

The Diocese of St Mark the Evangelist

(Anglican Church of Southern Africa in Limpopo)
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To: All Clergy
 All Churchwardens
 All Diocesan Organisations

Please share this letter as widely as you can with the people of your church or organisation!

Dear Friends in Christ,

This is a busy month for us in the Diocese of St Mark the Evangelist. As I write, we are about to:

- ✦ Have a Clergy Day on Saturday with Dr Vicentia Kgabe, the new Rector of the College of the Transfiguration (COTT). She will share with us her thinking about the training of clergy. This is very important to us because, as discussed in my last *Ad Clerum*, we need to train many new priests to be future Rectors.
- ✦ Celebrate the life and death of Manchi Masemola on Sunday, a young girl who gave everything out of love for Jesus.
- ✦ Meet in Diocesan Synod from Thursday 20th to Sunday 23rd August.

In this letter I would like to share with you a few thoughts as we prepare for Synod. Please pray, and get your churches to pray, that God will meet and direct us during that time.

Preparing for Diocesan Synod

The first Council of the early church took place in Jerusalem to decide if Gentiles could be part of the church without first becoming Jews. When they had reached a unanimous decision that Gentiles would be welcome, the apostles and elders explained it by writing, "For it has seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us..." (Acts 15:28).

People sometimes think of synods as boring and formal, but actually they are an opportunity for us to meet with God and one another, and hear how God wants to lead us forward. So, let us prepare full of expectation that God will be there and the Holy Spirit will speak.

A few important themes are emerging – arising from the recent DFB Lekgotla and the motions that have been submitted (see the 2nd Agenda Book). I will say more about them in my Charge, so what I write here is to encourage you to think and pray about them beforehand.



Young people at Youth Synod in June



Report Back at Youth Synod

- 1) **Young people** need to be part of **everything** we do. It is interesting that nearly every motion in the 2nd Agenda Book includes young people! It has long been one of our goals that each Parish should have a stipendiary Youth Pastor. This is partly because it will help give leadership to our young people, and partly because it is a good way to identify and mentor future clergy and leaders for the church. A few of us have been meeting

Diocesan Vision: To make disciples in vibrant, self-sufficient congregations established and linked to each other by sharing in resources; ministry & service; outreach & evangelism.



Mothers' Union members workshopping during the Bishop's Teaching Day

- over the last two months to work on a proposed plan for youth interns and volunteers, and there will be a presentation on this at Synod.
- 2) **Making disciples** is central to our Diocesan vision. The Lekgotla said that our people, including the youth, need practical teaching and guidance on the real issues of daily life as disciples of Christ. So we are working on doing research identify these felt needs so that we can train our preachers and leaders to meet this challenge. Already the Diocesan Youth Synod and Mothers' Union Bishop's Day have identified quite a number of these questions.
- 3) **Multiplication** of parishes has been part of our Diocesan life for a while. Since embarking on the journey of multiplication we have doubled the number of parishes, and we have learned a lot about how to do it. But the particular challenge identified by the Lekgotla was **"multiplication with transformation"**: to start churches and congregations that are able to respond to the needs of people in a changing world – particularly those who are not drawn to our churches as they now are.
- 4) **Community development using Church resources** is also one of our goals, but only a few of our churches are using their buildings and land to serve the wider community. Yet the needs are enormous, including the need to care for our environment, and unemployment (especially among young people) is high. Surely we can use our facilities to give training and opportunities to people while serving the community at the same time.

So, Synod will be planned around these themes and will be an exciting opportunity to expand our vision together. Hopefully we will all leave with some practical ideas about what God is calling us to do.

Another important part of Synod will be the presentation of the proposed Diocesan Budget for 2016. That will take place on Saturday 22nd August at 14:00 immediately after lunch. **We invite all Churchwardens and Parish Treasurers to join us for lunch at 13:00 and for this session.** It is important to understand that a Budget is not just about money... It is a strategy for doing what we believe God is calling us to do!

Many blessings as you prepare for Synod. I look forward to seeing many of you there.

Yours in Christ,

†Martin

†Martin: St Mark the Evangelist



Members of the DFB Lekgotla hard at work

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All Parish Wardens and Treasurers are invited to:

- ✦ Join us for lunch at 13:00 on Saturday 22nd August
- ✦ Participate in the Synod Session at 14:00 when the draft Budget for 2016 will be presented