

AD CLERUM - NOVEMBER 2011

Dear People of God,

I was talking to some parishioners the other day – just a casual conversation about nothing in particular. And then, apropos of some comment that had been made, one of them said, “Our priest says that the church is unreasonable in the demands it makes on our lives. It doesn’t seem to realise that we all lead busy lives and already have too many demands on our time.” Although I didn’t respond to the comment, a variety of thoughts immediately flashed through my mind:-

- I was struck by the authoritative way in which it was said. The statement probably reflected the person’s own perception, but the fact that the priest had said it gave it authority and made it true. And that speaks to the authority vested in us as leaders and the responsibility to use that authority wisely for the building of God’s kingdom.
- I didn’t think that the priest was suggesting that their expectations or that of their parish was unreasonable; it was some other entity, probably the “diocese,” that was being unreasonable in its demands. And that raises questions about our loyalty to, and support of, the wider church of which we are a part, and the extent to which we undermine and damage the unity of the church by our words. It also raises questions about how we use our experiences and perceptions to help shape and build a better and more faithful church. The right words in the wrong place can do more harm than good.
- I thought that the comment was especially sad coming from a church leader because, intentionally or not, it reflects a worldview in which the church is on the margins of our life and world. And that raises profound theological questions about the nature of the church and its purpose in the world.
- The comment also raises an important question: “Is the church unreasonable in its demands? What is ‘unreasonable’ as against ‘reasonable’? And what is meant when we talk of “demands”?”

My first two thoughts relate to our role as clergy and leaders, about the nature of the authority invested in us, and about the way we use or abuse it. These are all matters for ongoing reflection and prayer. But it is on my last two thoughts that I want to focus this reflection.

In his superb little book “What is the Point of Being a Christian?” Timothy Radcliffe speaks of the growing loss of hope in our ability to transform the world and make it a better place and, drawing from leading scholars and thinkers, says that the evidence suggest that, despite the explosion of wealth in many parts of the world, we are increasingly suffering from a collective depression that holds very little hope for the future. He then goes on to explore the Eucharist as a symbol of hope for hopeless times. The institution of the Eucharist happens

at the Last Supper; at the start of calamitous events that stripped the disciples of everything that they had believed in and hoped for. He writes:-

“As Christians we gather to remember the story of that Last Supper. It is our foundational story, the one in which we find the meaning of our lives. And yet it is a story which tells of the moment when there was no story to tell, when the future disappeared. We gather as a community around the altar and remember the night that the community disintegrated: our founding story is of the collapse of any story at all, and our community looks back to when it fell apart.”

Our faith and our worship is thus profoundly counter-cultural. It speaks of a radical trust in One who offers hope precisely at the point when, in human terms, there is no hope. If the church is the baptised people of God – people who have gone through the waters of death and been raised to new life in Christ – then our calling to be a counter-cultural community of faith that in some way participates in, and makes visible God’s ongoing work in the world is our primary vocation. All life, and all its demands, is to be lived out in the light of our vocation as Christians. The church is the only place where we can be equipped to do this work of ministry.

A number of years ago, after one of the addresses at a Benedictine Experience retreat, a clergy person came up and said that the talk had profoundly challenged him about his own life and that of his ministry. I was somewhat surprised because the priest in question is a good and godly man and a fine priest, so I asked him what had struck him so forcibly. He responded, “Benedict, in his Rule, makes prayer the central non-negotiable of monastic life. The times of prayer are a non-negotiable given and the rest of life is fitted in around that. I just suddenly realised that my life and the life of those in my parish is totally the other way around. Our work is the non-negotiable around which everything else must be fitted: it is work, then family, and only then, maybe, if we are lucky, prayer. Prayer and church commitments gets fitted in around everything else. And it shows.”

Those words have stayed with me ever since I heard them. How much of the malaise of the church – diminished giving, falling attendances, growing marginalisation – is due to the fact that the church competes with the world for a little bit of space and time, instead of being the place where we are shaped into a counter-cultural community whose life and faithfulness reshapes and reforms the values of the world around it.

And that brings me to the last of my thoughts: “Is the church unreasonable in its demands?” Space does not permit exploring this in any meaningful way, so let me rather just say that, given the pressures and demands on the lives of our parishioners, we need constantly to check ourselves to ensure that our demands are not ‘unreasonable’. Meetings should not be frivolous, nor should they be a waste of time. Every activity should be intentional in growing our people in faith and service. All meetings and every act of worship should be transformative; forming us into that new creation whose life is shaped by hope. Only if God is at the centre and the rest of our lives fitted in around that, can we truly become what we already are – a Eucharistic community bringing hope to a despairing world.

