruption.

This rally is about spelling courage with a single two-letter word: "NO."

Say NO to corruption!

I can't hear you properly! What we we say to corruption? (*wait*)

What do we say to corruption?

And let's say YES to courage! (*wait*)

What do we say to courage?

What do we say to courage? (*wait*)

This may sound uncomfortable, but it is time for South Africans to ask: while our rich African heritage is preserved by our identification with our ethnic, tribal and clan roots, can we please agree that this does not give our leaders the right to abuse our values and our trust! Whatever our roots are, whether they are African roots or European roots or roots from somewhere else, the reality is.... that stealing is stealing.

Our country deserves better than the way our leaders are behaving now. Our country's communities deserve better. Our families deserve better. Our children deserve better.

Too much of our country's destiny is in the hands of corrupt leaders and bureaucrats; now it must pass into the hands of our 50 million citizens.

May we rally today and every single month going forward, to courageously look inwards and disinfect ourselves of all that is not values-based. Let those of us who are Christians uphold a vision of the resurrected Christ who in overcoming death sent a very important message about courage, the courage that survived even death.

My friends, join me in a short prayer.

God bless South Africa,

Allow her to rise again in an historic New Struggle to fight fear and find courage to end the high cost of low trust.

Allow her to realize that when the power of courage overcomes the love of power, we will all reach the mountaintop of equality,

Guide her with a new generation of values-based, moral leaders,

Lead her into the way of truth by rekindling her levels of trust,

Until all shall enjoy true equality.

And then, all shall flourish.

For Christ's sake, Amen.

God loves you, and so do I.

God bless you, your family, and God bless South Africa.