

The Church has left the building: Recognizing the Gospel beyond the visible Church

Matthew 28:18-20

Introduction

Grace and Peace from our Lord Jesus Christ.

Dear sisters and brothers in Christ, members of this our Synod, distinguished guests: greetings and welcome to the Forty Ninth Session of our Diocesan Synod.

I wish to extend my fervent welcome to our special guests (The Ven. Bhekindlela Magongo- representing the Bishop of Swaziland), our partners in mission- Mr Sabelo Mashwama and Maropeng Moholoa from Hope Africa and our ecumenical partner- the Revd Canon Sabelo Mntubu. The two ensuing days will be of hard work and concentration on the laws of the Church and the world we live in. They will require us to debate even uncomfortable issues that affect our local context, our country and even our families. In the midst of it all, I exhort you to be vigilant, be considerate of others feelings and, most of all, to remember that our common denominator is God, who has called us all together as a family.

To those who are attending Synod for the first time, I hope you will feel at home. Do not be intimidated by the processes, debates and engagements. I must confess that even though I have attended Synod a couple of times, today I am like you; maybe I am even worse than you because I feel so unworthy to, even preside at this Synod, but I believe that the God who called me will neither leave me nor forsake me.

I wish to give thanks to God for the on-going support I receive from my wife and my two children. I thank God for them always and I could have not asked for a better family than them. I also wish to extend my sincerest gratitude to the Advisory Committee who have prepared for this Synod; our Diocesan Staff who did all the work after the Advisory Committee had met, members of Chapter for their constant support, members of various bodies of our Diocese for their commitment, the wonderful Clergy who love the Lord Jesus with their whole hearts and who give themselves sacrificially to serve God and his people in this Diocese, the KwaNzimela staff, Good Shepherd rector and churchwardens for allowing us to worship here, for the Mothers' Union, whose hall we shall be using for deliberations and all that concerns Synod and the rest of the people of this Diocese who love and serve God in different ways.

I wish to extend particular thanks to all my predecessors for their hard work, dedication, zeal and enthusiasm in making this Diocese the way it is. I wish to extend my particular thanks, though, to Bishop Dino whom we congratulate for having been translated to Natal last year and from whom we inherited this episcopal ministry, for his tirelessness in seeing that this Diocese moved from where his predecessors had left it. We shall reap the fruits of his legacy, and of course we shall bring out what God intended for us; when he put us where we are.

Yesterday was exactly seven months since the day of my consecration and enthronement. I have learnt some things that concern episcopal ministry. I have learnt that one needs to care, but not too much, that this ministry involves taking tough decisions which are so painful even to you who is by virtue of your office is required to take them, because they give you sleepless nights of wondering whether the decision was not too hasty, was I not too harsh, etc. I have also learnt that the Episcopate requires one to have a thick skin. We have already, since April, dedicated five churches, namely: St Andrew's, Nembe, St. Saviour's, Ndlangubo, St Thomas', eBokwe, St Thomas', Mbilane, and St. Matthias, Khula Village. We have ordained eight deacons and we look forward to ordaining three deacons into the priesthood next month. We have confirmed 619 candidates. God being our helper we wish to work tirelessly for the growth of the mission in this Diocese.

This Synod meets at a very critical time in the history of our tertiary institutions, when our children demand free education with a hash tag #feesmustfall. At our last Synod of Bishops the Archbishop invited heads of institutions of the Gauteng Region who told us that the situation was dire, and indeed we had heard about it over the news for some time. One understands the cry of these students and the fact that the government must deliver on the promises made. When these protests started we all thought on the surface, though, that students were advancing a political cause. However later we could see that the protests were genuine because some students go to bed hungry having secured loans for tuition and accommodation, and for some having paid the initial registration fee with no hope of settling the rest of the fees if 'NSFAS does not come to party.

One really understands the plight of these students, looking at the economic inequality in our country and the mere fact that some of these students make it through to Matric having had a huge struggle, because of poor science laboratories, a shortage of teachers and, if there are enough teachers they go on strike every time they want a salary increase, poor conditions of schools, some of them have to walk long distances to school. I, however struggle with the fact that these very students destroy the only infrastructure that could take five or more years to reconstruct simply because funds WOULD have been allocated to other needs. I wish to commend the students of UNIZUL who have not embarked on the protests, not because I am sure they do not share the same burden as others but they believe in the fact that there are other ways of dealing with matters, which I strongly believe in. At Chapter we looked at the contingency plan, of how we will handle the situation if the same protests were to take place there. We are however grateful to God for the Memorandum of understanding in which the students have agreed to write their 2016 exams. Our trust and hope is that the spirit of God may encompass them as they soak themselves to studies.

