

AD CLERUM – March 2009

My Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ

Two things have struck me very forcibly since my arrival in Canada; the weather and the economic climate.

My brother's home in Canada lies on the edge of rocky knoll that is a part of a parkland. At this time of the year the rough beauty of the rocks is hidden beneath a blanket of snow that cloaks the landscape in a series of gently flowing curves that are almost surreal in their beauty and against which the tall white birch and trembling aspens stand out in stark contrast. It is a scene of pristine beauty and a place of wonder and adoration.

But the beauty, although real, is also deceptive. The temperature outside hovers for the most part at about -20°C with the wind-chill factor still lower, and the trail that runs through the park has both pockets of soft snow that leave you waist deep in snow as well as treacherous ice slicks lying hidden just below the snow covering. For all its beauty it is a landscape that can often only be traversed by ski or snowshoes. And with all its familiar landmarks hidden beneath the snow, it is a place where it is all too easy to get lost.

As I have gazed out of the window at the bleak beauty before my eyes and the narrow hiking trail that wends its way through the trees, I am struck by its similarity to our journey through life. Though the landscape along life's way is seldom so pristine or pure; it too has a beauty that may, at times, be bleak, its pathways are also treacherous and filled with pitfalls, and there too we may all too easily lose our way.

The economic climate here is no less chilly. The recession that is hitting the United States of America and Canada is far more severe than anything we have as yet experienced in South Africa. As I meet and talk with people here, the economic crisis is a regular topic of discussion and almost all have their own tales of woe and hardship. One person I was speaking to told me of how her son had been laid off work only months before completing his apprenticeship and went on to say that she is now the only member of her family who still has a job. President Barak Obama, in his address to a joint sitting of the USA Congress this past week, expressed the feeling here well when he said, "...the state of our economy is a concern that rises above all others. ... You don't need to hear another list of statistics to know that our economy is in crisis, because you live it every day. It's the worry you wake up with and the source of sleepless nights. It's the job you thought you'd retire from but now have lost; the business you built your dreams upon that is now hanging by a thread; the college acceptance letter your child had to put back in the envelope. The impact of this recession is real, and it is everywhere."

When conversations turn to the economic situation, as they inevitably do, almost invariably scapegoats are named and blamed; bankers, mortgage brokers, credit-rating agencies, President Bush, China, the media or some other purported agency of greed, incompetence or dishonesty. In Obama's speech there were no scapegoats. The problem, he said, did not begin when the housing market collapsed or the stock market sank, but was rather something that the USA had been bringing upon itself over a period of many years; a consequence of a generalised reckless greed and a refusal on the part of almost everyone to defer the short term sacrifices necessary for long term economic security.

"In other words," he said, "we have lived through an era where too often, short-term gains were prized over long-term prosperity; where we failed to look beyond the next payment, the next quarter, or the next election. A surplus became an excuse to transfer wealth to the wealthy instead of an opportunity to invest in our future."

The focus on short term interests that caused the USA to lose its moral and economic way has had disastrous consequences not only for itself, but for a world which was generally only too happy to follow the American Way. Romania, Hungary and the Ukraine, together with many countries in Africa and the rest of the developing world, are all teetering on the brink of bankruptcy. And even those countries who are far from bankrupt, there have been massive downturns in their economies resulting in huge numbers of people being retrenched.

We are already beginning to see the effects of this global recession in South Africa, especially in declining exports and plunging mineral prices, both of which have already resulted in employees being laid off. More worrying is the fact that we are, apparently, running about 9 months behind more developed countries and so have not yet begun to feel the full economic impact of the economic downturn and concomitant job losses. The implications of this are serious for we do not have social security nets that protect those who are unemployed, and it will be contingent upon us within our own extended families and within the family of the church to provide for the growing number of unemployed and those in need.

But there are two other aspects of the financial downturn that are, perhaps, both more important and pressing at this stage. The first relates to the issue of greed, the second to that of blaming others for our economic woes. It may be preferable to blame the USA rather than fuel xenophobic angers by blaming the foreigners and refugees in our midst for the lack of jobs, but it is dishonest even to blame the USA and make them the scapegoat for the worldwide economic crisis and its impact on us when we too have been caught up in the same greedy covetousness for possessions and the outward trappings of wealth and success – the luxury motor car and home, the latest cell-phone, the Saville Row suit. A billboard advertisement along the M1 says it all; it shows a young black executive behind the wheel of a flagship Cadillac, and the caption reads: “the new measure of success”.

