

AD CLERUM – SEPTEMBER 2009

My Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ

Bartimaeus was blind. This might seem like a trite observation to everyone, but not for Bartimaeus. That single fact dominated Bartimaeus' life. Every waking moment, every thought, every action was dominated by the physical fact of his blindness. Bartimaeus was blind, and because he was blind his life was reduced to one of profound discontent, a life lived on the margins, a life begging for more - "Lord have mercy."

Paul, too, was for a while blind. For a time his life too was dominated by the harsh reality of being unable to see. He too was reduced to a life of dependency on others – in his case on the kindness of one who had once been his sworn enemy - and, like Bartimaeus, Paul was compelled for a while to sit on the sidelines of life begging continually for healing, "Lord, have mercy."

But the scary truth is that Paul, or Saul as he still was in those days, had been blind long before his dramatic encounter with God on the Damascus Road; he just didn't know it. It took the experience of physical blindness for him to discover and realise that he had been blind for years. His blindness had not been physical, but it was a profound spiritual blindness. He could see the world; the trees and the people, but in truth he couldn't see a thing. His perspective was so distorted by his upbringing, by stories he had heard, by people he had met and by his own life experiences that he could not see God's truth even though it stared him in the face. Despite his religious zeal and his love for God and his own unshakeable certainty that he saw things clearly, the truth is that Paul was blind.

We too are blind even though, like Paul, we believe that we can see. And our sincerity and good intentions and our love of God do not automatically dispel the darkness – they might for us, as for Paul, be an integral part of our blindness. (Think of the racial bigotry that is to be found in our own country among people who are devout churchgoers and otherwise kind and caring people). If we really realised that we were blind we would, as physically blind people so often do, seek out doctors and healers and priests in a desperate effort to find healing. And we would turn to God in the words of the Kyries – "Lord have mercy" – the cry of our blindness. But because we think we see, there is no desperation in our seeking, and the Kyries in our Eucharistic liturgy are reduced to a beautiful musical interlude before the words of confession.

For both Paul and Bartimaeus healing required a grace filled encounter with God in a context that shifted paradigms and allowed the scales to fall from their eyes. In Paul's case (and probably also in the case of Bartimaeus) it took more than one such encounter to effect the change - for healing is a gradual process. Healing does not happen simply by recognising our blindness or even in our ability to identify and name the areas where our vision has been distorted; it requires a growing awareness and understanding of how we have been affected and shaped by that which we are able to name.

Take for example, the issue of racism. Racism is a hierarchy of power relationships built upon the inclusion or exclusion of others on the basis of real or perceived physical differences. Those included in the hierarchy of power are deemed by themselves to have greater intelligence, capabilities and ethics. While this perception of superiority defines and legitimates racism, racism itself is not as much about racial differences as it is about social and economic power structures that legitimates the enrichment of one group at the expense of the other.

South Africa has for hundreds of years defined itself in terms of race and even though we might blithely say that we have put all that behind us, the realities of racism are still there, both in our economic structures and in our attitudes towards others. Notions of white superiority and black inferiority are deeply ingrained in our psyches, having been shaped by generations taught to interpret the world through the eyes of a dominant culture and by local and Eurocentric media that reinforced the negative stereotypes of certain racial groups. This has been compounded by the fact that we live in an environment in which structural inequalities still reinforce the old social stereotypes – for example in our education system where the majority of black schoolchildren have never been inside a library nor have access to the internet and where, because of the inequalities in education, 1 in 10 white children obtain an A-level pass in matric as against only 1 in 1000 black children.

As I have said, these notions of superiority and inferiority are deeply ingrained in all of us. Notions of 'white' superiority can be seen in the arrogant, condescending and patronising attitudes of whites towards others (a notion of superiority that is sadly not limited to those of us born in South Africa – as can be seen in the patronising arrogance of the USA). It can be clearly heard in many suburban dinner party conversations. Equally notions of black inferiority are not something that can simply be shrugged off – countless experiences of humiliation leaves deep scars and breeds both self-hatred and rage which, as Mamphela Ramphele has said, "... makes it hard for one to rise to the challenges of the rights and responsibilities of citizenship." She has also commented that the expectation of further humiliation (especially where one is confronted with patronising condescension) leads to defensiveness.