I have chosen the theme: "The Church has left the building: recognizing the Gospel beyond the visible Church" and my point of departure will be Matthew 28:18-20

This passage takes place during the time when the disciples had lost the one they loved and admired, to a brutal execution. To see Jesus alive after his death, which they naturally assumed had ended everything, must have been utterly astonishing.

Nothing in their history or Jewish faith had prepared them for what was occurring. To say they struggled with cognitive dissonance would be an understatement.

Jesus had left the disciples and expected them to return to Galilee where he would meet up with them, they followed yet again, not knowing what they would encounter. Galilee was where it all began and Galilee, it seems, would mark the new beginning. It is difficult to imagine what their journey was like, but it had to have been a memorable one. It was the ultimate road trip, filled with long conversations that focused upon making sense of the mind-bending events that had transpired, wondering aloud what would happen next. This moment with Jesus would be an important time for them. They had lost everything in the catastrophic events that preceded this, and they were on their way to discover what, if anything would be next.

Having reached Galilee Jesus solemnly commissions them to go forth among **all** nations, by **all nations** for me means not only a particular group of people, but all that has breath in it, including animals and plants. The salvation they were to preach is a common salvation; whoever will, let him come, and take the benefit; and that all are welcome to Jesus Christ. My whole point with this passage is that Jesus asks his disciples to reach out compassionately, creatively, with a clear mandate accompanied by zeal, they themselves having been set ablaze on fire. It is important to note that the disciples neither suggested nor were they driven by their egos or the feeling that this is what Jesus might want us to do; they had to wait for his commissioning before they could set forth.

In-order for this to be realised we will look at different subtopics which, after much prayer and reflection, we have dedicated ourselves to focus on.

EVANGELISM, DISCIPLESHIP AND SPIRITUAL GROWTH

Evangelism

The theme of my charge as already stated is on the “Church leaving the building: recognizing the gospel beyond the visible Church”. This theme can only be achieved if we are not inwardly looking as stated by the collect I developed for this Synod. The Anglican communion came up with five marks of mission and for the purposes of this topic I will deal with the first two and they are: “To proclaim the good news of the Kingdom and to teach, baptize and nurture new believers” These two marks of mission can only be achieved if the Church was not inwardly looking as already alluded to. Our Diocese did embark on this cause in the past, through the department of Mission and Evangelism and lately Malikhule ibandla and proved itself to be a success.

We are extremely grateful to God for the ministry of those who headed this department before. We have Christ the King Parish up and running and many more Parishes because of the sterling work done by those who went there, to evangelize and later for Church planting. We are also grateful for the tent ministry which has

been in operation in our Diocese, in proclaiming the good news of salvation to all, and most came to know the Lord through it.

The challenge in the years ahead of us though, is to increase the effectiveness of this ministry by seeking for a more practical and workable structure, and by placing it at the very heart of our ministry and the ministry of this Diocese. I envisage the proclamation of the gospel reaching beyond our borders, i.e. reaching other Dioceses in this Province and beyond our Province and Church. I see us as the Diocese of Zululand resuscitating the ministry of open airs, see each and every Parish setting aside a week or weeks of mission where amongst other things the ministry of healing and reconciliation shall take the centre stage. I picture us as the Diocese doing Church planting like never before, reaching all the un evangelized areas within our borders, planting Churches in squatter camps if we will reach that point here in KwaZulu/Natal, planting Churches in the low-cost Housing areas which have sprung up all over since 1994, planting Churches in the farming areas of which her population is increasing due to land restitution laws. I have a picture of a Diocese united, breaking bread together, and being set ablaze to realize that life is no longer our own but we now live for His honor and for the advancement of His cause.

All the above can only be achieved by seeking together a more a practical and participatory method which will not only place this ministry at the very heart of the life of this Diocese, but will see it, into fruition. A year or two from this Synod, I will appoint one Clergyperson on a full time basis who shall work with a dedicated committee appointed by the Bishop to carry out this mission. The appointed person shall be INSTALLED as Canon Missioner, which will afford Chapter to engage him/her on matters concerning the ministry. That person together with the committee shall need off course the assistance of capable people like the Provincial Growing the Church team to draw up a charter regulating the nature, scope of work, tenure and modus operandi. I therefore call upon all God's people who have this ministry at heart like me to contribute towards this cause, so that all that is necessary for it to go forward maybe realized. Amongst many of the things needed is a good tent with a good public address system, motor vehicle and a trailer. Those who feel moved to contribute to this cause would need to speak to our Diocesan Secretary so we may start gearing ourselves towards realizing this goal.

