



Diocese of Johannesburg

# ANGLICAN BISHOP

## DIOCESE OF JOHANNESBURG



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Dear Saints

I greet you in the name of Jesus Christ who is risen today, alleluia!

The past two weeks in our beloved land have illustrated once again that we, as followers of the Risen Christ, have a critical role to play in working towards the healing of our country. These are tumultuous and confusing times, but no more or less so than the horrific days of apartheid, and akin to the terrible - and terrifying - hours of suffering that began on the first Good Friday, and climaxed in the wonder and joy of Easter Sunday. The events of these past days have suggested several important facts about our lives as Christians in South Africa.

Firstly, I was deeply moved by the measured but deliberate way in which so many of my fellow Anglicans in this diocese, and fellow Christians, banded together in peace and goodwill last week to express their profound disquiet at the lack of morality and the lack of integrity of our President, our government, and some of the leaders of our ruling party.

Secondly, the way many of our parishes approached and enacted Palm Sunday, following my call to you to use this special festival day as one of prayer for our country, was most encouraging.

Thirdly, the response I have had from you, from other Christians and people of other faiths, as well as from the general public and interest from the media in our ongoing witness as a living church, has shown me that a more concerted Christ-centred campaign by us is necessary. A single day of Christian affirmation of the noble values we proclaim, in which we highlighted, through protest, the way our government has abandoned its responsibility to govern honestly and fairly, is not enough.

We have reached a new *Kairos* moment in our lives as the people of Christ.

Going forward therefore, I want to suggest six actions that all of us in this diocese should prayerfully adopt and act on:

1. For the period from Passion to Pentecost, I ask that we engage in a period of prayer and reflection on *morality and integrity* in government, in business, in the workplace, and in our own lives. For this purpose, together with others in the diocese, I have devised a programme entitled

Passion to Pentecost  
**50 days of moral action**

The details of this programme are attached and updates will be sent each week.

2. As part of this journey of prayer and reflection during these *50 Days of Moral Action*, I would like all parishes to consider organising, on every Friday until Pentecost, a vigil or local act of public witness. I also ask that parishioners are encouraged on these Fridays, as an act of penitence for our own failings, to fast from food, and to drink only water for 12 hours on each Friday (their health permitting such a fast).
3. I believe that we, as a people, would be deeply enriched if every parish, once a week for the next eight weeks, met to discuss a particular aspect of the programme of *50 Days of Moral Action*. I will send a letter to be read at your service each Sunday in which I will raise a particular aspect of the programme. This short letter can form the basis for discussion and we will also let you have any other input that we believe you would find useful during this journey.
4. I encourage each parish, either on its own or together with other Christians in their area, to plan an event on the Day of Pentecost, to celebrate the gift of the Holy Spirit who leads us out of darkness and into the light.

Finally, as an immediate action, I ask that your Parish prayerfully take part in the following two initiatives:

5. I call on all members of parliament who are Anglicans and resident in this diocese, each to examine his or her own

conscience, to pray for guidance, and to vote on 18 April in line with their conscience when the motion of no confidence in the president is put in parliament. I further call on all priests and parishioners who know members of parliament to engage with them over the next two days and to encourage them to be faithful servants of Christ.

6. The second immediate action that I suggest is for each parish to organise a vigil of prayer for our country, either on the night of Monday, 17 April (tomorrow), and/or on Tuesday, 18 April while the motion of no confidence is debated in parliament.

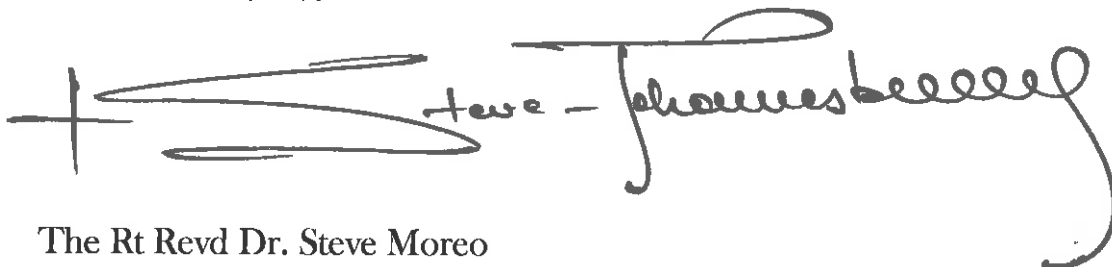
In my recent address on the challenges facing us, I noted that the people of South Africa can clearly see how dishonest our current President is, as well as the government he heads. The people of our land are not fools, but are good, honest, moral and truthful people. As Christians, we cannot keep quiet; we cannot continue to endure the consequences of a government too stupid to see its own folly. The answer to the question, "What is truth?" will always overcome the lies of those who wish to double cross, to hurt the poor and marginalised by their actions, and to conduct their government business in the deep shade of duplicity.

This programme of *50 Days of Moral Action* will assist us as Anglicans and Christians in finding the way of integrity and morality, grace and love.

The resurrection is a victory over death and forces of evil and all immorality. The morality of the resurrection is a morality of integrity, of honesty, of respect, of trust, of honour, of excellence, of justice, of purity (Philippians 4:8).

May the risen Christ walk with you as you journey through *50 Days of Moral Action!*

Yours full of Grace

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Steve-Johnesbee". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping flourish at the end of the name.

The Rt Revd Dr. Steve Moreo