

***Review, Renew and Restore:
Reconnecting Faith to Daily Life Inside and
Outside the Stained Glass Windows***



**Charge of the Archbishop and Metropolitan,
the Most Revd Dr Thabo Makgoba
to Provincial Synod 2019**

Readings: Esther 5:1-14; Psalm 124 and Luke 8:19-21

Greetings and Appreciation

May I speak in the name of God who creates, redeems and sustains us. Amen.

Sisters and brothers in Christ, members of Provincial Synod, distinguished guests, invitees and staff: welcome to the 35th Session of Provincial Synod, which comes just a year before the 150th anniversary of our first Provincial Synod, marking the formation of our Province in 1870.

A particular welcome to those of you attending Synod for the first time. Please feel confident enough to make a full contribution to our deliberations. We also welcome members of the Order of Simon of Cyrene who are present.

Since Synod last convened, a number of bishops have retired or stepped down; they are listed in the 2nd Agenda Book, and we thank them all for their faithful witness and ministry over the years. Among our Provincial office-bearers, we also thank Advocate Ronnie Bracks, whose term as Registrar of the Province is ending, and our warm thanks to those bishops who

will retire before the next meeting of Provincial Synod, including Bishop Ossie Swartz of Kimberley and Kuruman and Bishop Dino Gabriel of Natal.

Since we last met, a number of former bishops have died: Bishop John Salt of St Helena, Bishop Sigisbert Ndwandwe, Suffragan of Johannesburg, Bishop Lawrence Zulu of Zululand, and Bishop Patrick Matolengwe, Suffragan of Cape Town. A number of other former members of Synod or of the Order of Simon of Cyrene have died since we last met; we have been informed of Mr Nic Gumede, Mr John Emery, Mrs Emma Mashinini and Sir Rupert Bromley.

Replacing bishops who have retired, we are delighted to welcome in their new capacities Bishop William Mostert of Christ the King, Bishop Vicente Msosa of Niassa, Bishop Nkosinathi Ndwandwe, translated from Natal to Mthatha, Bishop Moses Madywabe of Khahlamba, Bishop Dale Bowers of St Helena, Bishop Eddie Daniels of Port Elizabeth, and Bishop Manuel Ernesto, translated to the Missionary Diocese of Nampula. Welcome also to the Bishop-Elect of St Mark the Evangelist, Dean Luke Pretorius, and the brand-new Bishop-Elect of the Diocese of Mzimvubu, Bishop Tsietsi Seleokane.

I also want to give a special welcome to retired bishops and senior priests who are acting as Vicars-General, in some cases in especially challenging circumstances. We are deeply indebted to Bishop Sitembele Mzamane and Bishop Funginkosi Mbhele for their service in Mzimvubu and Zululand, and our thanks also to the Vicars-General of Cape Town, Archdeacon Keith De Vos and of Lesotho, Dean Tankie Mofana, where Bishop Adam Taaso has sadly been ill.

Introduction

Our Synod theme is: “Review, Renew and Restore: Reconnecting Faith to Daily Life.” You can review our progress since the last Synod in the comprehensive reports you already have, so I will focus on how we can renew our vision in a way that restores some sanity to our world, and deepens our trust relationships with God and the values by which we live.

I also note the theme of next year's Lambeth Conference, which is “God’s Church for God’s World”. The sub-themes that will emerge from a study of 1 Peter at the Conference will be the key issues facing the Anglican Communion in the next decade. They can be grouped around what I call five “Pillars of

Relevance”, which are a useful lens through which to consider in our own deliberations over the coming days. Arising from this Synod, I hope your bishops will be able to take to Lambeth a resolution which will give your personal input on each of the five pillars. They are:

1. Galvanizing Our Church by Bridging The Unity of Opposites;
2. Becoming Relevant to Young Adults;
3. Creating Equality of Opportunity;
4. Shaping the Future in a Climate Changing World;
and
5. Restoring Trust in our institutions, our leaders and ourselves.

Building a “Home for All”

Just two months ago the world paused to recall the first walk on the moon by a human being 50 years ago, a sign of what human intellect and science can achieve. Humankind indeed made a “giant leap”, as Neil Armstrong said. Since then, we have expanded the bounds of knowledge in ways that we would never have dreamt possible even a few years earlier. But we as humankind have increasingly faltered since then. We

see troubling examples everywhere we look. We are living through a time of almost unprecedented populism and nationalism, and a historic era of distrust; a time defined by an overwhelming desire to keep others out, to build walls and erect barriers.