In South Africa, as in the USA, individual greed has driven the economy far more than has a concern for the long term prosperity of the masses. And our individual economic gain is often at the expense of others who in the process are exploited and oppressed. Excessive bonuses have been paid to executives even in the face of blatant non-performance rather than to the employing of sufficient workers to ensure delivery. In the name of greed, a multiple of excuses and opportunities have been created to ensure the maximum transfer of wealth to the wealthy. And even then, we are told, most of us have for far too long been living beyond our means and have ignored the warnings of Trevor Manuel, Tito Mboweni and their like to significantly reduce our levels of personal debt. We have, in the words of John Schumaker, been caught up in a “... dress rehearsal for one of the most spectacular greed surges in history, with jaw-dropping degrees of stockmarket folly, corporate skulduggery, decadence, excess and high-octane narcissism” from which few of us have been immune.

The philosopher Lao Tzu wrote 2,500 years ago: ‘There is no calamity greater than lavish desires, no greater guilt than discontentment, and no greater disaster than greed.’ And because that is as true for us in South Africa and in the USA as it was 2,500 years ago, it is a clarion call to each of us to re-examine our own lifestyles. We need to realise the extent to which we have all been infected or affected by the most spectacular greed surge in history, and to recognise just how much of our life and our reactions to those around us are driven by covetousness and greed. The economic class divides within our society that give rise to so much anger and resentment are fuelled by just that greed and covetousness. And we are a part of the problem; for others must make do with less than they need so that we might acquire and hold on to more than we really need. In this aspect of our lives there is equally a need for healing and reconciliation.

The economic landscape is, at present, icy, and looks set to become even more bleak and barren as the crisis deepens. Many landmarks have pointed us in wrong directions and the old, solid landmarks that guided us in the past lie buried beneath a covering of icy snow. But there is still a pathway, made visible in the incarnation. It is not an easy path; it demands that we jettison much that we hold dear and it requires that we let go of our narcissistic greed in order to journey together on a way that will allow us to discover again that which is truly treasure. It may well be, for all of us, a long and painful journey, that goes by the way of self respect rather than that of self-indulgence but together we can arrive at a place where greed is no longer redefined as a virtue and finding scapegoats is no longer a legitimate way of evading problems and avoiding our common unity in Christ.

A few questions for this month’s reflection and discussion are:-

1. What have been your experiences of economic crisis, of wealth and poverty? How did they make you feel about yourself, and about those who were more or less fortunate than you? How have these experiences shaped your values and your lifestyle?
2. Barak Obama attributed the economic woes of the USA in part to unbridled greed and a refusal to face and address burning issues that had long term implications. Where do we see unbridled greed in our own country and community and what effect does it have on our communal life? What burning issues in our country are we refusing to face and address?
3. Ron Sider once wrote a book in which he spoke of us “... *learning to live more simply in order that others might simply live.*” What does this mean for us in these economic times and how could we change our own lifestyles and those of our parish so that others might really benefit?

May we become that community of Christ in which the love of Christ is clearly seen in our economic commitment one to the other.



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Discussing the Questions

In my reflection at the start of each Ad Clerum I have again posed questions that I believe need answering. The questions are simply springboards to get conversations around the topic started in parish councils, bible study groups etc. Hopefully these questions will lead us to the real questions that touch our deepest hurts and will enable us to find healing and reconciliation.

I ask, therefore, that we take the questions seriously and create opportunities in our parish life to discuss them. I have asked also that feedback be given on the responses received, so that we can better plan the way forward in this process. The success of the exercise depends on your wholehearted participation. Because of the sensitivity of the questions I offer the following guidelines for the discussions:-

1. We are sharing personal experiences that may be painful and which may well leave us feeling vulnerable. What is shared is neither right nor wrong – it just is what it is; an experience someone has had that has impacted their life.
2. Receive all such stories with love and gratitude that the person has been willing to share their life with you. Respect the opinions of others. Do not try and correct their perceptions or interpretation of events. Do not try and offer solutions or help them, even if they cry. Just enfold them in your love and understanding.
3. Ask clarifying questions if necessary, but only those that will that deepen your understanding of what happened and will open you to your shared humanity with the other person.
4. At the end of each time of sharing, spend a few moments in prayer, offering everything that has been said to God and praying that God will bring healing to us all.

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Vicar General

Gerard Sharp was due to meet with his doctors the day after my departure and was expecting them to allow him to return to work. He is, as you all know, my permanent Vicar General and so will simply continue in that role during my absence. Please remember though, that he has been on an extended period of sick leave and needs to gently ease himself back onto the treadmill.

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Of Archdeacons and Archdeaconries

I apologise for the delay in announcing the new Archdeaconries and in appointing Archdeacons. The process has been slower and more difficult than I had anticipated, but one that I am not willing to rush. I will continue to work on it and hope that we can get it finalised before my return.