The American theologian Tandeka created what she terms a "race game" to help white Americans recognise the extent to which 'whiteness' is normative in their thinking. The game consists simply of asking the person to add the word 'white' when referring to or describing a person who is 'white' like they are. In other words, in the same way that they use colour or ethnicity to describe members of marginalised communities (eg. my black friend, my Asian hairdresser) so they now deliberately label every white person to whom they refer (eg. my white parish priest, my white neighbour, the white shop assistant). What the game reveals how much easier they find it to describe people as 'black' or 'Hispanic' or 'Asian' rather than to describe them in terms of 'whiteness' because white is the norm that renders the label unnecessary. But I believe that it teaches us something more. If we deliberately attach labels (even multiple labels, as in 'my white, male, homophobic friend) to everyone we refer to while playing the game, it begins to reveal the extent to which all of us find it easier to label 'otherness' – whether in terms of race, gender, or sexual orientation – and the extent to which we differentiate between ourselves and that 'other' on the basis of that label.

I want to suggest that all of us should spend a few days playing the game, and then to reflect not only on the extent to which we see others in terms of 'otherness,' but also in terms of the values (superior / inferior, trustworthy / untrustworthy, comfortable / uncomfortable) that we attach to those labels. And then we need to compare notes with others and to begin addressing the issue of 'otherness' in my life. For as long as our fears, hurts and prejudices remain buried and hidden from sight, we remain blind to our own brokenness and hurts and thus unable even to recognise our need for healing and reconciliation.

Play the game for a week or two. I would suggest that you try and answer the 3 questions below first on your own, then discuss the questions with someone from your own racial (or gender or sexual orientation group) and finally, discuss them again with someone from a different group (some "other"). After all three exercises, pray to God for help in the issues that have surfaced.

1. How did you feel playing the game and attaching labels? Did any labels make you feel more uncomfortable than others? Why? What values do you attach to those labels?
2. Were you comfortable with certain labels? Why? What values do you attach to those labels?
3. Did the act of labelling itself bother you? Why? What does that say about the labels and values we unconsciously attach to others? Can you identify some of them?

May the one who heals blindness give us sight.



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New email addresses for the Diocesan office

It has long been our dream that every parish in the Diocese should have internet access under a central domain name. As a first step in this the Diocesan office has moved to a new domain name on the Google mail system. Google have graciously given us 250 free email addresses. This means that every parish and every priest can have their own email address with a common domain. The advantage for clergy is that priest will carry their address with them to every new placement. The new Diocesan email addresses are name.surname@anglicanjoburg.org.za.

If anyone else is interested in making a move to the Googlemail system on the Diocesan domain name please contact Claire.Holden@anglicanjoburg.org.za or Rodney.Taylor@anglicanjoburg.org.za

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Spiritual Formation

Clergy Retreat: September: The Clergy Retreat led by our Bishop is currently underway at St. Benedict's. Please keep those participating in this retreat in your prayers.

Clergy Day: The next Clergy Day will take place on Tuesday 6th of October at St Georges, Parktown. Merwyn King will speak to us on Good Governance.

Clergy Quiet Day: The next one Quiet Day is on the 17th of November. Following the August Quiet Day one of the participants felt moved to write this ad invitation to all of us:

“Do you often feel isolated as a clergy person, or, maybe out of touch and out of trust with God, yourself and others? Do yourself, a favour, come to the monthly clergy quiet days! As we share these days together, there's a mystical and deeply moving bond which grows between us and God; an understanding of our common struggles, concerns, and faith as people, and as clergy and bishop; a blessing which develops in us and for the benefit of the community. Come and be part of this grace.”