You have often heard me speak of the New Struggle, a struggle against the inequality of equality. Today I am proposing a new role for the New Struggle: we must declare our commitment to stand up against those who promote distrust. The enemies of trust are forces we cannot see, which makes it harder to tackle them. But we must fight them to the end, for if we can destroy them, then we will create a new era of trust in our countries and in the world and enable our children and their children to capitalise on our technological achievements.

But of course the progress to which we as people of faith aspire goes beyond technology. Hear the words of the scientist and priest, Teilhard de Chardin:

“One day after mastering the winds, the waves, the tides and gravity, after all the scientific and technological achievements, we shall harness for God the energies of love. And then, for the second

time in the history of the world, [we] man will have discovered fire.”

In a world fraught with tension and which often tolerates behaviour which excludes and dehumanises others, the Word of God today repudiates demeaning social pathologies, offering us a different hermeneutic and challenging us to act out of a higher set of values. In a close reading of today's short Gospel passage, two voices are heard. The one calls out to Jesus, “Your mother and brothers are here”, implicitly confining belonging and inclusion to those who share blood ties, or those bound by a common set of agreed convictions. Jesus, on the other hand, makes the critical point that “belonging” is wider than the narrow definitions proposed by the first voice. It’s not confined to an inner circle who “belong” – those who think differently, pray differently, and love differently are all part of this new family.

Some theologians point out that this “extended family” is an early sign of the eschatological family. The Biblical scholar Joanna Dewey makes the point that when Jesus emphasizes that all who hear and do “are my mothers and brothers”, he is pointing out that his family is neither male-headed nor patriarchal. Jesus

make clear that everyone – beyond gender, status, race or creed – has a role in shaping the Kingdom and are citizens of that Kingdom.

We see today how exclusion features so strongly in the populist ideologies of our time, whether in the debates around migrants and refugees in the northern hemisphere, or in the political factionalism in the Global South. But to our shame, we also have to admit that within the Church, right here amongst us, there is a creeping tendency to turn a deaf ear to “the other” and to practise and perpetuate the “politics of exclusion”.

But there should be room for all who hear and do the will of God, even anonymously. And hearing is part of the very identity of the church. Benedict begins his Rule by urging the monks to listen with the ears of the heart. He goes on to link this immediately to the virtue of hospitality. Hearing the Word is linked to creating spaces, nurturing spaces, safe spaces for all who feel excluded. We do not have a good track record on this; neither as sympathetic listeners nor as practitioners of inclusivity. Now is the hour, pushing back against the politics of exclusion, to bring about real change in our theology, in our ecclesiology and in our practice so that

our churches can become as Chief Albert Luthuli says, "A home for all!"

In our first reading, it is precisely by taking custodianship of the future that the figure of Queen Esther is so inspirational. In our reading, Haman's power and megalomaniac tendencies instill in him a desire to dominate, just as in our time we see power abused, whether by powerful economic interests, governments, unions and sadly even within the Church. But as Haman's ruthlessness becomes apparent, Mordecai and Esther are awakened to the plight of the most vulnerable, of a people at risk. That awakening led to the understanding that they could not stand on the sidelines while death was visited on the marginalised. They understood that they must become agents of change, architects of the alternative culture and of another vision of the kind of world we want to fashion.

Contrary to the romantic notion that the beautiful Esther won the King's favour with her beauty and charm, the text actually underlines something different; that she spoke to power by bringing out the vulnerability of the marginalised. It was that implicit testimony that moved royal power to act differently. If

we take Esther seriously then we need to accept the call to come alongside the vulnerable in challenging power.

Inside the Stained Glass Windows: the State of Our Church

Turning to a review of the health of our church, and of our capacity to “renew and restore”, we have an impressive array of reports before us, and a number of relevant Measures and Motions. Some of the issues they raise are deserving of early attention as we begin Synod.

