

The Diocese of St Mark the Evangelist

(The Anglican Church in Limpopo Province)

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To All Clergy
Copies to all Churchwardens
Copies to Diocesan Organisations

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

Dear Friends in Christ,

Greetings in the name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who promised to build his church and make it strong to overcome the evil one (*Matthew 16:18*).

My Travels

Since writing to you in April I have had an exciting and challenging time – especially in my two mission and ministry trips to Singapore and Malaysia. During this time I was privileged to:

- ✦ **Visit the Diocese of Sabah** (Eastern Malaysia on the island of Borneo) where I learned about their approach to rural ministry, their Anglican Training Institute and Ambassadors programme (“Year of your life” for young adults), and the Music and Worship Academy of All Saints Cathedral.
- ✦ **Co-Lead a Vision & Mission Exposure team** (with Trevor Pearce) in Singapore, where we learned more about the mission and ministry of the church in a very challenging context.
- ✦ **Preach at St Andrew’s Cathedral** in Singapore on “Faith and Frustration”.
- ✦ **Speak at the “Once Choice Encounter”** – a conference for Young Adults from the Anglican Church in Southeast Asia and Mauritius, designed to guide them in making important choices for their lives.



Young People at the One Choice Encounter

- ✦ **Speak at the Parish Camp of the Chapel of the Resurrection (COR), Singapore** – where I shared about the ministry of the Holy Spirit as Fire, Wind, Water and Oil.



Ministry during the Chapel of the Resurrection Camp

While all this meant that I was out of the Diocese for about four weeks, I believe that I returned with many benefits – both for my ministry as your Bishop, and also for the Diocese.

For example, the St Andrew’s Cathedral Mission Committee has offered about R150,000 to help establish small businesses among the poor in Extension 44 (Mission Parish of the Good Shepherd). I am also hoping that we will be able to form a partnership with the Diocese of Sabah and their Ambassadors Programme.

Now I would like to tell you more about two exciting new initiatives that we have taken in the Diocese.

Identifying New Rectors

On Wednesday 26th June I hosted a **Special Chapter Workshop** with a group of invited Self-Supporting Clergy whom we have identified as potential Stipendiary Rectors of the future. I am reporting quite fully on the discussions we had, because they also apply to those who are already

Stipendiary Clergy – most of them as Rectors or preparing to be Rectors of parishes.

1 Expectations

We started by looking at expectations. We were thinking of the church as a local community and also as an organisation.

1.1 **What Does the Church Expect from Rectors?**

As you can imagine, the church expects a lot!

1.1.1 Leadership in Mission and Ministry

The church is looking for servant leaders who are humble and flexible, but have a strong vision for the church. Rectors should be people who empower others by delegating and trusting them to take initiative. They should know their own gifts and limitations, and help others to identify their gifts and grow in them. They must have the courage to challenge what is wrong in the church and community.

1.1.2 Teamwork

Closely related to Leadership, we expect Rectors to work with others and communicate well with them. They should understand the many different roles that different people must play in the life of the church. They should also be team players within the Diocese and Anglican Church – understanding ordination and the duties of ordained and lay leaders. They should be committed to their oath of canonical obedience to the Bishop.

1.1.3 Prayer and Lifestyle

Like all clergy, our Rectors should set an example in prayer – using the Daily Offices and growing in their relationship with God. Their lifestyle (relationships, behaviour, use of money, giving, language...) should reflect the Gospel.

1.1.4 Teaching

Rectors are expected to lead the church into making disciples by teaching faithfully from the scriptures. This means that they must keep reading and studying (formally and informally), especially the Bible and theological books. They must also be observant, to recognise areas where people need guidance and teaching.

1.1.5 Pastoral Care

Rectors are responsible to see that the members of the church are cared for (although of course they can't do it all themselves!). They should be good listeners who respect the confidentiality of what is shared with them. They should be available to those who need their love and support.

1.1.6 Management

Rectors (together with Churchwardens) should make sure that the church is well administered. They should be accountable to the Bishop and should be able to report clearly to the Parish Vestry and Council.