Discipleship

The second mark of mission quoted earlier is that of teaching, baptizing and nurturing new believers. This also should be our urgent call as the Diocese of Zululand. The proclamation of the gospel is incomplete if it is not accompanied by discipling those who have heard the message of salvation, because that new person will have to more and more conform to the image of the Lord Jesus and in becoming like him in deed.

I believe that following Jesus and helping others, follow Jesus happens within a community, and I also believe that discipleship journey follows a four-part process which is the following:

Because everyone is valuable to God, we **engage** culture and community.

Because everyone will grow as our lives are built on Christ, we **establish** biblical foundations.

Because ministry is not only for full-time ministers, we **equip** believers to minister.

Because everyone is called to make disciples, we **empower** disciples to make disciples.

The Anglican Consultative Council meeting in Zambia in May this year took a unanimous decision to encourage all Anglicans around the globe to engage in intentional discipleship and at our last Provincial Synod a motion was passed that ACSA would engage herself in planning and launching this ministry. I therefore charge all Clergy to continue using the Rooted in Jesus books in discipling their parishioners as adopted by Synod 2012; and as a means of initiating new converts into the Christian faith, we shall utilize the resources provided by Growing the Church network, and we have accordingly indicated to them, that we would like a training on discipleship in 2017. I will however charge Malikhule to give careful consideration and come up with strategies of how this may be realized. There are also programs like the Alpha course, which some of our brothers and sisters have gone through and have testified that it changed their lives; these could be utilized too in the meantime.

Spiritual renewal

This Diocese is known of her charismatic spirituality throughout the whole Province and elsewhere, which was handed down to us by the fathers who started the charismatic renewal in the fifties. We give thanks to God for their immense contribution towards the spirituality of this our Diocese. I admire the fact that when the movement began, the emphasis was on experiencing God afresh within the context of our rich Anglican heritage.

My dream is to see this Diocese growing into the full maturity in Christ, being renewed spiritually, emotionally and physically by the tools already in existence within our Diocese. I have a picture of a Diocese growing not only in Anglicanism but also in keeping the balance, in worship and spirituality. I see this Diocese growing tremendously into being the role model of other Dioceses in this Province as it used to be. I see this Diocese spiritually renewed so that other Churches may learn to appreciate our Anglican identity more than before.

In order for this to be realized one will need to pay attention to the organization of Iviyo, so as to make sure that it is nurtured the way it should, as well as the Mountain service (Inkonzo yentaba), which has come in full force within our circles. We will have to get involved in its decision making, so that we can all truly own it as the Diocesan family. I see these two tools as a means of our spiritual renewal as the Diocese, of which I will encourage us as a family, to participate in them and appreciate their existence amongst us.

My theory is that we cannot be able to leave our Church buildings and recognize the gospel elsewhere, if our spirituality has not been renewed. Only when a transformation process has occurred in our lives, we will open up into new possibilities.

INCARNATIONAL MINISTRY (MASINAKEKELANE DIOCESAN AGENCY FOR DEVELOPMENT)

Masinakekelane Diocesan Agency for Development continues to show great potential in leading social development work in the Diocese. Masinakekelane supports and mentor several food gardens at various parishes throughout the diocese. We have quite a good number of volunteers that work the land to produce food to mitigate food insecurity in our diocese. Many of our people survive on subsistence farming, we acknowledge that drought has made it difficult for them to grow and produce food and in some parts of our diocese lack of safe drinking water remains a great challenge. Having said all that, we want to encourage all household to have food gardens in their backyards, and where possible, on parish land for the benefit of the community.

We continue to support the **dress a child school uniform campaign** championed by Masinakekelane. Through this dress a child school uniform campaign, we help to restore the dignity of many children, some orphaned and vulnerable, and those from very poor families. As we approach the end of another academic calendar year, we call on all people to continue supporting this campaign. We need to send a strong message out there that education of our children is one of the priorities for the diocese.

You will recall that HOPE Africa chose our diocese to pilot the Church and Community Mobilisation Process (CCMP), otherwise known as Umoja. The CCMP approach builds the capacity of church leaders to engage with the surrounding communities in the integral mission and to identify and utilise local resources for the benefit of the church and broader community. The process empowers people to take charge of their destiny by questioning history, current situation, examining the root causes of poverty and exploring locally available resources; and implementing appropriate activities to achieve the desired future. We remain grateful to HOPE Africa for training 15 of our parishioners and clergy to become CCMP facilitators with responsibility to transform individuals and communities. It is now in our hands to ensure that CCMP is also implemented in the rest of the diocese.