Looking at the statistics, it is encouraging to see the numbers of women now being ordained to the priesthood and to the diaconate, and especially that this is happening in both rural and urban dioceses. Less encouraging is the number of women being licensed as rectors or deans of parishes. Even more distressing is that we have seen very few women among nominees for bishops at recent elective assemblies. One of my hopes is that the Archbishop's Commission on Women in the Episcopate that I have established will bring about the transformation and richness which the

presence of women can bring to the episcopal vocation within our Province.

While considering the Church's human resources, can I make another appeal regarding one of my dreams for our church – that every diocese should be a home of one of the religious orders. The religious life has been a powerful resource, for prayer but also for other ministries, in the life of our Province, and it is my hope and vision that we will continue and grow this tradition.

Of course the health of our Church depends not only on the number of new priests and deacons being ordained, but on their quality and their ability to connect with the unconnected. The average age of our congregations is increasing and one of our greatest needs is to re-earn the trust of the young people in our communities. I must admit that there is no silver bullet. However, what there is, is the need to go out, reach out and bring in young people by engaging in a dialogue to understand their needs and show how our Church can become the bridge to their future.

We continue to be grateful for those who undertake the work of upholding and improving the standards of theological education and formation of all, among both clergy and lay Anglicans. Congratulations

to the Rector of COTT, as well as the COTT Council, for getting our college to be accredited and registered. We are grateful to the Dean of the Province, who chairs the College Council. We also owe a debt of considerable gratitude to Professor Barney Pityana for getting us to this point, and for his continuing leadership of the Archbishop's Commission on the future of COTT.

On the wider educational front, we must commend the Anglican Board of Education in Southern Africa, which continues with the vital, although not easy, work of promoting affordable and accessible quality Christian education, especially to the poor and marginalised. Thanks to the Board, the CEO and to Bishop Peter Lee, who has ably chaired this team on our behalf.

The Provincial Youth Council's report is challenging this year, telling us that young people do not feel supported or resourced by the Province but also coming up with some concrete ideas for a strategic plan for youth ministry. We have impressive talents and skills among young Anglicans – for example, our youth rep. to this year's meeting of the Anglican Consultative Council, Basetsana Makena, did us proud – and I hope that we can take some creative thinking to Lambeth 2020.

And at this stage, I just want to thank Father Jerome Francis, who is leaving our Province and who was the clergy rep. on the Anglican Consultative Council, and Dr Louisa Mojela, who has served this Province as ACC Standing Committee member for the last 10 years.

One of our ACSA Mission priorities is protecting and nurturing the young, and in this regard it was shocking to see recently that the number of children killed or injured in armed conflict around the world last year reached its highest level ever. The United Nations reported that 12,000 children were maimed or killed in 20 different conflicts. In Nigeria and Somalia, children are being recruited to fight and more than half of the 2,500 reported cases of child abduction are said to have taken place in Somalia.

In our own Province, we share with the rest of the Communion a very deep concern at the sexual abuse in churches and schools which has been exposed in recent years. At this Synod we are taking the important step of voting on a Resolution of Permanent Force which will establish the Safe and Inclusive Church Commission of Southern Africa. Sexual abuse of young people constitutes one of history's great breaches of

trust and it is imperative that we eradicate abuse completely from our churches and congregations.

In developing the framework for the Safe Church Commission, we have been immeasurably assisted by the Canon Law Council, which has come to play a critical role in helping us meet the challenges we face in our current legal environment. Thank you, Canon Law Council.

Failing to get our Canons right, or to exercise discipline over those licensed to minister, can have far-reaching implications, as demonstrated by a recent report of South Africa's Commission for the Promotion and Protection for the Rights of Cultural, Religious and Linguistic Communities. In response to reports of pastors making congregants drink petrol or eat grass or snakes, the commission launched an investigation into ways in which the poor are being exploited. In its report, the commission recommended that religious institutions and clergy should be registered and licensed. There is no sign of the government acting on the report at this stage but it is an example of how state institutions could be tempted to infringe on religious freedoms unless we hold our ministers accountable ourselves.

Turning to church administration, the Provincial Treasurer's report states that there are a “growing number of dioceses that are not submitting their annual returns of income to the Provincial office”. Also in some dioceses, expenses are increasing at a faster rate than income, resulting in deficit budgets which will not be sustainable for very long. Let us say this bluntly: the practice of heedlessly adopting budgets providing for more spending than income threatens the financial security of the dioceses and is bad stewardship. I hope that those responsible for finances in the dioceses will hear my warning.