St Benedict's Retreats: Fr Don & Jenny Thomson will be leading a retreat entitled “Peace, Be Still (Mark 4:39) from the 18th - 20th of September.

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Reading Recommendations

Richard Foster and Gayle Beebe have together produced an excellent book entitled “Longing for God: Seven Paths of Christian Devotion. Introducing us to spiritual insights from 28 spiritual writers from the past (4 writers for each of the 7 paths), it offers much material both for prayer and spiritual formation.

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Bishop Bavin School is 20 years old this year. I would like to offer them our warmest congratulations for the fact that in those 20 years they have provided R 20,000,000 in bursaries and scholarships to disabled and disadvantaged pupils. They are an example to us all.

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September has been declared **Provincial Environmental Issues Month**. It has been suggested that we again use some of the material from Seasons of Creation to highlight environmental issues during the course of the month. Our own diocesan environmental group has also suggested that one of the Sundays be set aside as “Low Car Sunday”. Please read the attached document for details.

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St. Joseph's

We have been experiencing significant delays in the development of the new Diocesan centre because of the fact that it is a national monument and as such requires special permissions for each and every alteration, repair or addition. In addition much work has been required for consent for land use change. We are now fast approaching the point where we will be in a position to proceed. Tenders have already been received for repairs to the roof and the flooring and we are hoping that within the next month or so we will be in a position to begin work. When we as a Diocese almost unanimously agreed to the purchase and development of the property we also agreed that we as parishes would find the necessary money for the purchase and repairs. We will be writing to you under separate cover to ask

parishes to contribute to specific areas of the upgrade of the buildings and we would hope that you will respond generously to the request.

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Parish Finance Portfolio

The meeting of the Parish Finance Portfolio (old Treasurers Meeting) will take place at St Joseph's Home on **19th September** starting at 08:30 for 09:00 and ending at 12:00.

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Weekly Newsletters

Some parishes have taken to printing out a copy of the weekly newsletter for display on their parish notice boards on the Sunday. I would encourage all parishes to follow suit and to draw people's attention to it so that it and the Ad Clerum become more effective channels of communication.

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Provincial News

- At its recent Synod the **Diocese of Cape Town** approved a resolution asking the Synod of Bishops to provide pastoral guidelines for gay and lesbian members of the church living in "covenanted partnerships," taking into account the mind of the worldwide Anglican Communion.
- The **Diocese of Saldanha Bay** will be holding their Synod from the 17th of September. Please keep Bishop Raphael and the Diocese in your prayers.
- The **Diocese of False Bay** will be holding their Synod from the 23rd of September. Please pray for Bishop Merwyn and that Diocese.
- Kate Davies, wife of **Bishop Geoff**, has injured her back in a fall while they were away in Lusaka. She is recovering well but we ask that you keep her in your prayers.

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Family News

- **Sipho and Nono Masemola's** granddaughter died suddenly and unexpectedly this past weekend.
- **Val Lodge** has been released from hospital and is making wonderful progress in her recovery. Please continue to keep both Val and Barrie in your prayers as they adjust to life back home and that new challenges they will be faced with there.

- Please continue to pray for **David and Joyce Ntsoelengoe**. Joyce has been seriously ill for some time with suspected ulcerated colonitis. She is currently undergoing further tests.
- **Mary Maboe** was admitted to hospital in a diabetic coma. She has now been stabilised and discharged. Please hold them in your prayers.
- **Lefetlho Lethoko's** sister-in-law Poppie has been in hospital with swine flu. Please keep them in your prayers.
- **Dan and Pat Ngqumeya's** 8 year old granddaughter Penelope died last week. We pray for their family as they mourn her loss.
- **Barry Beckley** had a black out and fall and is currently in hospital. Please keep him and Margaret in your prayers.

