

The Diocese of St Mark the Evangelist

(The Anglican Church in Limpopo Province)

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Ad Clerum: Lent 2012

To All Clergy
Copies to all Churchwardens
Copies to Diocesan Organisations

Please share this with God's people in your parish!

Dear Friends in Christ,

Greetings in our Lord Jesus Christ, and every blessing for 2012! This year has started with a bang – in my first three weeks after returning from holiday I was able to:

- ✦ Institute Robbie Novella as Rector of the Zoutpansberg
- ✦ Institute Gail Blunden as Rector of the Letaba, and license her as Archdeacon of Mopani
- ✦ Ordain two Deacons (Paulina Manganye & Kwena Makgoka) and two Priests (Malin Mokou and Pauline Mamabolo)
- ✦ License Shearsby Mupfudzapake as Archdeacon of the North
- ✦ Meet with Youth Leaders to start planning our Diocesan Youth Camp
- ✦ And... have a week at Synod of Bishops.

God is at work, and this promises to be a challenging and exciting year for the Diocese of St Mark the Evangelist.

First Things First

But let me start with the most important thing. Lent is a time to make sure that God is number 1 in our lives – as we follow the example of Jesus. He spent 40 days in the desert seeking God and God's will for his mission and ministry.

At our Chapter meeting in Wednesday we were struck by some of the verses in the daily readings:

Teach me your way, O LORD, that I may walk in your truth; give me an undivided heart to revere your name. I give thanks to you, O Lord my God, with my whole heart, and I will glorify your name forever.
(Psalm 86:11-12)

Do not love the world or the things in the world. The love of the Father is not in those who love the world; for all that is in the world--the desire of the flesh, the desire of the eyes, the pride in riches--comes not from the Father but from the world. (1 John 2:15-17)

God calls us to put him and his Kingdom first, to have an undivided heart, one that is set on seeking him and his will above everything else. The world promises so much yet delivers little of lasting value. God promises hardship,

suffering, persecution... and eternal life of love, joy and peace.

So I encourage you to set aside time this Lent to seek God above everything else in your life. Sacrifice something in order to make time to seek God. Jesus promised that you will find what you are looking for (Luke 11:9-13), and be mightily blessed in the process.

One way you can do that, if you are close to Polokwane, is to come to Christ Church Cathedral on Wednesday evenings at 6pm for the Bishop's Lenten Teaching Series, "Come Holy Spirit". Just as Jesus was filled with the Holy Spirit after his baptism, so he promises to fill us with the Holy Spirit for our life, ministry and mission.

If you cannot attend, but would like to order DVDs of the series, please contact the Diocesan Office – Lutz Ackermann will kindly be organising these.

Anglicans Ablaze

1 Provincial Conference

Once Again let me remind you of the "Anglicans Ablaze" Conference that will take place in Johannesburg from **3rd to 6th October**. We have found a venue that can take up to 3000 people (has there ever been a conference of 3000 passionate Anglicans in Southern Africa) and have already lined up some excellent speakers. These include:

- ✦ Archbishop Ben Kwashi of Jos in Nigeria
- ✦ Bishop Graham Cray of the "Fresh Expressions" movement in the Church of England
- ✦ Grace Sampson-Song, an anointed young black Christian leader from Cape Town
- ✦ Miles Giljam, Team Leader of African Enterprise in South Africa
- ✦ Our own Archbishop Thabo Makgoba
- ✦ Dr Alison Morgan of Rooted in Jesus
- ✦ Bishop Albert Vun of Eastern Malaysia
- ✦ Bishop Rennis Ponniah of Singapore
- ✦ Oh yes... Bishop Martin Breytenbach (do you know him?)

... and the list goes on!

We plan to have a special focus on Young People, and so the title is "**A Generation Rising Up**" which comes from a

popular worship song. Please set aside the dates in your diary and make plans to attend if you possibly can. I will let you know as soon as registration has opened.

The purpose of the conference is to breathe the life of the Holy Spirit into the Vision and Mission Statements of the ACSA:

Vision

The Anglican community in Southern Africa seeks to be

- ✦ Anchored – in the love of Christ
- ✦ Committed – to God’s mission
- ✦ Transformed – by the Holy Spirit

Mission

Across the diverse countries and cultures of our region, we seek:

- ✦ To honour God in worship that feeds and empowers us for faithful witness and service
- ✦ To embody and proclaim the message of God’s redemptive hope and healing for people and creation
- ✦ To grow communities of faith that form, inform, and transform those who follow Christ

The Anglicans Ablaze leaders (representing GtC, SOMA, New Wine, Iviyo and ACSA Youth) asked me to write a Collect to help us prepare. The Bishops prayed this collect last week and encouraged us all to use it regularly (perhaps one of you will translate it into the languages of our Diocese):

Almighty God, consuming fire of love
You have given us the vision to be
Anchored in the Love of Christ
Committed to Your mission, and
Transformed by the Holy Spirit;

We seek

To honour You in living worship
To embody and proclaim the Good News, and
To grow communities of faith:

Set us ablaze with Your power and love

To build up Your Church
And serve You in the world
To Your praise and glory

In Jesus’ name we pray, **Amen**

2 Diocesan Events

We have started planning for two Diocesan “Anglicans Ablaze” events

2.1 Our Own Anglicans Ablaze Conference

This will take place over the weekend **15th to 17th June**, when we are all invited to join in with the Diocesan Iviyo Conference. I pray that God will use this weekend to prepare our hearts for the events in October

2.2 Diocesan Youth Camp

One of the best mornings I have had in a long time was with about 80 Youth Leaders from the Diocese on 4th February. Together we caught the vision for a Diocesan Youth Camp from **12th-14th October**. Not only that, but we started on detailed planning and a number of teams have been set up to work on different aspects. The Coordinating Team will meet with me again on Saturday 10th March.

Our theme will be about “making disciples who make disciples” and the camp will be a mixture of worship, teaching and fun. We are looking for a venue that can accommodate at least 500 people at a reasonable price.

The speakers at the camp will be a visiting SOMA Team which will include several young people. Please set aside these dates too, and start making plans to help your Young People to attend.

Diocesan Synod

Annual Vestry Meetings should be well underway in all the parishes by now. Remember to seek God about who to elect, as those elected can have a tremendous positive (or negative) impact on your parish. And make sure that you elect Godly, wise people as your Diocesan Synod representatives.

The first setting of Synod, with the opening Eucharist, Bishop’s Charge and First Reading of proposed Rule Changes, will take place at Christ Church Cathedral on 31st March, starting at 8am. Please do not allow anything (even funerals) to stop you from being there!

Please pray that God will guide me as I prepare my Charge, and that God will use this Synod to move forward the vision, life, ministry and mission of the Diocese of St Mark the Evangelist.

I give thanks for you all daily, and you remain in my constant love and prayers.

Yours in Christ,

*†Martin: St Mark
the Evangelist*

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I had a wonderful summer holiday with my family at St Francis Bay in the Eastern Cape