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My Visit to Canada

My thanks to all of you for being so understanding about my need to visit my brother at this time, as well as to those of you who phoned to offer support and help. It is in times like this that I know just how special and amazing you all are. Thank you and bless you.

Although doctors had said that nothing further could be done for my brother following his relapse, they have not given up trying to slow the progress and spread of the cancer. Much of what they are doing is experimental and it is fascinating to hear them discussing and deciding on the particular mix of drugs to be tried with each successive treatment. He reacted badly to his last chemo treatment – a treatment that was scheduled to take only 1 ½ hours ended up taking 8 hours. He is doing well at present, largely due to more than double the usual dose of steroids. Please pray for him and, indeed, for all of us.

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Spiritual Formation

Clergy Day: Our next Clergy day will be held on Tuesday, 3rd March 2009 at Christ Church, Mayfair and the topic will be Upper Room Ministries.

Retreats: Sister Liz Alberts will be leading a directed retreat from 6th to 8th March. The venue will be St Benedict's. The next retreat at St Benedict's will be from 24th to 26th April. The topic is Being a Witness to Hope and will be conducted by Bobby Godsell.

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Reading Recommendations

Professor Jonathan Jansen made a deep impression of many of us at our Diocesan Conference in January. You will therefore be pleased to hear that his latest book, "Knowledge In The Blood – How White Students Remember and Enact the Past," is now available. I have not yet been able to get my hands on a copy, but am sure that it will be a challenging and worthwhile read.

A very different book, but one that also has a lot to say about building healing communities is Jean Vanier's book, "Befriending the Stranger." In a series of 6 meditative pieces he invites us in the midst of all the violence and corruption of the world to create new places of belonging and sharing, of peace and kindness, where each is loved and accepted with one's own fragility, abilities and disabilities.

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Family News

Provincial News

- **David Bannerman** has been elected Bishop of the Diocese of Highveld. Our congratulations and prayers go to him as he prepares for his consecration on 25th April 2009.

Diocesan News

- **Charles Germond** has been in hospital with pneumonia, but is now recuperating at home. Please keep him and Dorothy in your prayers at this time.

- The **Revd Doug Torr** left recently for New Zealand to visit his father whose condition has taken a turn for the worse. Please continue to hold Doug, his father and family in your prayers at this difficult time.
- It is with great pleasure that we announce the news that the **Revd Karen Uitzinger** obtained her BTh Honours Degree *cum laude*. We apologise to Karen for not publishing this news earlier, and hope you will all join us in congratulating her on her outstanding achievement.
- The **Revd Phyllis Mgquba's** sister suffered from a Stroke on the 9th February following the death of Phyllis' brother-in-law, William Bongo Tshawe. Please keep the family in your prayers during this difficult period. For more information contact Phyllis on 082 745 0576.
- **Mrs Julia Njumbuxa's** brother-in-law passed away on the 14th Feb 2009. The funeral service will be held on 1st March 2009 at Lady Frere. Please keep the family in your prayers during this time of bereavement. For more information contact Mrs Julia Njumbuxa on 082 467 5061/011 494-5294 or Revd Bikitsha Njumbuxa on 082 465 3095.

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Dates for Diary

MARCH

Sun	1	SfM Worship Training: North Riding	St Mark's	
Mon	2	Diocesan Welfare Committee	JP Centre	10h00
Tues	3	<i>Independent Schools Half Term Ends</i>		
		Clergy Day- Topic: Upper Room Ministries	Mayfair	09h00-12h30
Tues	3	Training-Rectors' Forum Meeting	Weltevreden Park	13h00
Thurs	5	Provincial Publishing Meeting		
Fri	6	St Benedict's Retreat: Directed Retreat – Sr Liz Elbert (6th – 8th)		
Sat	7	Youth Leadership Training		
Sat	7	Anglicare	Parktown	09h00-11h00
Sat	7	Ordinands Programme: Diocesan Office	St Joseph's	
Sun	8	Final date for YE Accounts on Notice Board / Nominations close.		
Sun	8	Siyafundisa: Official Site Visit	Westonaria	09h00
Tues	10	St Benedict's Spiritual Formation Group		
Wed	11	Management Meeting	St Joseph's	08h30-16h00
Wed	11	Siyafundisa: Clergy Training		
Thurs	12	Siyafundisa: Clergy Training		
Sat	14	STILIM for Lay Leaders	Linden	08h30-12h30
Sat	14	Diaconal Training	Weltevreden Park	09h00-15h00
Sun	15	Final date for Vestry		
Sun	15	Siyafundisa: Official Site Visit	Bekkersdal	08h00
Sat	21	HUMAN RIGHTS DAY		
Sat	21	POST: Basic Skills Counselling	Bedfordview	09h00-16h00
Sun	22	Siyafundisa: Official Site Visit	Toekomsrus	08h00
Wed	25	Siyafundisa: Clergy Training	TBA	TBA
Thurs	26	Mothers' Union: Lady Day		
Fri	27	<i>Government Schools Close</i>		
Fri	27	Siyafundisa: Official Site Visit	Toekomsrus	18h00
Sat	28	FoV Programme: Black Theology	St Joseph's	09h00-17h00
Sun	29	SfM Worship Training	Ruimsig	
Sun	29	Siyafundisa: Life Skills Training (29th -3rd April)		