HIV and AID continue to remain a huge challenge to us. The infection rates are alarmingly still too high and too many lives are affected. The recent research revealed that HIV infection rate is increased by the on-going gender based violence; and the 2016 International conference also noted that urgent attention is needed to reduce HIV infection rate among girls between the ages of 14 - 24, and we should couple that with our efforts to mitigate sexual and gender based violence. It is for this reason that the Diocese of Zululand has partnered with HOPE Africa in the Community Gender Based Violence and HIV Prevention initiative for Adolescent Girls and Young Women (AGYW). This wonderful initiative seeks to empower Adolescent Girls and Young Women to live their DREAM Life.

The intervention contributes towards increasing community response and improving existing services in addressing gender based violence and the risk to HIV through strong referrals and linkages of adolescent girls and young women into a continuum of care and prevention services. The programme goal will be achieved through the following objectives:

Strengthen communities within the district of Umkhanyakude (KZN) to promote and sustain gender equality, and prevent gender based violence as well as HIV among AGYW

To provide quality and timely Post Violence Care (PVC) and psychological support to AGYW who have experienced Gender Based Violence, and reduce related negative effects and/or repeated assault.

Masinakekelane shows great potential through its programmes and opportunities it creates for our people. We, however, need a strong and dedicated board/committee to ensure that good governance and accountability are realised. I therefore want to make a special call to people with passion for social development to serve on the board/committee of Masinakekelane. We are indeed grateful to Mrs Zodumo Ndwandwe who ensures that Masinakekelane reaches out to communities, even to the remotest parts of our diocese; she ensures that Masinakekelane is stable and operational. Masinakekelane is our organisation, and we need to support it as much as we can so that it can reach more communities in our diocese. This we can do by putting in place Masinakekelane committees in our Parishes that will do the work faithfully and diligently and also have Archdeaconry Chaplains who shall make sure that Parish committees do the work as expected.

I must emphasize that incarnational ministry is one of the major tools that will assist us as the Diocese to recognize the gospel beyond our visible Churches, because being faithful in doing it, will make us keep contact with the rest of God's people not only Anglicans in our Parishes, but others out there who are in desperate need of our care. I want to end this section by Teresa of Avila's words "Christ has no body on earth but yours, no feet but yours. Yours are the eyes through which Christ's compassion for the world is to look out; yours are the feet with which He is to go about doing good; and yours are the hands with which He is to bless us now."

SACRAMENT OF CONFIRMATION

Earlier we informed this aghast house of the number of those we have confirmed during our seven months of episcopal ministry. Each time and in all the places this initiation rite has been performed, just before we finish, I have made sure that I ask one person to say a prayer for those who have been confirmed as a means of really asking God's mercy and grace to dwell with them so that the rite performed may not just be one of those traditions the Church has to go through.

When Bishop Dino introduced the system of allowing children to receive communion before confirmation I was overjoyed, thinking that the Church was now beginning to correct the mistake of the early 1500's where confirmation was made a requisite for admission to communion and also the mistake of the reformation which

changed confirmation into a didactic experience expressed as a graduation exercise for those who had mastered the catechism.

I have come to appreciate confirmation as:

An increased portion of the gifts of the Holy Spirit: wisdom, knowledge, right judgment, understanding, courage, piety, and fear of the Lord. A deepening and strengthening of the grace received at Baptism, which is considered the presence of God in the soul. A more intimate relationship with Jesus Christ. The ability to take a greater, more mature role in the Church's mission of living the Christian faith daily and witnessing to Christ everywhere. A special mark, or character, on the soul that can never be erased.

I see confirmation as one of the tools that will really help us as the Church to get out there to witness and proclaim the message of salvation. Those who have gone through confirmation and who are serious about the sacrament received should become special agents of transformation as originally intended by the Church.

We shall therefore without delay, appoint a Clergyperson who shall be a Chaplain or given another name with the assistance of Chapter and the person so appointed shall engage all those confirmed in the Diocese from 2016, to avoid big numbers, in a manner befitting such. One of the appointee duties shall be that of assembling all the confirmed from time to time for post confirmation classes and a material for such shall be provided at an appropriate time.

STERWARDSHIP OF THE ENVIRONEMENT

The very first commandment that we were given as human beings was given to Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. "Work the land and look after it" Gen 2:15
Eat from the garden, drink the water and make your shelter from the trees, but LOOK AFTER IT.

Over the recent years we have not looked after God's earth - the top soil has been washed away, the trees have been cut down, the rivers are polluted and the land is covered with plastic and rubbish. And we are burning coal and petrol and polluting the air. The saddest thing of all is that as we burn them we have made a blanket around the earth which is warming it. We are heating up this planet, a Garden of God and we are now seeing more drought leading to suffering, rising of food prices and more hunger.

