

AD CLERUM – APRIL 2009

My Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ

At the beginning of the 19th century, William Paley argued that if someone who had never before seen a watch were to pick up one lying at the side of the road, a careful examination of it would bring that person to the conclusion that a mechanical object of such complexity and interrelationship could not have come into being by chance, but must have been made by a watchmaker. In exactly the same way, he said, the complexity of our creation forces us to the conclusion that there has to have been a creator.

That argument for the existence of God became hugely popular and has, in recent years given birth to a number of “updated models” - the anthropic principle (the fact that only this specific combination of the physical constraints of the universe can sustain life as we know it), Walter Bradley’s “Intelligent Designer” argument from the study of the human genome and Michael Behe’s “irreducible complexity” of structures at a molecular level. But for all its enduring success as an argument for the existence of God it falls far short of the Christian understanding of creation and redemption.

Our scriptures begin with the words, “In the beginning, God,” and end with proclaims the book of Genesis. At the end, God, the “Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last” says the book of Revelation. And at the very centre of the scriptures – at the centre of all history and at the heart of all creation - stands the story of God incarnate. Our God did not simply set the world in motion and then step back; creation is an ongoing process that continues even now. “For God to create,” says Rowan Williams, “is for God to ‘commit’ his action, his life, to sustaining a reality that is different from him, and doing so without interruption.” A better analogy than that of the watch, though perhaps no less flawed, might be that of a burning light bulb; it lights up at the flick of a switch, but shines because of the continuing current that causes the light to shine. Creation then is an ongoing process sustained by the divine ‘current’ of God’s love. The moment of creation is always now.

In the Prologue of his gospel St John takes the process of creation still further. He links the incarnate Word with creation and proclaims him to be not only the giver and sustainer of life, but also its redeemer. Thus, for St John, the work of redemption is inextricably intertwined with that of creation; the work of the Triune God. That is why, throughout the gospel, Jesus is portrayed as the one who acts rather than is one who is acted upon, for what is happening is, from start to finish a divine action in which the whole of the universe is made anew.

In St John’s account of the passion, this sense of Jesus as the author and actor of the whole historical drama is even more pronounced. The discourse that precedes John’s final “sign” shows us the one who will humble himself for his servants (13:1-17), initiate the betrayal of Judas (13:21-30), and act boldly in fulfilment of a divine purpose (14:1-31). It also shows us one who understands that his own passion will initiate a like passion for those who believe in him (15:1-27), but who sees his passion and that of his followers as the prelude to a whole new world order (16:16-33) and so is led to pray that we might be one even as he and the Father are one. And so, in St John’s gospel, it is the death of Jesus rather than the resurrection that is the completion of his work. “God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself” (2 Cor. 5:19).

If creation and redemption are inextricably linked then it follows from what Rowan Williams was saying that the moment of both creation and redemption is now. Each circumstance and moment of every person’s life is filled with the creative and redemptive presence of God. It means that, whether we recognise it or not, each of us is already in a relationship with God as is every other person with whom we meet. God is, in Christ, reconciling the world to himself.

In one of his talks Richard Rohr says, “This moment is as perfect as it could ever be.” Whether we are stuck in rush hour traffic or sitting in the dentist’s chair, this moment is as perfect as it could ever be for it is a moment of encounter with our creating and redeeming God. As St Paul says, “I tell you, now is the time of God’s favour; now is the day of salvation” (2 Cor 6:2).

Each moment of every day is an invitation and an opportunity to enter the intimacy that is ours in Christ. The challenge for us all is to learn to live in the present moment; to recognise God at work in us in each and every moment. So often we live in the past or in our dreams and plans for the future, but it is in the now that is the moment of our salvation.

St Paul, too, picks up that same close link between redemption and creation in his second letter to the Corinthians, but goes on to add yet another dimension. He says, "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, the new has come" (2 Cor. 5:17). Creation and redemption interlinked to become a new creation – recreation - in Christ. St Paul then goes on to say, "All this is from God who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave to us the ministry of reconciliation: ... he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. ... God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that we might become the righteousness of God." (2 Cor. 5:18-20).

In a meditation on the 7th word ("It is finished) in his book, 'The Seven Last Words,' Michael Crosby emphasises our participation in the ongoing work of God. He writes:

"The work begun by God in the very beginning was brought to completion in Jesus; that is what *he* finished. But that which he finished is not yet done. Others must continue the work if it is to be finished in the end. ... And until God, through us, concludes that work begun in the beginning, until it is truly accomplished, the hour will not have come. Until that time, we, as the beloved disciples, have our work cut out for us if the scriptures are to be fulfilled in us and in our work,"

As Crosby looks at the brokenness of world in which he lives he finds himself forced to say, "No, it's not finished." We can no longer afford to be spectators of the suffering of others; we are ambassadors of Christ, witnesses to the creative and redemptive love of God. Though Jesus on the cross "bowed his head and gave up his spirit," we know, he says, that "... we cannot yet bow our heads because there are too many bowed heads around us that need to be lifted up in the Spirit. And as far as our discipleship is concerned, until we complete our work, it will never be finished."