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Moves, Appointments and Vacancies

- Our apologies for the belated announcement that **John Herbert** has stepped down as Priest-in-Charge of St Joseph's Phakamani and will be returning to his home parish of St Thomas' Linden.
- **Godfrey Henwood** will be instituted as Rector of the Parish of St Michael Bryanston on Sunday 6th of September at 4pm.
- **Kgoro Mogami** will be moving to the Parish of the Church of the Resurrection, Meadowlands as of the 1st of September. Please update your directory.
- **Dorcas Baleni** will be moving from the Parish of Holy Cross, Orlando to the Parish of St Mary, Dobsonville from the 1st October. Please update your directory.
- **Stewart Basson** will be moving to the Parish of St Margaret, Noordgesig as of the 4th October. Please update your directory.
- In November two of our Trainees will begin their ministry in new parishes; **Bradley Moloji** will move to the Parish of Holy Cross, Orlando and **Nombuyiselo Nhlapo** will move to the Parish of St. Francis, Moroka. Please update your directory.
- **David Alexander** has resigned as Cathedral Canon with immediate effect. We thank him for the wonderful contribution he made as a Cathedral Canon.
- **TEE** is currently looking to make an appointment to the position of Principal. Please click on the link below for more information.

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Birthdays and Wedding Anniversaries

Please remember the following persons in your prayers as they celebrate birthdays and anniversaries this month:

SEPTEMBER

1 st	Michelle Louw
2 nd	Barry & Margaret Beckley (W/A)
3 rd	Lynda Shimmin
4 th	Winnie Dixie
4 th	John & Irma Warren (W/A)
6 th	Irma Warren
9 th	Lankiri Thaba
11 th	Olga Raphoto
11 th	Chris Viljoen
11 th	Susan Germond
11 th	Mlungisi & Shwane Ntsele (WA)
12 th	Monica Xinwa
14 th	Ian Thorburn
14 th	Buyile Montjane
16 th	Priscilla Everson
16 th	Michael Arnold
18 th	Patricia Lane
18 th	Elizabeth Thomas
18 th	Koto & Tinny Moloji (WA)
21 st	Phyllis Mqguba
22 nd	Barbara Collins
23 rd	Ray Bewsher
23 rd	Philip & Winnie Dixie (W/A)
23 rd	Chris Uitzinger
23 rd	Mothusimang & Boitumelo Makata (W/A)
24 th	Ian & Diana Thorburn (W/A)
26 th	Monica Ngombane
26 th	Amy Herbert
27 th	Greg & Bev Longbottom (W/A)

OCTOBER

1 st	Tsépo & Nosipo Matubatuba (W/A)
2 nd	Désirée Snyman
2 nd	Gail Prince
4 th	Vicentia Kgabe
8 th	Trevor & Gail Prince (W/A)
9 th	Peter & Gayle Wilson (W/A)
9 th	Sharmain James
10 th	Reuben Ndlovu
10 th	Pilane Moroa
10 th	Victor Tshoagong
13 th	Ian & Bernice Stevens (W/A)
14 th	Kathe Day
15 th	Manelisi Zeka
16 th	Dennis Francis
17 th	Dan Molwantwa
17 th	Alan Keartland

17 th	Luke Pato
19 th	Bev O'Shaughnessy
20 th	Kenny Xinwa
20 th	Nicholas Seku
21 st	Makananelo Thaba
22 nd	Mlungisi Ntsele
22 nd	Joyce Ntsoelengoe
22 nd	Florence Ntsoko
22 nd	Denzall Snell
23 rd	Kenneth Owen
24 th	Lankiri & Makananelo Thaba (W/A)
27 th	Tim Mncube
30 th	John Warren

Although we endeavour to keep our records up-to-date, experience tells us that we often miss out on special dates. If you are celebrating a special occasion in the coming month that is not on the list please email Zodwa so that we can update our lists.