May the faith that forms us transform the chaos of our times into the moment of God’s grace



Questions:

For self reflection:

1. Is my prayer life, my worship, and the community of faith the non-negotiable givens around which the rest of life is fitted? Or is work the non-negotiable around which everything else must be fitted? Speak to God about this: ask God to show you where and how you could change the patterns of your life so that your life might more truly be a baptismal, Eucharistic life.
2. Do the things I say about what is happening in the world and in South Africa reflect despair or hope? And is that despair or hope shaped more by secular hopes and fears, than by the One who brings hope in the midst of chaos and despair? Reflect on the Eucharist as a promise and symbol of hope. Pray that your life might be filled with that hope.

For group discussion:

1. Do we, as a parish, have clearly defined outcomes that we are intentionally seeking to achieve? If the answer is 'yes', what are those outcomes? How many know about them? How carefully are your parish events reviewed and reshaped in the light of them? If the answer is 'no', what do you need to do to become more intentional in growing our people in faith and service?
2. How carefully do we plan our worship and our meetings so that they are transformative encounters with the risen Christ? What could we be doing differently?

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Spiritual Formation

Clergy Day: The next Clergy Day will take place on Tuesday the 1st of November at the Parish of St Paul, Munsieville. The focus for the day will be on the Lent 2012 Themes. Because we will be working on the content of the Lent course you are asked please to bring your bibles.

The December Clergy Day begins at the Parish of St Francis, Parkview and will then move to Bishop's House for the annual clergy Christmas Party. The date is Tuesday the 6th of December and all clergy are asked to confirm your attendance with Noxi for catering purposes.

Retreats at St Benedict's: Michelle Pilet will be leading the last St Benedict's retreat of 2011. The topic is "Exploring the Feminine Face of God" and it will run from the 11th -13th November. The topic is not focused on women but is an exploration into the nature of the Trinity. Should you wish to attend please contact St Benedict's on 011 435 3662 or at office@stben.co.za.

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Reading Recommendations

I have been re-reading Timothy Radcliffe's book "**What is the Point of Being a Christian?**" and have been struck afresh by how good it is. If you have not already read it, do yourself a favour and buy it. It is one of those books that makes me wish that I could write with such simplicity and wisdom.

In a completely different vein: I came across an interesting website which is well worth a visit. It is a Roman Catholic site that offers a tremendous number of online bible study and audio courses (Sample titles: Covenant Love: Introducing the Biblical Worldview / Genesis to Jesus: A Journey through Scripture / The Lamb's Supper: The Bible and the Mass) as well as a huge resource library under 3 headings: Scripture, Liturgy & Prayer, and Apologetics. Not surprisingly, it strongly punts the Roman perspective. But it has some superb material that will challenge you and make you think. And best of all; it's all free. Either Google "St Paul Center for Theology" or go directly to "www.salvationhistory.com."

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Vestry 2012

We are now in the countdown to the end of the year and the run up to Vestry 2012. It is vital for all books to be finalised and sent to the auditors / independent verifiers early in 2012. Please ensure that your financials are in order and an Independent Verifier appointed. No Diocesan Office staff will be permitted to verify books in 2012. If your parish has not yet appointed a verifier please contact the Diocesan Office so that they can assist you with finding someone.

Please note that there will be an **Independent Verifiers Workshop** on Saturday the 19th of November from 09h00 to 12h00 at the Parish of St Mark, Northriding. Please encourage your people to offer themselves as Verifiers.

I will distribute the Vestry guidelines in the December Ad Clerum.

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Lent '12 Update

Lent '12 is now on Facebook – this is a wonderful opportunity to share your stories and ideas and to see what the team is doing. Their Facebook name is 'People of the Way' and their logo is:



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St Joseph's Update – Report by Rodney Taylor

The renovations at St Joseph's Diocesan Centre continues well on schedule for 90% completion of renovations by the end of 2011. The only major area that will still require renovation will be the kitchen area.

The rondavel behind the dining room is now the focus of attention as the roof gets renovated. We are also upgrading the toilets behind the building that will make this meeting / training area self sufficient.

The Diocesan Administration Office is hoping to move early in 2012 depending on Telkom and the provision of telephone lines. We have been assured that the lines should be in by early January 2012.