God has given to us the ministry of reconciliation; committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are, therefore, Christ's ambassadors. The cross stands at the centre of history, a visible sign of God's redemptive love. Now is the hour of salvation; now is God's reconciling love made visible in us.

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

1. There is a world of difference between knowing about God and knowing God. How would you describe that difference? Is your relationship with God one in which you can say you truly know God rather than just of knowing about God? How did you come to this point of knowing God rather than just knowing about God?
2. On the cross, Jesus prayed, "Father forgive, for they know not what they do." How have you experienced God's forgiveness in your own life? As Christ's ambassador through whom he makes his appeal to the world, how have you shown that same forgiving love to others? Where is forgiveness still needed in your own life and in your attitude towards others?

May resurrection life be made visible in our love 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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Renewal of Vows and the Blessing of Oils

Our Maundy Thursday Eucharist for the Renewal of Diaconal and Priestly Vows and the Blessing of the Oils will take place at the Cathedral on 5 April at 07h00 and will be followed by tea and hot cross buns. I know that the time is inconvenient for many of us (especially for those who have long distances to travel), but has been chosen in order to accommodate our self-supporting sisters and brothers. I hope that all of you will make every effort to be there for what is an important day in our spiritual journey.

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My Visit to Canada

My brother had a very bad 3 weeks following the chemo treatment at the end of last month – so much so that he was beginning to ask whether his quality of life made continuing the treatment. However, a full body scan in the middle of this month was positive with the result that he has undergone another round of chemo, but with a further increase in steroids to try and reduce the side effects of the treatment. Although he is not feeling as well as he would like, he is coping much better than before with the after-effects of the treatment.

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Spiritual Formation

Clergy Day: There will be no Clergy day in April. Instead clergy are encouraged to attend the three-day Conference on Narrative Theology facilitated by Gerald West, Professor of Old Testament and Director of the Injima Institute. The Conference will be held on 20th, 21st and 22nd April at St Thomas', Linden. The cost is R350 which covers tea and snacks, a light lunch and all course materials. Bookings must be confirmed and paid by 6th April. Payments to be deposited into the following account: Standard Bank, Branch Code 006305. Account name: St Thomas' Church, Linden. Account number: 002918536. Use "Surname-NT" as reference for the deposit and fax proof of payment to 011 782 5693 or e-mail to sttsec@isat.co.za. The number of seats is limited to 100. E-mail jamesh@tiscali.co.za to confirm your booking and make sure you are on the mailing list to receive the full Conference programme.

Retreats: Bobby Godsell will be directing a retreat at St Benedict's from 24th -26th April. The topic is "Being a Witness to Hope."

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Reading Recommendations

Kathleen Norris has written a number of reflective and insightful books on spirituality (The Cloister Walk, Amazing Grace: A Vocabulary of Faith, Dakota: A Spiritual Geography). Her latest, "Ascedia and Me," is a superb study of a serious spiritual problem that loomed large in the writings of the desert tradition (John Cassian, Evagrius Pontus). She shows that, even though it has fallen below the spiritual radar of both church and society, it continues to be not only one of the most serious spiritual problems in the life of the church today, but also a major part of the malaise of our times. It is a "must read" for all of us who are serious about growing in grace.

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Prayer for the Elections

Most of our parishes may already be using their own form of prayer in the lead-up to the Elections on 22nd April. If not, you may wish to use the following prayer suggestion during this important period:

With the approach of the General Election, Lord God, in your mercy raise up as candidates for Parliament men and women who love truth more than power, and their country more than themselves. Give electors insight to distinguish between sound policy and party propaganda; and so direct the issues of this election that we may be blessed with wise leaders, good government, and just laws, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

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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

- **Revd Eunice Marubelela**, Assistant Priest in the parish of Christ the King, Sophiatown was admitted to Helen Joseph Hospital on 24th Tuesday March suffering from High blood pressure. Please keep her in your prayers for a speedy recovery. Eunice's contact number is 082 662 4259.
- **Charles Germond** has recovered from his bout with pneumonia, but his wife, Dorothy, has unfortunately fallen and cracked her pelvis. Please keep them both in your prayers at this time.
- A memorial service will be held for The **Revd Doug Torr's** father at 11h00 on Thursday, 2nd April 2009 at St Augustine's, Orange Grove. For further details contact The Revd Millie Smythe on 082 227 9151.
- Our congratulations go to **Nigel Willis** who has received an "upper second" for his Master of Philosophy in Theology. Nigel is the first person to have been allowed to do an M.Phil at St Augustine's College "by dissertation only" and we wish him continued success in his studies.
- **The Revd Mashikane Stephen Montjane** is sick at home. Please pray for him and his wife Buyile during this time of illness. For more details contact Buyile on 011 865-2973.
- **Margaret Montjane**, the wife of **The Revd Norman Montjane**, was admitted to Ward 6 of the Park Lane Clinic recently. Please pray for Margaret and Fr Norman. For more information please contact The Revd Norman Montjane on 073 154 7799.