One of the most loved verses is John 3: 16 "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son so that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have everlasting life". It probably was the first verse we learned in Sunday school. We were all brought up with this verse and we should think of all the peoples of the whole world - Africa, china and India etc. not only us, our parishioners and our Churches, but the whole World. God so loved the world that he sent his only begotten son to save humans, animals, rivers and mountains and to save the land.

When Jesus died on the cross, he died for us humans, but his blood dripped on the land.

We know as Christians we are called to preach the gospel to the lost, to visit the sick and to feed the hungry. But we are also called to recognize the gospel in the environment by working with Christ to heal the land. In the Anglican Church we say to care for creation is the fifth mark of mission. "To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation, and sustain and renew the life of the earth". To heal the land is not an added extra responsibility; it is part of our mission as followers of Jesus.

So I propose the following ways to heal the land, which will really help us to leave our Church buildings and be outwardly looking, so as to recognize that Christ came to save the cosmos.

1. We need to confess "If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land. 2 Chron 7:14. What are some of the things that we need to confess?
 - we have land which is not used to grow food - while others go hungry
 - we have cut down trees and have not planted more
 - we waste water and forget that it is sacred
 - we throw waste and allow the land to become full of plastic

2. We need to green out churches

When someone walks into our churches they must see a sacred place of God the Creator. In order to do this we need to do six things

- Preach and pray about creation: we can celebrate the Season of Creation in September; we can celebrate World Environment Day. Preach about water at our baptism services. We can have services or part of our services in God's nature, rather than going out **only** on Palm Sunday.
- Plant trees: Rev 22:2" the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations" Trees clean the air from pollution, they hold the soil to prevent erosion, they provide shade and they provide food for birds, animals and fruit trees provide food for humans too. We need to know which alien trees are as they suck up the water, and rather plant indigenous trees which are born here in our part of Southern Africa.
- Start vegetable gardens - can we in this Diocese have some courses where we share knowledge about how each family can more efficiently grow their own vegetables and also improve our use of church land?
- Hold water as a sacred gift of God. We all know which river Jesus was baptised in - Jordan river- but often we don't know which river the water came from that we were baptised in. We think the water came out of a tap. I want to challenge you to discover where the water came from that was used in your church for baptism. If it is filled with rubbish - can you organise a clean-up campaign? Make sure that taps are not dripping, both at home and in your church.
- Remember that the earth is the Lord's. We like to keep our church clean and the sanctuary, but what about the community outside? We need to organise clean ups and reduce the rubbish that is lying everywhere, and to

provide collection points for paper, cans, bottles and plastics to be sent for recycling, thereby also generating income for the parish.

- And we need to raise our children to love nature – for you will not protect what you do not love. Teach our children and grandchildren to grow vegetables, take your Siyakhula and youth on hikes, so that they can appreciate nature.

In order for the above to be carried out, I want to challenge all Archdeaconries to have a Chaplain to the environment with a committee as per the size of the Archdeaconry, which will see to it that the green Agenda is catered for at parish level. All organizations to make it a point that their constituencies are aware of the green agenda and that time is set aside to talk about the environment.

LITURGICAL RENEWAL FOR TRANSFORMATIVE WORSHIP

The topic on liturgical renewal for transformative worship has come up again and again in our previous Diocesan Synods as well as at our Provincial Synod, because it is important, especially in these times, where people demand worship services that are accessible and meaningful. I hold the view that the design of our worship services must take into account the spirituality and language of the discourse of our people, however not forgetting that our worship should be Spirit directed.

Most people, young people included, still think that our worship is too stereotyped and lacking vibrancy and variation. This criticism comes out especially when the focus has only been on the prayer book. It is still felt that our worship should be contextual and with this, I agree.

One would always acknowledge the fact that this Diocese holds diverse spirituality which has worked well in the past, with no tension between those who possess either. I was tempted at some stage to write a paper on the “Place of liturgical worship in Pentecostal/Charismatic worship” I lost the urge to write because I felt the two traditions ARE INCOMPATIBLE. I however feel that this Diocese over the past has had to blend the two in all our worship services. I hold the view though, that balance needs to be stricken, so that both traditions can be incorporated, for those who wish to do so, since we are diverse, however not compromising who we are, and what we stand for.

The Provincial liturgical team, which I am a member of, is busy preparing a prayer book “Under the African Skies”. A glimpse of it was introduced to us at the last Provincial Synod. We have already incorporated some of the content that will be coming with the new prayer book during our ordination services. While we are waiting for the new prayer book to arrive, I feel we have to do something ourselves. I will be inviting the Very Revd Bruce Jenneker- the Convenor of the new prayer book next year to journey with Clergy in Post Ordination Training and any other interested Clergy as well as members of laity who wish to be part of the training on how to do creative worship, i.e. exploring new ways of worship which is corporate but creative. Having received that training, anyone who wishes to use creative worship suiting the local context will be given special permission by the Bishop, who will have examined the creative worship well beforehand.