APRIL

Wed	1	Last Day for Annual Returns / Financial Statements to Diocesan Office		
Wed	1	DFB/Trustees/Archdeacons (To be Confirmed)		
Sat	4	Youth Leadership Training		
Sat	4	Ordinands' Programme: Preaching & Thesis	St Joseph's	
Sun	5	PALM SUNDAY		
Wed	8	<i>Independent Schools Close</i>		
Thurs	9	MAUNDY THURSDAY		

Fri	10	GOOD FRIDAY		
Sat	11	STILIM Lay Training		
Sun	12	EASTER		
Mon	13	FAMILY DAY		
Wed	15	<i>Government Schools Open</i>		
Sat	18	Diaconal Training	Weltevreden Park	09h00-15h00
Sat	18	Anglicare	Parktown	09h00-11h00
Sun	19			
Mon	20	Gerald West Conference: Theology Through Telling Stories		
Tues	21	Gerald West Conference		
Wed	22	Gerald West Conference		
Wed	22	Trustees + DFB	JP Centre	16h30
Fri	24	St Benedict's Retreat: 24th -26th: Being a Witness to Hope – Bobby Godsell		
Sat	25	Spiritual Direction Training: 25th – 27th		
Sat	25	FoV Programme: Being a Priest & Rector	St Joseph's	
Sun	26	SfM Worship Training	Newclare	
Mon	27	FREEDOM DAY		
Tues	28	Bishop's House Quiet Day	JP Centre	09h00-15h00

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Birthdays and Wedding Anniversaries

Please remember the following persons in your prayers as they celebrate birthdays and anniversaries in the coming months:

MARCH	
1 st	Roy Collins
1 st	Mathabo Dlwati
1 st	David Butcher
3 rd	Peter Roberts
4 th	Primrose Seku
5 th	Pearl Sharp
5 th	Chris Aitken
6 th	Chris & Maureen Rowland-Aitken (W/A)
8 th	Errol Dengler
10 th	Peter Witbooi
5 th	Japé Heath
16 th	Eugenia Zeka
16 th	Kim Jacobs
16 th	Gill Lee
16 th	Geraldine & Paul Singleton (W/A)
17 th	Ethel Mbalula
17 th	Charles Germond
17 th	Rodney & Anne Taylor (W/A)
20 th	Steve Moreo
20 th	Geoff Paxton
21 st	Beatrice Mpupu
22 nd	Helen Smith
22 nd	Kgoro Mogami
23 rd	Meshack Nhlapo
25 th	Sedume Ramokgopa
27 th	Beverly Longbottom
29 th	Jeanette Ross
29 th	John Richard Slessor Whyte
29 th	Motlalepula Namu
30 th	Douglas Torr

APRIL	
1 st	Cecil Lamb
2 nd	Angela & Earl Neil (W/A)
3 rd	Joe & Mary Maboe (W/A)
3 rd	Nigel Mollink
4 th	Kenneth & Hilary Owen (W/A)
4 th	Sidney Place
5 th	Morgan & Lynette Ellis (W/A)
5 th	Doug & Vanessa Michael (W/A)
7 th	Tshepo Maloka
7 th	Nelly Ramoabi
8 th	Martin Louw
10 th	Tim & Rosemary Gray (W/A)
10 th	Peter Wilson
10 th	Keith & Pam Berning (W/A)
11 th	Cyril Halkett
14 th	Oupaki Moruthane
15 th	Mothusimang Makata
15 th	Paul Siaki
16 th	Doug Wessels
16 th	Loreen McDougall
16 th	Liziwe Moreo
17 th	Bill Salter
17 th	Bikitsha Njumbuxa
17 th	Mmalerato Molwantwa
17 th	Dodo Mlanjeni
18 th	Cecil & Pamela Lamb (W/A)
20 th	Fred & Merle Robb (W/A)
20 th	David Edwards
21 st	Paul Letlala
22 nd	Eileen Wanckel

31 st	Paul & Ntombi Molefe (W/A)
31 st	Rosemary Gray

23 rd	+Duncan
23 rd	Mary Maboe
25 th	Dikeledi Malema
25 th	Sipho Masemola
25 th	Marius Snyman
26 th	Lynette Paxton
27 th	Justin Dodd
28 th	Pauline Molefe
29 th	Barrie Lodge

NB: Although we do make an effort to keep our Birthday and Anniversary lists updated, we would be grateful for your comments regarding errors or omissions.