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Dates for Diary

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: Chrism Mass	Cathedral	07h00
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	Linden	09h00-16h00
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

MAY

Fri	1	WORKERS' DAY		
Sat	2	Self-Supporting Clergy Meeting	Linden	08h30-12h30
Sat	2	Youth Leadership Training		
Sat	2	Ordinands' Programme	St Joseph's	
Tues	5	<i>Independent Schools Open</i>		
Tues	5	Clergy Day		
Tues	5	Siyafundisa: LSF		
Wed	6	Siyafundisa: LSF		
Thurs	7	Siyafundisa: LSF		
Thurs	7	Discernment Panelists' Meeting		

Fri	8	Siyafundisa: LSF		
Sat	9	Good Governance Workshop		
Sat	9	Siyafundisa: Parents' Workshop		
Sat	9	STILIM for Lay Leaders	Linden	08h30-12h30
Sat	9	Diaconal Training	Weltevreden Park	09h00-12h00
Sat	9	Diocesan HIV/AIDS Quarterly Meeting		
Wed	13	Pastoral Care Meeting	St Joseph's	09h00-16h00
Sat	16	Discernment Conference		
Sat	16	Good Governance Workshop		
Sat	16	Mothers' Union: Diocesan Council Elections		
Sat	16	Siyafundisa: Youth Day Event		
Sun	17	Discernment Panelists' Meeting		
Wed	20	St Benedict's Spiritual Formation Group: AGM		
Thurs	21	ASCENSION DAY		
Sat	23	Good Governance Workshop		
Sat	30	Good Governance Workshop		
Sat	30	Anglicare	Parktown	09h00-11h00
Sat	30	SfM/FoV Ordinands' Programme	St Joseph's	09h00-17h00
Sun	31	PENTECOST		
Sun	31	SfM Worship Training	Randburg	

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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:

APRIL	
1 st	Cecil Lamb
3 rd	Joe & Mary Maboe (W/A)
3 rd	Nigel Mollink
4 th	Kenneth & Hilary Owen (W/A)
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
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
23 rd	+Duncan
23 rd	Mary Maboe

MAY	
5 th	Molebe & Motlalepula Mosima (W/A)
5 th	Gerard Sharp
6 th	Makhozi Lenkoe
8 th	Andrew Phillips
8 th	Sue Ray
12 th	Motlale Namu
12 th	Gerald Hick
13 th	Maureen Rowland-Aitken
17 th	Corney Mphaki
18 th	Zodwa Khumalo
19 th	Vicky Moroa
20 th	Gwyn Slade
22 nd	Margaret Steward
23 rd	Pearl Mokgohlane
24 th	Charles May
25 th	Mlanjeni & Nokwezi Dodo (W/A)
25 th	Nosipho Matubatuba
27 th	Dolly Lethoko
27 th	Yvonne Payne
28 th	John & Amy Herbert (W/A)
28 th	Ntombi Molefe
28 th	Tsëpo Matubatuba
30 th	Doug & Lynette Wessels
30 th	Yasmille Smythe
30 th	Rhoda Dove

25 th	Dikeledi Malema
26 th	Lynette Paxton
27 th	Justin Dodd
28 th	Pauline Molefe

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, 26th April* from the *Cathedral Church of St Mary the Virgin, Port Elizabeth*. The Dean is *The Very Revd Shane Fraser*.

- **Post-Ordination Skills Training:** The programme for 2009 is as follows:

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.

- **The Parish of Holy Cross, Orlando:** Invites applications from suitably qualified Grade 12 persons to fill the position of Administration Assistant. The overall responsibility of the successful candidate will be to assist in general office support and the efficient management of all documentation.

Job Requirements:

Knowledge

- Office Administration
- Record-keeping
- MS Office

Skills

- Good interpersonal skills
- Strong communication skills
- Ability to work under pressure and cope with interruptions

Attitude

- Good command of the English language
- Ability to communicate on all levels
- Team player
- Willingness to assist wherever required

Applications to be submitted to The Revd STEVE MOREO. E-mail: holycrosscps@telkomsa.net; Fax: 011 936-5574. Closing Date: 17 April 2009. For more information contact 011 936 1394.

- **The Pastoral Care Portfolio:** Will be running an Alpha Marriage Course at St George's, Parktown from 13th May to 24th June 2009. The Course is held weekly from 19h00 to 21h30. The cost includes a once-off payment of R40.00 per person for the workbook; and R45.00 per person per weekly session for the meal. Please contact Chris or Daryl Jennings on 011 782 4393 for further information.
- **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.
- **Updates for Clergy Telephone Directory:**
 - The Revd Margaret Eades, Assistant Priest at St Patrick's, Malvern, has a new e-mail address: m.eades@iburst.co.za
 - The parish of Holy Cross, Orlando West has a new fax number: 0866-561-857.

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