Does anyone match up to all these expectations? I doubt it very much! But they do give us an idea of what we should be striving for and what calibre of people we need. But even this is not an exhaustive list. What would you add to it?

1.2 **What Can Rectors Expect from the Church?**

1.2.1 Practical Care

If our Rectors are to give us all that we expect then we need to take care of them. They should not have to worry about meeting their basic needs and those of their families. So they expect to be provided with adequate medical care, housing, transport, a fair stipend and allowances. In particular, they are concerned about providing for the education of their children. The people need to understand that Rectors are not an "optional extra" for each parish, but essential for them to live and grow in mission and ministry.

1.2.2 Spiritual & Emotional Support

Rectors can expect spiritual & emotional support in the form of prayer and friendship. They should know that their people have a common vision, will help them to make wise decisions, and will support them in those decisions (even if some of them are unpopular). They should know that their people trust and respect them, and they should give trust and respect in return. They should be able to count on the support and loyalty of the self-supporting clergy in the parish.

1.2.3 Partnership in the Gospel

The Rector should be able to assume that the people are committed to playing their part in the mission of the church. They should be able to count on their giving (with the tithe as a starting point), cooperation and transparency (no hidden agendas). Our mission must be God's mission, to reach out proclaiming the Kingdom of God in every context, so that everyone receives God's blessing.

1.2.4 Training and Help from the Diocese

Rectors should receive ongoing training, practical help and guidance from the Diocese. This can take many forms: clergy schools, retreats, special training events and fellowship days, help to register for formal courses. This kind of help is also built into the structure of the Diocese – and can come from the Bishop, Archdeacons, Leadership Team, Training for Ministries and more.

1.2.5 Rest and Recreation

All clergy, including Rectors, are expected to have a day off each week. Without that rest, no one can give their best. They are also entitled to leave and a sabbatical every five years. Many of our clergy cannot afford to get away on holiday with their families, and the church should do what it can to help them. Finally, they should be allowed to retire when they reach retirement age!

2 The Qualities of a Rector

Out of all the above we asked ourselves, what are the particular qualities that we are looking for in a Stipendiary Rector. Here they are:

2.1 Call from God

First, we emphasised that it is a calling from God that must be discerned mutually by the person and the church. Such a process takes time, but here are the basic steps that we follow:

- 1) The candidate should discuss their possible calling with their Rector or Priest in Charge, who will discuss it with the Parish Council.
- 2) The name of the candidate should then be brought to Diocesan Chapter – ideally by the Archdeacon.
- 3) If Chapter recommends it, the person will be invited to a Vocations Conference to help discern whether God is calling him/her into Stipendiary ministry.
- 4) If Vocations Conference agrees, they will advise the Bishop on what further training the candidate needs. This may include a time at Theological College, further courses, practical training in the skills of ministry and leadership, and exposure to other parishes.

2.2 Exceptional Character

We are looking for people of exceptional character, and qualities like honesty, high commitment to Christ and his church and integrity were mentioned. They must have good relationships and interpersonal skills. It should be evident that they are walking in close fellowship with the Lord in humility and obedience, and that they have a passion for the gospel.

2.3 Theological Education

Those who become Rectors should study theology at the highest level possible. Formally our normal standard is the Diploma in Theology from the College of the Transfiguration (COTT), Theological Education by Extension College (TEEC) or a similar recognised institution. We also expect them to take the initiative to receive skills and training through other formal or informal means.

2.4 Gifts and Skills

Everyone has different gifts and I wrote about specific skills in 1.1 above. But Rectors we are looking for self-starters who will take initiative to use their gifts to build up the church and serve the Kingdom of God.

3 What Next?

Finally we took time to identify the next steps that both the Diocese and the candidates need to take.

3.1 The Diocese

3.1.1 Training of Trainers and Trainees

Because an important part of the transition from Self-Supporting to Stipendiary ministry will be in-service training, Training Rectors and Assistants (i.e. those in training) need guidance. In particular we identified needs in these areas:

- ✦ Initiative vs Control
- ✦ Teamwork
- ✦ Relationships (which would include managing conflict).