I strongly believe that our liturgy should not only focus on those inside the building, but amongst many of its elements, one of them should focus on mission. It should be diverse, alive and creatively respond to the needs all who found themselves in it.

GIVING AND THE ECONOMY OF THE DIOCESE

In this diocese we inherited a system which was agreed upon by all parishes, which spreads the burden by a form of Parish share modified by pastoral flexibility where an individual Parish finds itself struggling. If everybody is transparent and honest, it works well; even in a budget like ours, everyone is involved, and we do not become dependent on external funding. We will live on resources raised entirely amongst ourselves, on a basis of sharing which is as fair and none contributes nothing.

St Paul's principle, set out in 2 Corinthians 8 & 9, that **each one should give** is usually referred to individuals but it seems to me that it also applies to groups of Christians together in congregations; 'each one should give not reluctantly or under compulsion'. There is something dignifying, empowering and uniting in shouldering the practical load together even if some are much better able to contribute than others.

But the principle does also apply to individuals. St Paul can be translated as saying 'each should give as he has decided' or 'each should give as he is able' - that is, in proportion to his or her income. I do want to say that if this diocese is going to flourish, we have to get the giving right. I know this is possible because I have seen it in some of the parishes I was once appointed to; once the culture of generous and regular giving is established, that parish can be solid and flourish for many years to come. So can a diocese. We are still doing it the wrong way round and squeezing the pensioners to death whilst the ones with good paying jobs cry poverty. It is the ones with the jobs and the cars who should be carrying the church financially.

No priest can preach about giving without doing it themselves and no church warden or councillor can ask for money unless they are giving themselves. We as leadership need to take that time out and ask our people to do the same. What I am asking for here is a turning of the corner for all parishes of this diocese so that life for our Clergy would be easy and that they may focus on evangelism as they should, rather than worrying whether the Parish would make it for the next Parish share.

We have already appointed a task team to handle stewardship around the Diocese; I hope they will be received well. They have had several meetings already to set up strategies on how they can go about dealing with stewardship not only of money but of the talents and time. Amongst those strategies in place, is making the month of September a stewardship month, where all Parishes will engage themselves in teaching on stewardship, and at an appropriate time they will provide liturgies approved by the Bishop, to be used during that month of September. For the purposes of concertizing the whole Diocesan family on stewardship, the task team is planning to renew and re-launch the ministry of stewardship on Family day 2017. I

trust that this cause shall be supported, and preparations towards that day are underway.

Having said all the above, I however feel that we should come up with Innovative ways of securing healthy and sustainable cash flows instead of ONLY relying on offerings and contributions from parishes which remains our first call THOUGH as Christians. Our Diocese is spiritually very wealthy but occupies an area void of large industries and job opportunities. It is greatly rural. Its cash resources are scanty and diminishing especially in these hard economic times. There is currently a net outflow of cash from the areas north of UThukela River. This means that the buying power of denizens of this area is taking more money out of the region to support people outside the region who used to work and send money into the Region. This income is largely from social grants. The area of Esikhaleni always performs better because most people work in the Industrial area of Umhlathuze followed by Mandeni, again because of industries in that area. With more unemployment in the Country and this Region in particular, diocesan resources are negatively affected. Even in the best of times, we are predominantly rural.

Having stated the obvious and well-known fact, it is also an established fact that the Diocese has some investments that yield accrual interest. It is also an established fact, that the Diocese earns income from leasing out her both timber and sugar cane farms. It is therefore not a novelty and out-of-turn proposal to consider a more structured and formal management of our Diocesan resources. By borrowing from our Mother Head Quarters of Canterbury, their financial and business Operations headed by a Body called Church Commissioners. These are highly qualified business practitioners who serve as directors on many Boards of companies. They look after the investments of the Church and decide on them.

I therefore propose to this Synod for the establishment of a Diocesan Board of Church Commissioners, which shall, inter alia;

- 1) Be composed of business men and women of the Diocese.
- 2) Investment experts and bankers plus other professionals available for this purpose. To Develop, Grow and Sustain wealth for the use by the Diocese to fulfil its pastoral duties and develop and impart skills to our parishioners. Such a Board shall generate its own resources and maintain its own existence and employ from the Diocese a workforce that will understand fully the reasoning behind the existence of the Board.

Each Archdeacon will be tasked to assist in conducting an audit of skills and professions within his territory and recommend persons who can avail themselves to serve on the Board. A Charter regulating the nature, scope of work, tenure and its modus operandi can be crafted in consultation with suitably qualified persons.