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General Notices

- **The Sunday Morning Radio Broadcast Service:** The second Broadcast for 2009 will be relayed at 11h05 on *Sunday, 15th March* from the *Cathedral Church of St Alban the Martyr, Pretoria*. The Rector is *The Very Revd Livingstone Ngewu*.
- **The Publishing Committee:** Would like to draw your attention to a decision not to continue to supply the Anglican Prayer Book 1989 (Standard Edition) as a hard cover edition. All future reprints of this edition will only be available with a soft cover – except for the special black Clerical edition and the white deluxe edition – of which small quantities will be produced. This decision was made in the light of the increasing cost and availability of suitable 50gm paper for the Prayer Book and is also an attempt to keep the price as reasonable as possible. The current selling price for the soft cover edition is R89.95. the first soft edition will be the Setswana Prayer Book currently being reprinted. For further information contact Canon Cynthia Botha on 011 836 5825.
- **The Bishop’s Tea with Retired Clergy and Widows:** The Bishop’s Tea scheduled for 25th March 2009 has been cancelled, owing to Bishop Brian and Susan’s family visit to Canada. The next Bishop’s Tea will be held on 21st October 2009.
- **Post-Ordination Skills Training:** The programme for 2009 is as follows:

21 March	Basic Skills (counselling)
20 June	General Skills
18 July	Narrative Methods
19 September	Insanity and Referral
17 October	Death and Dying
21 November	End of Year Party

Venue: St Margaret’s, 9 Harper Road, Bedfordview. Time: 09h00 to ±16h00. Bring & Share lunch. For more information contact Revd Patricia Lane. 011 455 4449.
- **Preaching Course:** The University of Pretoria is running a preaching course at Holy Cross, Orlando West. Part 1 of the two-part course is being held on 20th, 21st, 22nd March 2009. The leader is Bishop Dungulu - he will be using the course prepared by the Dept of Theology, University of Pretoria. Pastors and lay preachers from all denominations welcome. Cost: R560 (tea provided, bring own lunch). Bookings close 12th March (limited numbers). Enquiries and bookings: Revd Steve Moreo 082 377 5533, holycrosscps@telkomsa.net or Mrs Sue Cramer 084 587 5757, sue.cramer.sfm@gmail.com
- Please note the following changes for your Clergy Directory:
 - New e-mail address for **Revd Kathy Barrable** (Assistant Priest at St Andrew’s, Kensington): kathybarrable@vodamail.co.za.

- New e-mail address for **St Paul's, Parkhurst**: saintpauls@mweb.co.za.
- **SIYAFUNDISA**: The new additional Field Worker has now been appointed for SIYAFUNDISA. Her name is **ANNAH MOLOI**. Please welcome her into this ministry as she will be visiting your parishes where this programme is being implemented. For more information contact: Jabulani Miya, SIYAFUNDISA FIELD WORKER. Tel: 011 333 4399 or 082 323 9948.
- **SIYAFUNDISA**: Dates for 2009 Training Workshops/Meetings are as follows:

DATE	ACTIVITY
04–09 Jan	In-service Training Workshop
04 Feb	LSF Volunteers + Clergy
05 Feb	LSF Volunteers + Clergy
14 Feb	Event: Valentine's Walk
21–22 Feb	LSF Volunteers' M & E Weekend!
28 Feb	Parents Training Workshop (Adults)
11–12 Mar	Clergy Training Workshop
25–27 Mar	Clergy Training Workshop
29 Mar–03 Apr	LIFE SKILLS: Initial Training Workshop
05–08 May	LSF Volunteers' M & E Workshop
09 May	Parents Workshop
16 June	Youth Day Siyafundisa Event
06–10 July	LIFE SKILLS: In-service Training Workshop
23–24 July	LSF Volunteers' M&E Workshop
27– 28 Aug	Clergy Training Workshop
27 Sept–02 Oct	LIFE SKILLS: In-service Training Workshop

If you would like your parish to be included in this LIFE SKILLS programme as a means of HIV/AIDS Prevention, or need more information, please contact the Siyafundisa Office on Tel: 011 333 4399.

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