I hope that all who attended the conference on 15th October took the trouble to walk up to the building and absorb the changes that will make this a truly splendid Diocesan Centre.

Should you wish to make a contribution to the cost of this mammoth project please find bank details below.

Bank: Standard Bank
Account Name: Diocesan Finance Board
Account Number: 001-302-337
Branch: Small Street
Branch Code: 001805
Reference: St Joseph's donation, your name & Contact Details



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Diocesan 90th Anniversary Celebrations

The Diocese of Pretoria (which was formed in 1878 from the Diocese of Free State) at their Synod of 1919 unanimously approved the formation of the Diocese of Johannesburg. The Provincial Synod of Bishops subsequently approved the formation of our Diocese effective from the 1st of January 1922. The first Bishop of Johannesburg, The Rt Revd. Arthur Karney was consecrated and enthroned on the 25th of January 1922 at the St. Marys Cathedral.

This means that in 2012 our Diocese celebrates its 90th birthday and we are planning a number of events throughout the year to celebrate this milestone.

As we are all aware our Diocese was further divided and as a result gave birth to the Diocese of Matlosane, the Diocese of Christ the King, and the Diocese of the Highveld. Our celebrations therefore are not only for our own Diocese but also will include the other Dioceses who share this rich history.

The objectives of the celebrations are to give thanks to God for our various diocesan mission and ministry initiatives that have built the kingdom of God in this area over the past 90 years and to celebrate the mission and ministry milestones especially the prophetic contributions of our laity, clergy and bishop's to our society. Part of our celebrations includes looking at where we are going over the next 90 years and with this in mind all proceeds from the events taking place over the year will go toward the cost of the refurbishment of our new Diocesan Centre at St Joseph's.

The Diocesan Management Team appointed The Ven. Steve Moreo and The Ven. Xolani Dlwati to coordinate the Diocesan Celebrations Organising Team. The following celebratory events were approved by the Diocesan Management at their March 2011 meeting and the plans are underway:

1. Diocesan Thanksgiving Service – this will take place at 11h00 on Sunday the 24th of June at St John's College, Houghton. Archbishop Thabo Makgoba has been invited to preside and preach. This event is the key celebration of our 90 years.
2. Golf Day – planning for this is underway and details will be communicated as soon as they have been finalised.
3. Music Festival – all parish choirs will be invited to take part in a music festival scheduled to take place in August. Venues and dates will be communicated shortly.
4. Gala Dinner – we are hoping that each parish in the Diocese will take at least one table at our Gala Dinner scheduled to take place in November. Discussions are currently underway with venues and details will be communicated as soon as they have been confirmed.
5. Diocesan Youth Event – this will take place on the 16th of June. The Diocesan Youth Ministry will advertise details closer to the time.

Please make every effort to keep these plans in mind when planning your parish and personal diaries.

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Diocesan Website – Report by David Butcher

There has been a lot of progress in developing the Diocesan website this year, in particular in the area of Diocesan Accounting as well as Synod papers and minutes and Conference information. As from 1st October, all accounting information is only available on the website. This means that all monthly statements and debit orders are available to each parish when they want them and they will never get lost! This is providing several benefits for the Diocese:

1. For the Diocesan office, there is a substantial reduction in cost in terms of time and print costs.

2. For parishes, they now have access to all their statements, debit orders, etc. at a time convenient to them and their auditors. This will help them to prepare their monthly and annual accounts for their parish members in good time.
3. It is a great help in annual verifications if the parish treasurers have all the details of their Diocesan Accounts as well as their bank accounts.
4. No longer will important documents be lost in the post or email because the information can now be accessed from any computer – anywhere, anytime.

The accounts are only available to “managers” of the individual portals, and only they can “see” their details. This presents problems for the parishes that have not yet been for training because no one has been appointed as a manager for that portal and so no one has access to information. If your Parish or organisation still needs to appoint a manager or wants to appoint another manager for your Portal this can be done by:

- Contacting any member of the website committee – see www.anglicanjoburg.org.za for details. Click on the “About your Website” tab on the left hand menu to find out who is a member.
- Asking any manager already appointed to your portal. They can get the details on how to do this in Section F of the Managers Manual.
- Attending a training session run by David Butcher.

The next **website training** morning has been arranged for Saturday November 19th at 66 Galway Road, Parkview (directions available from dandjbutcher@mweb.co.za) starting at 08h30 and ending at 12h00. You may arrive at your convenience during the morning. Your training will last about an hour and sessions will run continuously throughout the morning. There will be people available to load you as a manager for your portal and make sure know what to do. To reserve a space please ring 011 646 4008 and talk to David or Jean.