We owe an enormous amount to our Provincial Treasurer, Rob Rogerson. He has come to be synonymous with the Province, and so it is with much regret that I have to report that he will retire in July 2021, before the next Provincial Synod. Rob is at present both our Provincial Treasurer and the Principal Officer of two pension funds. Some work has been done on finding his successor for the pension funds – we have appointed a Deputy Principal Officer who, it is hoped, will become the full-time Principal Officer in early 2021 – and the Provincial Trusts’ Board has been charged with finding a new Provincial Treasurer. Rob, we will miss you sorely but it's not time for tears yet. In

that little gesture today, we have decorated you with the Order of Simon of Cyrene, but tonight's braai will be dedicated to you.

Before I turn to reviewing the state of our nations, two brief points further on the state of our church:

- Firstly, warm congratulations to the Missionary Diocese of Nampula, and to what is about to become the fully-fledged Diocese of Angola. Another of my hopes and visions – and hopefully our collective desire – is that one day in the not-too-distant future we will inaugurate a new Province in the Communion: an independent, stand-alone, Portuguese-speaking Province in Southern Africa.
- Secondly, you have before you a substantive report from the Archbishop's Commission on Human Sexuality. I commend it to you for careful engagement, since it underlines that we cannot choose or judge who is made in God's image. We are called at this Synod to discern together and then act to ensure pastoral care for all.

Outside the Stained Glass Windows: the State of our Nations

Looking beyond issues internal to the Church, I commend for debate and your decision the motions in the Agenda Book. Looking at the societies of Southern Africa more broadly, we need to ask ourselves: how can we be part of a church that works to uplift our countries out of the economic morass some are in, or deal with corruption, or help sustainable development for all, and how do we do this while also focussing on the needs of the poor?

As I prepared this Charge, I saw that President João Lourenço of Angola has recently hosted a summit on peace and security in the Great Lakes region, and that this should reduce tensions in the region. Coming against the backdrop of President Lourenço's action against corruption upon coming to power, we hope that his presidency augurs for a better future for Angola.

In Lesotho, it has been disturbing to see that the seemingly never-ending instability in government continues. We hope that regional pressure from SADC - and the recent signing of an agreement to implement governance, security and media reforms - will motivate politicians to put the interests of the country first.

Last month, Bishop Carlos reported on the exciting developments in Mozambique, in which the Government and Renamo signed a new peace agreement, this coming after renewed hostilities in recent years. The Church was asked to offer prayers before the signing of the agreement. With our three dioceses in Mozambique, please pray for true reconciliation, justice and lasting peace. At the same time, please pray for an end to the continued attacks in the northern province of Cabo Delgado. The bishops of Lebombo, Niassa and Nampula played a sterling role in ministering to those hit by the cyclones earlier this year, and there is still a need for help for their recovery. It is my hope that at this Provincial Synod we will also launch a 2020 Lenten Appeal of the Province in order to help the dioceses in Mozambique to continue reconstructing the lives of their people.

It has been distressing to see that nearly five years after the Namibian and German governments began negotiations over how to deal with the genocide perpetrated by colonial troops early in the 20th century, Germany continues to resist paying reparations. Perhaps we need a resolution urging Germany to pay reparations which will “clear the decks” and allow a

mutual acknowledgement of the pain and suffering their forebears caused.

Our Diocese of Swaziland, as well as showing growth in mission, evangelism and leadership development, is addressing the problems in wider society.

The smallest and remotest diocese in the Province is St Helena. It is relatively peaceful and its people of different ethnic backgrounds form a close community. The main economic activity is fishing and the opening of St Helena's first airport is creating real opportunities for tourism. But with secularisation creeping into society, the Diocese reports that it has a lot of missionary work to do to re-engage with God's people.

In South Africa, the Church is hearing a deep cry, not only from our own clergy and lay Anglicans, but from leaders in other walks of society - even from leaders in political parties and government. The cry is this: As we sink into a mire of divisive, debilitating, unproductive and even murderous factional squabbles, seemingly without any regard for the welfare of the people, where is the voice of the Church? Are we too narrowly focussed on our own mission and ministry?