This Board of Commissioners will present its Reports to a Joint Seating of the Finance Committee and the Diocesan Trust Board on a regular basis and I envisage it to have its offices in an area such as Umhlathuze City to access businesses with greater ease. Having a more structured and formal management of resources will also assist the Diocese to contribute to the cause of justice in our society, because I believe that "it is in giving that we receive", and our giving should not be inwardly looking but reaching also to those beyond our Church.

ST. AUGUSTINE'S SCHOOLS

Three years ago at our Trust Board meeting a suggestion was made that of resuscitating St. Augustine's School as an Anglican School of Excellence and also returning it to its former glory. Meanwhile a group of former school principals, inspectors and school teachers had a similar idea in their little corner. Having done research into St. Augustine's, they delegated one of them to come to discuss the matter with the then Bishop Dino, who welcomed the project with both hands, and subsequently told the delegation that the trustees had, had a similar idea.

Following that meeting a subsequent meeting was held between Bishop Dino, the Diocesan Secretary and others to chart the way forward. The idea was sold to the trustees; a follow up meeting was then convened at St. Augustine's between these enthusiastic people of God and the Diocese of Zululand which was made up of a team ranging from clergy, school principals, and ex teachers. A joint committee was formed which was to take the matter forward and see to its fruition. That team has met on a number of occasions to deliberate, and to look at ways of how this school maybe started.

All that is necessary has been put in place; there is a detailed plan of the school and a constitution which has to go through Diocesan Council at some stage for ratification, portfolios for the board of governors, committees have been set in motion e.g. planning, registration, curriculum and classes, fundraising and gala dinner organisers.

A meeting has been facilitated between some members of the team and Chief Molefe to officially inform him of this project and request the use of more land for phase 2 and 3 of the project, viz. a primary school- Grade R to Grade 6 and a teachers' training college for general education and training and further education and training.

The team is hoping that teaching may start in 2018, the point of entry being Grade 7-9 and progressing as the years go by. It is hoped that the school will be built in phases, the last phase to be completed in September 2017. I wish therefore to call upon anyone here present and any member of our beloved Diocese to contribute to this cause, with either monetary donations or your skills so that this project may take off. The Team hopes to have a gala dinner on the 16th of December at a place and time to be announced at a later stage. The organizers are hoping to invite all former students of the institution, some of which hold high positions in government and industries, and we shall at some stage approach some foundations for financial assistance.

I have no doubt in my mind that this project will create job opportunities, and that it will assist us in achieving our goal of reaching out and not looking inwardly but creatively and compassionately focussing our attention out there, being energized by faith. I envisage us turning the area of Masotsheni into a village whose Lord is Jesus Christ.

CLERGY WELLBEING, HEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT

1. Clergy wellbeing and Health

Graham Tomlin in his book entitled *The Widening Circle: Priesthood as God's way of blessing the world* says the following about Priests:

“The priest bears responsibility of recalling the Church constantly to its priestly calling. They remind the Church of its rootedness in the rest of the humanity, ensuring it doesn't become remote, patronizing or condescending in its attitude towards the community around it. At the same time he says Priests have to remind the Church of its divine calling, to be agent through which Christ does the work of restoring humanity to its place within the created order.”

The above and many other tasks listed in the Charge to the Priests, which is always read out those to be ordained priests by the Bishop, puts a heavy load on the lives of the priests. For them to function properly they need to be taken care of and, in turn, they themselves need to take care of their bodies, minds, spirits etc. A person left to his/her own devices will fall victim to burn out. We therefore need the support, love and encouragement of others to continue being the people whom God intended us to be.

Amongst the many promises I made at my consecration in April was that of sustaining my fellow Clergy, by constantly guiding and encouraging them at all times and in many ways. God being my helper, we purpose to fulfil this to the best of our ability, first by initiating programs that will bring Clergy together for spiritual renewal and growth, and also for unity. I purpose to initiate Clergy sports day where we will compete according to our giftedness. I will encourage Clergy, spouses and families to get together in Archdeaconries especially those who are not doing it. We purpose to continue the legacy of our predecessors that of upgrading Rectories and building new ones as possible as we can. I strongly believe that mission is possible if the one to carry it out has a stable life, proper and comfortable place of dwelling and off course other needs of life. Since the beginning of the year all Clergy have been receiving a sum of R700 towards the payment of their medical aid and we are hoping to raise that amount to R1000 for 2017. Our aim is to keep on increasing this medical benefit to an amount that will enable Clergy to top up this subsidy with a small portion.

Clergy Development

Priesthood demands of Clergy that they be good theologians and regular readers of scripture and the great tradition of Christian Theology. Clergy need to know the pattern of divine interaction with the world, who God is, what the world is and the place of humanity and the Church within it. I also hold the fact that Clergy need to be vested in other fields of study as well, since the communities they lead are diverse

and are transforming very fast because of the vast knowledge that is out there for them, at no cost.