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Dates for Diary

SEPTEMBER		Diocese	+ Brian
Tuesday	1	Clergy Retreat <i>Independent Schools Open</i>	Clergy Retreat
Wednesday	2	Clergy Retreat	Clergy Retreat
Thursday	3	Clergy Retreat	Clergy Retreat
Friday	4	Clergy Retreat	Clergy Retreat
Saturday	5	Discernment Conference / Youth Leadership Training	
Sunday	6	Discernment Panel Meeting	Bryanston: Institution of Rector
Monday	7	Diocesan Welfare Committee	Episcopal Synod
Tuesday	8		Episcopal Synod
Wednesday	9	Pastoral Care Meeting Provincial Standing Committee	Episcopal Synod / Provincial Standing Committee
Thursday	10	Provincial Standing Committee	Provincial Standing Committee
Friday	11	Provincial Standing Committee	Provincial Standing Committee
Saturday	12	Diaconal Training / STILIM Lay Training	
Sunday	13	Discernment Conference	
Monday	14		LEAVE
Tuesday	15		LEAVE
Wednesday	16		LEAVE

Thursday	17		LEAVE
Friday	18	MU Conference: 18 th -20 th	LEAVE
Saturday	19	POST	LEAVE
Sunday	20		LEAVE
Monday	21		LEAVE
Tuesday	22		LEAVE
Wednesday	23	<i>Government Schools Close</i>	LEAVE
Thursday	24	HERITAGE DAY	LEAVE
Friday	25		LEAVE
Saturday	26	SfM Weekend	LEAVE
Sunday	27	FOV / SfM Weekend: Alexandra	LEAVE
Monday	28		LEAVE
Tuesday	29		LEAVE
Wednesday	30		LEAVE

OCTOBER		Diocese	+ Brian
Thursday	1		LEAVE
Friday	2		LEAVE
Saturday	3	Youth Leadership Training / Anglicare	Inauguration Ukhohamba Diocese
Sunday	4		
Monday	5	<i>Government Schools Open</i>	
Tuesday	6	Clergy Day	Clergy Day
Wednesday	7	Management Strategic Planning	Management Strategic Planning
Thursday	8	Management Strategic Planning	Management Strategic Planning
Friday	9	Management Strategic Planning / St Benedicts Retreat: 9 th -11 th : Down to Earth – Tim Gray	Management Strategic Planning
Saturday	10	Diaconal Training / STILIM Lay Training	
Sunday	11		Pastoral Visit: St George's
Monday	12		Provincial Media Meeting
Tuesday	13	St Benedict's Spiritual Formation Group	St Benedict's Spiritual Formation Group
Wednesday	14	Pastoral Care Meeting	Pastoral Care Meeting
Thursday	15	<i>Independent Schools ½ Term Begins</i>	
Friday	16	AWF Conference: 16 th -18 th : Empowering Ourselves	
Saturday	17	POST	

Sunday	18	MU Clergy Prayer Day	Pastoral Visit: Jeppestown
Monday	19		
Tuesday	20	<i>Independent Schools ½ Term Ends</i>	
Wednesday	21	Retired Clergy Tea	Retired Clergy Tea
Thursday	22		
Friday	23		
Saturday	24	SfM Weekend	Confirmation
Sunday	25	SfM Weekend	Pastoral visit: Kensington
Monday	26		
Tuesday	27		
Wednesday	28		
Thursday	29		Provincial Publishing Meeting
Friday	30		
Saturday	31		

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General Notices

- **POST** is holding its next meeting on 19th September. A guest speaker will be attending to talk about Wills & ANC; "breaking the news" of imminent death; coping with suicide & letting go.
- If anyone has a **car for sale** for R30,000 or less please would you contact Rodney Taylor in the Diocesan office.
- St. Stephen's, Sunninghill will be holding a special service on Sunday 6th September to open a new branch of the **Mother's Union** and to admit new members. We welcome all Mother's Union members in the Diocese to join us for the service at 8:30 am and for tea thereafter. If you wish to attend please send an email, sms or phone: Angela Odame - angelao@nedbank.co.za; 084 987 4622
Parish Office – ststephens@icon.co.za; 011 807 7974

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