Recently I tweeted to South Africa's politicians under the hashtag: #STOP FIGHTING! START LEADING! For our own part, we need to speak up, strongly and consistently on the need for respect for democratic and constitutional values, which are of course biblical as we pursue the incarnate Christ who reviews, renews and reconnects us to our Maker.

The recent revelations about the obscene amounts of money being poured into political election campaigns have been truly shocking. If we do not bring under control the amount of money washing around in politics, it will erode people's trust in politicians and their confidence in our democracy, making voters susceptible to the appeals of populist demagogues.

Faced with problems such as these, it is tempting to become cynical and opt out of involvement in public affairs. But there is something that ordinary South Africans can do, and that is to take our future into our own hands by reviving the 1980s activism of civil society, doing things for ourselves and mobilising to place pressure on government. The former Deputy Minister of Finance, Mcebisi Jonas - the man who turned down a R600 million bribe from the Guptas - came to Bishopscourt recently to talk about his new book. In it

he says that viewing our problems as the result of a clash between two factions of the governing party is to over-simplify them, and overlooks what he describes as “the much more dangerous structural and systemic nature of our crisis.” He warns that things can get worse, and even that there are forces which could seize control of and corrupt our election machinery, effectively ending democracy.

One of the themes which emerged for me repeatedly in his book is the importance of a cohesive, robust civil society which holds the public sector accountable. How could we do this in practical terms? Well, the example I can think of most readily as a former teacher is education.

Many of you know of my distress at the persistence of inter-generational poverty - at the fact that those who are likely to experience life abundantly in our society are sons and daughters of the elite, while the sons and daughters of the poor struggle to break out of a vicious cycle of poverty. The way to end this cycle is by giving children the means to break out of poverty through education. My special passion has been to encourage the establishment of new, low-fee, high quality church schools accessible to all, not just as a

way for individuals to advance themselves, but as a contribution to society. The American writer, Toni Morrison, whose loss we recently suffered, once said: “I tell my students when you get these jobs that you have been so brilliantly trained for, just remember that your real job is that if you are free, you need to free somebody else. If you have some power, then your job is to empower somebody else. This is not just a grab-bag candy game.”

Promoting education does not only mean building new church schools, as we are doing through the Anglican Board of Education. It means helping public schools in your community to perform better. For example, we hear of too many teachers who do not come to class on time, setting a bad example to learners and robbing them of the opportunity to take full advantage of their school hours. Perhaps if the *gogos* in a community got together and became watchdogs at schools, taking notes of when teachers arrive and leave, and sharing their records with governing bodies, we might see an improvement in attendance. And when I talk about *gogos*, we do have 40, 50 and 60 year-old *gogos*, and they are still up and about, and when I say *gogos* I don't only mean the female *gogos*, I also mean *khulus*.

And this kind of action in communities could be carried out in other areas. By now, 25 years after our liberation, surely we have learned that we cannot sit back and wait for government to do everything for us? Whenever and wherever we see government failing, especially at local level, we need to organise and act. For example, we can make sure that municipal employees working in our areas are devoting the hours for which they are paid to improving services. I am sure you can think of similar initiatives in other areas of your communities.

The state of our church, and the state of the different nations in our Province are cause for concern but also for great hope. Wherever I travel, I see dedicated Anglicans and others working hard to realise God's vision for us and our world. The challenges may be daunting, but they are not impossible to overcome. To paraphrase Martin Luther King, Jr., there are times during which we have to accept finite disappointment, but we must never lose infinite hope. I believe in you. God believes in you, and through our love of God we find an inner illumination.

That light helps us realise that Southern Africa, like its children, doesn't cry in Afrikaans, English, Zulu,

Xhosa, Ndebele, Venda, Swati, Sesotho, Sepedi, Kwanyama, Tsonga, Tswana, Shangaan, Portuguese or Chichewa. A child simply cries and we respond. Our children are crying for help. Our communities are crying for help. Our church is crying for help. Our countries are crying for help. We have a great deal of work ahead of us if we are to succeed in reviewing, renewing and restoring our church, and so reconnecting our faith to daily life. But let us remind ourselves that whomever puts their faith in God will not be disappointed.

God loves you and so do I. And God bless Southern Africa. Amen.