3.1.2 The Training Process

In dialogue with the trainees, we need to work out at Diocesan level exactly what training is needed and what the process should involve. Of course each candidate is unique, so their needs for training will be unique. One exciting development is that the Bishops of the Northern Provinces have agreed to work together on this.

In addition to existing formal study courses, we will look at other possibilities – for example the faculty of Theology at University of Pretoria.

3.1.3 Career Guidance

It will be valuable for the Rectors of those who feel called to spend time with them helping them to plot the best way forward. Training for Ministries will share in this process.

3.1.4 Meeting with Spouses

We recognised that spouses of those called into Stipendiary ministry are deeply affected by it. Therefore we agreed to have a meeting, for fellowship and sharing, with candidates and their spouses.

3.2 Those Exploring a Calling

Those exploring a possible calling into Stipendiary ministry also have things to do. In particular we agreed on the following:

- 1) They will seriously take this question to God in prayer: "How are you calling me?"
- 2) They will think carefully about what further training they believe they need and communicate this with the Diocese. They will take initiative to try to find out where and how they can get this training.
- 3) They will let the Bishop know how they are progressing with these questions and how they believe God is (or is not) calling them.
- 4) They will pray for the Bishop and Diocesan leaders as we try to discern God's will together.
- 5) They will find people (in or beyond the parish) with whom they can share their journey, and who can support and encourage them in it.

And for all of you who read this... we will desperately need new Stipendiary Clergy (especially Rectors) in the near future. We have some high quality Self-Supporting clergy

in the Diocese, whom I believe God is calling to take this step of faith. Please pray for them, and do all you can to support and encourage them as they seek God about it.

Education Initiative

On Wednesday 10th July we had another important initiative, this time at Christ Church Cathedral. Anglicans who are involved in Education or who are passionate about it, met with members of the Archbishop's Education Initiative. More than 60 of us met to look at ways in which we can make a difference to education in Limpopo Province.

1 Anglicans in Education

Bishop Peter Lee, who chairs the initiative, spoke about ways in which the church can get involved:

- 1) Through our existing Anglican Church Schools, which are like lighthouses, setting a standard of excellence.
- 2) By opening new Anglican Church Schools or re-opening those that were taken over by the apartheid government.
- 3) By running Early Childhood development centres – where children can receive good foundations for their education.
- 4) By supporting local Government Primary schools in many different possible ways.
- 5) By supporting local Government Secondary Schools.
- 6) By setting up "Homework" and after school care centres at our church buildings.



†Peter Lee introduces the Education Initiative

2 Appreciative Inquiry

The other members of the team (Melanie Sharland, Audrey Mazibuko and Pinkie Motlanyane) joined †Peter in leading us through an "Appreciative Inquiry" process. We thought about our own good educational experiences and then dreamed about what the "perfect" school would look like. We began to see that many of these attributes of perfections are not beyond our reach if we will only get involved!

After that we shared about good things that are happening in schools in Limpopo, and found that there are many places where things are being done well. The question is, how can we help other schools to learn from those that are doing well? In this process we identified a whole lot of

good practices and began to look at ways in which they can be shared more widely.

It seems to me that there are three areas where we could make an impact immediately:

- 1) Local Churches (congregations and chapelries) could approach nearby schools to see how they can support them. For example, they could pray for the staff; organise a prize-giving day; offer to take assemblies and give motivational talks, arrange a prayer service before exams...
- 2) We could open Homework Centres at our church buildings and have a few volunteers available to help and encourage the learners. These could grow into places where basic Christian discipleship takes place too, for example through Rooted in Jesus groups.
- 3) Some of our members already run Drop In Centres for children. These could be upgraded to become Early Childhood Development centres.

The challenge is for **each of our churches to find at least one way in which they can make a difference to education in Limpopo**. It may be that you can only do something small... but everything added together can become big!



Participants hard at work in the Education Initiative Consultation

3 Diocesan Education Team

At the meeting we set up a team of people – educators and those passionate about education – who will pilot the way forward at Diocesan level. They will meet again within a week to plan for the future.

But, we urged those present, **don't wait for the Diocesan Team to tell you what to do! Get on with it yourselves in your congregations and parishes!**

Yours in Christ,

†Martin: St Mark
the Evangelist