This Diocese is singularly blessed with a crop of young talented priests whose upward movement should be anyone's concern. They need hope and a good reason to stay aboard and to live. Studies have shown that great minds reach saturation and boredom very quickly if not challenged.

Our long-term desire is to position the Diocese of Zululand as The Voice of Reason. When the Diocese of Zululand, with a moral compass, has spoken, I see society and charismatic cults and their religiosity, bowing. I see us claiming the moral high ground. I envisage Clergy publishing leading books on various subjects and giving light in this era of confusion. I see this Diocese being a BEACON OF HOPE.

All the above can be achieved if we encourage and empower our priests to study further and further. I am prepared, as your Bishop, to grant study leaves to one or two Clergypersons depending on the circumstances per year to study further. Others may choose to study through distance learning, which we will strongly encourage. We envisage an upsurge of interest in taking up this opportunity for ordained priests, between the ages of 25 and 50 years old.

We envisage that some Clergy will deviate to study some courses that will assist the Church in her mission e.g. Information Technology, Accounting, Business Administration, Human Resources Management and other fields of Management, Christian Psychology, Community Development, Canon Law and Education (which will assist those whom we will appoint at St. Augustine, Masotsheni, as Chaplains in the near future). I have a picture of this Diocese producing Clergy with PhD's either in Theology or in other fields as we have mentioned. Obviously the dream cannot be achieved without funding. We will therefore need to establish a scholarship fund which shall be controlled and managed by a committee headed by the Bishop with a Charter regulating beneficiaries and what the Diocese expects from them.

Amongst many one of the terms of this scholarship will be that the beneficiary shall study what the Diocese endorses, and more importantly the beneficiary shall remain within the Diocese for a certain number of years which shall be determined by the committee. Canon Myeni and his family shall be the first contributors with a sum of R1M towards this cause as from the beginning of the New Year, and I shall ask him and others with the Assistance of Chapter, to assist directly until the Fund is registered and the terms are set out unequivocally. During the setting up of the committee and the rest of the things that needs to be taken care of, the donated amount shall be invested with our Trustees not only for interest but for safe keeping as well.

I believe that if we invest in our Clergy, we will be able to fulfil the theme of this our Synod.

COMPANIONSHIP WITH THE DIOCESES OF GEORGE AND CARLISLE

I believe that in order for us as the Diocese to be outward looking and not only focus on what we have and who we are, we will have to pay particular attention to our Link Dioceses of George and Carlisle. For me, companionship with others will bring opportunities that we would not have realized if we were keeping to ourselves. I have the utmost trust in the God who called all of us that he requires us to share who we are, what we have, and what we hope to become in the future. At this point I am reminded of the words of Henri J.M. Nouwen in his book titled: *The Only Necessary Thing: Living a Prayerful Life*, he says:

“Jesus is God-for-us, God-with-us, and God-within-us. Jesus is God giving himself completely, pouring himself out for us without reserve. Jesus doesn’t hold back or cling to his own possessions. He gives all there is to give.”

I will be travelling to the UK towards the end of January to the Bishop’s training in Canterbury, and after that training I will travel to Carlisle to meet up with the people of Carlisle and also the team that tasked at looking closely at our link. Amongst the many issues we will discuss, one of them will be that of “renewing and re-launching our companionship”. Obviously this will require us setting aside time to do it, whether it will be during Diocesan Family Day or at some other event. I have already discussed this matter briefly with the Bishop of George at our last Synod of Bishops. With our companionship I envisage opportunities of evangelism, sharing of ideas, youth excursions, parish exchanges/or one priest spending a year in either of the dioceses or vice versa and parish links.

CONCLUSION

My prayer for us as the Diocese is that, having inherited such a rich spirituality and diversity from those who went before us, we may not be stuck and inwardly focussed but work tirelessly with zeal, being energized with faith, to see that what God has sown in us may not be lost.

I come to this Synod having hope that God has something good in store for us and I will be ready to listen, discern and develop, together with you Clergy and people of God in building a Diocese whose foundations are: love, justice, peace, unity, compassion and treating everybody equally.

I earnestly ask you also to come to Synod prayerfully and with the aim of building something which our children will be proud of.

I want to end with the words of St. Augustine of Hippo:

**For you I am a Bishop, but with you I am a Christian,
One is an office, accepted, the other a gift, received.
If I am happier by far to be redeemed with you than to be placed over you,
Then I shall, as the Lord commanded, be more completely your servant. (AD354-430)**

To God be the glory. Amen