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2012 Year Planner

A first draft of the 2012 Yellow Pages is attached to this Ad Clerum. Please take notes of all dates already scheduled and advise Claire Holden in Bishop’s Office of any changes or additional booking requests.

Please note that there is a **Youth Synod** scheduled to take place on the 4th of February at St Joseph’s and Sparrow School. Summons will be sent to each parish shortly but please diarise the date now. Two young people, a priest and one churchwarden will be expected to attend from each parish.

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Provincial News

- Please pray for Suffragan Bishop Elect of the Diocese of Natal, Tsietsi Edward Seleokane, on the occasion of his consecration which will take place on the 12th of November.

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Diocesan Family News

- The **Motlabane** family has asked me to advise you that Motshabi has been discharged from hospital. They are still awaiting test results. Thank you for your prayers to date and please continue to pray for them.
- **Chris Uitzinger** has been discharged from hospital following his emergency surgery for a ruptured appendix. Please continue to pray for a speedy and complication free recovery.
- **Abigail Dengler** has been discharged from hospital following surgery. She is being admitted to a rehabilitation centre for the next phase of her recovery. Please continue to keep her in your prayers.

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Birthdays and Wedding Anniversaries

We would also like to wish all the following Clergy and Diocesan Employees a very happy birthday and wedding anniversary this month:-

Date	November	December
02	Susan Alexander	Stephen Ratshefola Chris & Alison Viljoen
04	John Alexander	
07	Mpho Moeti Greg Longbttom	Royce Meyers Hilary Owen Godfrey & Wendy Henwood
08	Janet Aereboe	Felicia Molipa Cyril & Hazel Halkett
09		Julia Njumbuxa Gavin & Helen Smith
10	John Naale	
11		Linda Williams
12	Nicholas & Primrose Seku(33) Dan & Malerato Molwantwa(34)	Xolani & Mabatho Dlwati David & Margaret Eades
13	Theo Simpson	Mpho Chaane
14	Tim Gray	Martin & Michelle Louw
15	Jenny MAbin Wilhelm Kligenbberg	Beryl Bailey
16		Puleng Modisaesi Paddy Seller Earl Neil
17		Bikitsha & Julia Njumbuxa
18	Steve & Liziwe Moreo(29) Royce & Yvonne Meyers(44)	Dan & Patricia Ngqumeya
19		
20	Pearl Makhalemele Shona Fleming	
21		Charles & Tebogo May
22	Claire Holden Omar & Eve Abrahams(41)	
24	Godfrey Henwood	
26	Mashikane Montjane	Audrey Hick
27	Nombuyiselo Nhlapo David & Rachel Mapheng(27) Mpho & Precious Chaane(7)	Allan Williams Rams & Thembi Ratshefola Joe & Mabatho Rakale
28		Alan & Diana Keartland
29	Michael & Jill Arnold(31)	
30	David Mapheng Andrew & Debbie Phillips(26)	Gayle Wilson Mashilwane Ntsele

We appreciate feedback – especially when we’ve forgotten someone’s special day so please do contact Noxolo at the Diocesan office with any updates or amendments.

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Dates for Diary

The **AWF Thanksgiving** service will commence at 10h00 at the Cathedral on the 5th of November.

The **Transformers** meeting on the 19th of November will take place at St Barnabas School in Bosmont.

NOVEMBER		Parish	Diocesan	Bishop
Tuesday	1	ALL SAINTS DAY / Clergy Day	Clergy Day	Clergy Day
Wednesday	2	ALL SOULS DAY		
Saturday	5	IV Training	AWF Thanksgiving Festival / Confirmation Region 4	Confirmation Region 4
Sunday	6			Pastoral Visit: Toekomsrus
Tuesday	8		Archdeaconry Region 1 Clergy Day	
Saturday	12		JDCF Spiritual Formation / Confirmation Region 5 / Region 2 Archdeaconry Meeting / Anglicare	Anglicare / Confirmation Region 5
Sunday	13			Pastoral Visit: Kensington
Tuesday	15			St Mary Board and Staff cocktail party
Wednesday	16		Archdeacons Meeting	Archdeacons Meeting
Saturday	19		Transformers /AWF Christmas Cheers / Archdeaconry Region 1 Council Meeting / Confirmation Region 6 / Independent Verifier Workshop	Confirmation Region 6
Sunday	20			Pastoral Visit: Malvern / 15h00 Institution of Rector at St Bartholomew, Kagiso
Saturday	26		POST	Self Supporting Clergy Day
Sunday	27			Pastoral Visit: St Andrew, Randburg 20th anniversary
Monday	28			Leave
Tuesday	29			Leave
Wednesday	30			Leave

