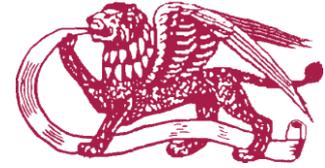


The Diocese of St Mark the Evangelist

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19 October 2015

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,

Greetings in our Lord Jesus Christ, who is alive and at work in his church – and also in the world.

First of all, thank you to all who participated in Diocesan Synod in August. This is what I wrote about it for the Web Site:

Synod opened with a celebration of the Eucharist at Christ Church Cathedral in Polokwane on Thursday 20th August at 18:00. Clergy and Synod Representatives were joined by civic leaders as well as leaders of other churches with whom the Diocese is working – in particular the Methodist Church, Presbyterian Church and Dutch Reformed Church. Over the ensuing days a number of rule changes and motions were passed, related to the life, ministry and mission of the Diocese. There was a strong focus on the three priorities that were identified earlier in the year at the Diocesan Finance Board Lekgotla:

- 1) **Practical Discipleship** – what does it mean to follow Jesus in everyday life?
- 2) **Multiplication with Transformation** – how can we start new churches and congregations that are not just “more of the same” but reach out to those who are not in church?
- 3) **Community Development using Church Resources** – how can we use our land and church buildings to serve our communities?

In all three of these areas, special attention was given to how we can include young people intentionally in everything we do, and the development of leaders, especially future clergy who can lead parishes as rectors.

Synod 2015 proved to be an amazing time of fellowship, worship, strategic planning and revival – people commented on how God's presence was tangible. Many went home renewed and inspired to serve God.

Another feature of Synod was the participation of the newly formed **Diocesan Legal Team**, under the leadership of Diocesan Chancellor, Matsaro Semenya. The team comprises a Judge, Magistrates, Attorneys and various other legal professionals.

If you want to read more about Synod, get the Bishop's Charge and other documents (including the minutes) please go to: <http://www.stmark.org.za/synod-2015.aspx>



Left to right: Preparing for procession at the opening of Synod; Group work in the garden at Christ Church Cathedral; The Bernard Mizeki Guild leading midday prayers.

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

Youth Volunteers and Interns

1 Synod Motion

Nearly every motion before Synod had something to do with young people, emphasising just how important they are in our life as a church. But one motion is especially practical, far-reaching and important. Starting a few weeks before Synod in anticipation, a team has been working on implementing it.

This Synod notes that:

The youth of the Diocese at the Youth Synod held on 27th June 2015 recognise that the role of the church includes reaching out to the needy (spiritually, materially, emotionally, socially and educationally) in the surrounding communities. Church buildings and land can be used for vegetable gardening, child care, homework clubs, support groups, drop-in centres and many other community and family support activities. In the light of this and especially in the light of the teaching of Jesus, the Youth Synod calls on Diocesan Synod to adopt the motion below:

Therefore:

This Synod respectfully requests the Bishop to set up a formal programme for young Volunteers and Interns. This should involve training and opportunities to help churches to serve their local communities, for the purposes set out above.

As you know, we already have two Youth Interns this year, preparing to be sent to the College of the Transfiguration for ordination training if and when they are ready. Water Setshedi is based at the Diocesan Centre, and is doing Training for Ministries Administration and helping with the Diocesan Youth. Rendani Mudau is serving as Youth Pastor at Christ Church Cathedral. We already have another two possible Youth Interns lined up for next year. And... we have been receiving an ever-growing stream of volunteers who come to serve for shorter periods: from Germany, Australia, Cape Town and Johannesburg. Many of our young people have also indicated that they would love to offer some of their time as volunteers.

Sometime soon I hope to write up a full policy and vision document about Volunteers and Interns, but there are a few things I need to share with you now – and to ask you, ***do you think there may be place for an intern or volunteers in your parish or ministry¹?***

2 What We Have Done

The Volunteers and Interns Committee that I set up has done a lot of work over the last few months: at the moment it is made up of Lutz and Frauke Ackermann, Philip Moseki, Pat Lennox, Kgauhelo Lekalakala, our Interns Rendani Mudau and Walter Setshedi, our Volunteer Isi Mayrhofer, and me.

More details will follow, but here is a short summary of each area we have worked on so far:

- ✦ Basic Principles – for example Interns usually commit to at least 1 year and are usually considering ordination or some kind of long-term church service; whereas Volunteers offer themselves for shorter periods of up to about three months.
- ✦ Selection – what criteria will be used to select Volunteers and Interns, and how will the process work. We have set up a selection committee and are developing the materials they will use to guide them.
- ✦ Payment – Interns will need a basic allowance, paid by the host church or ministry, of about R2000 per month. We will also ask their “sending” parish or Diocese to make a contribution. Volunteers will not be paid.
- ✦ Accommodation and Transport – this will be provided by the host parish or ministry (for example, a member of the church may have a room available). Several of them will be based in Polokwane and living in the Diocesan cottage or flat, or at Christ Church Cathedral.

¹ When we talk about ministries, we are recognising that some ministries or organisations (like Jane Furse Memorial Village, St Mark’s College, the MU or AWF, Diocesan Children’s or Youth Ministries...) may be able to receive Volunteers and Interns.

- ✦ Training – All Volunteers and Interns will have “blocks” of training, probably a Monday to Friday at Jane Furse Memorial Village once each quarter. The training will include Rooted in Jesus, an Orientation to the Diocese, practical experience and further studies according to each person’s need. We will also need to provide some training to host parishes and ministries.
- ✦ Deployment – see the next section... this is what I am asking you about.
- ✦ Rule of Life – Volunteers and Interns will live “in community”, wherever they are based. They will have a rule of life that includes prayer, Bible study, church membership, giving and more.
- ✦ Oversight – we will have a Diocesan Coordinator with a support team. Each host parish or ministry will also have an overseer for Volunteers and Interns. The blocks of training will include evaluation and feedback on how things are going.
- ✦ Funding – we are looking at all sorts of creative ways to raise the funds we will need to support and sustain our Volunteers and Interns programme. But any further suggestions or donations would be welcome!

3 What You Can Do

So far the Diocesan Office and Christ Church Cathedral have provided opportunities for Interns. Volunteers have helped more with soup kitchens, homework centres, missions and holiday clubs in areas like Extensions 44 and 78.

Now we are asking you to consider this prayerfully:

Would your parish or ministry benefit from hosting volunteers or interns? Would you be able to find a way to support them and provide them with accommodation?

We have brainstormed some of the things that Volunteers and Interns could be involved in... according to the needs of their hosts and their own gifts and interests. Here are some examples, but you may have something else in mind that we have not thought of:

- ✦ Training For Ministries Administration
- ✦ Information Technology: Input MyAnglican Data of members of the church
- ✦ Assist with computer training
- ✦ Parish Youth Pastor
- ✦ Help with Homework Clubs
- ✦ Help run Soup Kitchens
- ✦ Help with Drop in Centres
- ✦ Helping establish new churches (eg Ext 78)
- ✦ Holiday clubs
- ✦ Community development using church facilities (eg “Farming God’s Way”, growing crops)

I would love to hear from you if you think one or more of these things may be a possibility for you to host an Intern or Volunteer! Please do so as soon as possible.

I believe this Volunteers and Interns Programme (should we call it the VIP?) has enormous potential for the lives of the candidates, finding future clergy for the Diocese, and serving the wider community. Let’s work together to make it a blessing to all!

Yours in Christ,

†Martin

†Martin: St Mark the Evangelist



The Sunday Eucharist at Synod 2015