DECEMBER		Parish	Diocesan	Bishop
Thursday	1			Leave
Friday	2	Independent Schools Close		Leave
Saturday	3			Leave
Sunday	4			Leave
Tuesday	6	Clergy Christmas Party	Clergy Christmas Party	Clergy Christmas Party
Friday	9	Government Schools Close		
Saturday	10		FOX II	
Sunday	11			Pastoral visit: Rosebank
Friday	16	DAY OF RECONCILIATION		Wedding
Friday	23		Diocesan Office Closed	
Sunday	25	CHRISTMAS DAY		
Monday	26	DAY OF GOODWILL		

Tuesday	27	PUBLIC HOLIDAY	
Wednesday	28		Diocesan Office Closed
Thursday	29		Diocesan Office Closed
Friday	30		Diocesan Office Closed

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General Notices

- Please would all parishes ensure that payment for the **Transformer camp** is deposited into the Diocesan Deposit Fund (not DFB account) using the reference : Transformer's name, Transformer Camp and parish suburb.
- **Children's Ministry Teacher's Training** will be hosting an Administrative Seminar at St John's College from 09h30 – 15h45 on Saturday the 5th of November. The seminar will look at ways to encourage congregants to help in running Sunday School and ways of encouraging children to come more regularly. The cost is R20 and you are asked to bring a bring and share lunch. Please contact Molly Robinson on 011 021 5927 or on mollyrob@neomail.co.za by the 30th September to book your place.
- The annual **Medical Aid Meeting** will take place Tuesday, 15th of November 2011 at St George's Parktown from 09h30 till 12h00. All Medical Aid members are invited to this meeting. The purpose of the meeting is to discuss problems/queries and the changes for 2012. Medshield and the Healtcard reps will be there.
- The young adults of St Mary Magdalene, Protea South are holding a **World Aids Day Commemoration Service** with the theme 'Getting back to Zero' on Sunday the 4th of December at 09h00. They would like to invite young people from parishes throughout the Diocese to come and learn about HIV and Aids and how it affects youth in our society. Should you wish to attend please rsvp to kekeletso25@live.co.za , sophien@vodamail.co.za or call Kekeletso Mosholi on 083 769 4721, Mpho Raphata on 078 170 6580 or Lebogang Nkwini on 082 255 4009 for catering purposes by the 27th of November.

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COP17

After sixteen international climate change conferences, our world leaders have still not produced the agreement required to meet this huge challenge.

The nations of the world will be meeting again, this time at COP17 in Durban on the 28th of November to try and reach some agreement on how to reduce global CO₂ emissions, to take serious steps to stem biodiversity loss, and to provide resources and support for adaptation among the developing countries of the world.

On Sunday 27 November SAFCEI are holding a major gathering of people of faith and concerned citizens in Durban's Kings Park Stadium – led by religious leaders, including Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu. There will also be a multi-faith prayer service for the success of the talks on Sunday 4 December.

SAFCEI appeals to all parishes to pray for COP17 and, where possible, to attend the rally. They all have also started a petition (please find it attached) which we would encourage you

all to sign. The purpose is to issue a clear call to political leaders of the world that, for the sake of our people, our planet and in obedience to our Creator, we must arrive at an agreement that helps protect and preserve the world for future generations.

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CHOC

I met with Adri Ludick, Divisional Manager of CHOC (Childhood Cancer Foundation of South Africa) last week and was very impressed with the work the organisation does. Not only do they offer a place for children and families to stay while the children undergo cancer treatment, they also offer care packs and assist in keeping the hospital wards clean and in good working order.

CHOC also runs educational campaigns – if childhood cancer is diagnosed early enough there is an 70 – 85% survival rate. They have programs designed for children, for parents and for health care professionals. Adri said that they would love to go to every clinic in South Africa and train nurses in the early warning signs and how and where to refer children for treatment.

If anyone would like to find out how you can get involved either in offering practical help or to arrange training please contact Adri Ludick on adri.ludick@choc.org.za or 011 486 1212. Alternatively you can visit their website at www.choc.org.za

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