



Diocese of Johannesburg

# ANGLICAN BISHOP

## DIOCESE OF JOHANNESBURG



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### Pastoral Letter Vol 3 27 March 2018

Dear fellow saints

At the end of this week, we commemorate the two most pivotal days in Christendom: Good Friday and Easter Day. We all know them, sometimes too well, and, once celebrated, perhaps don't always remember how pervasive they must always remain as part of our Christian discipleship.

You will all know by now that one of the focus areas I have charged us as a Diocese to concentrate on is that of intentional discipleship. Many of you, however, may be new to your Church Council that has just been elected at Vestry, and may not therefore be aware of the focus areas that I delineated at Synod and in subsequent pastoral letters. I ask new Council members, therefore, to fully acquaint themselves with what I have said so that you too may fully embrace intentional discipleship, and the other focus areas of Intentional Children and Youth ministry and Intentional Ongoing Leadership formation.

What I am asking you therefore, whether you are a newcomer in your Parish leadership, a long-standing Council member, or one of the Clergy in the Diocese, is to go back to the basics. Please read the basics of what I have put forward and what has been accepted as a Diocese. I have recently been reading a book entitled '*Win*' in which the TV personality Jeremy Maggs interviews a number of leading South Africans about their success. The secret to this is simple: they do the basics consistently and successfully.

What does this mean for us as Easter people this year? Doing the basics, taking life as it comes, must have been unbelievably difficult for that small group of people who surrounded Jesus on the Cross at Calvary. Surely it must have been a hopeless task even, as the hours after his death turned into days. But, of course, as we are now privileged to know, out of death came Resurrection and Life. The American sociologist and theologian, Dr Tony Campolo, gives a wonderful sermon, "It's Friday... but Sunday's comin". No matter how challenging things seem, he says, Sunday always follows. So even when situations appear hopeless, even when we seem at a loss as to how we can be intentional disciples in the face of the seemingly overwhelming odds of a world full of strife and hatred, natural disaster and war, we

Our Vision as the Anglican Diocese of Johannesburg is:  
To Achieve the Shared Vision and Practice of the Ministry of All Believers

have to remember that the worst humanity could do to one of their own could not destroy the humanness of the Gospel message. Friday came and went, but Sunday *always* follows.

Underlying this is the simple fact that, as Jeremiah tells us, each human being is a co-creator with God. Each human being, living an intentional commitment to discipleship, becomes that co-creator. God says to Jeremiah (Jer 1:5), "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations." You and I are part of that co-creation.

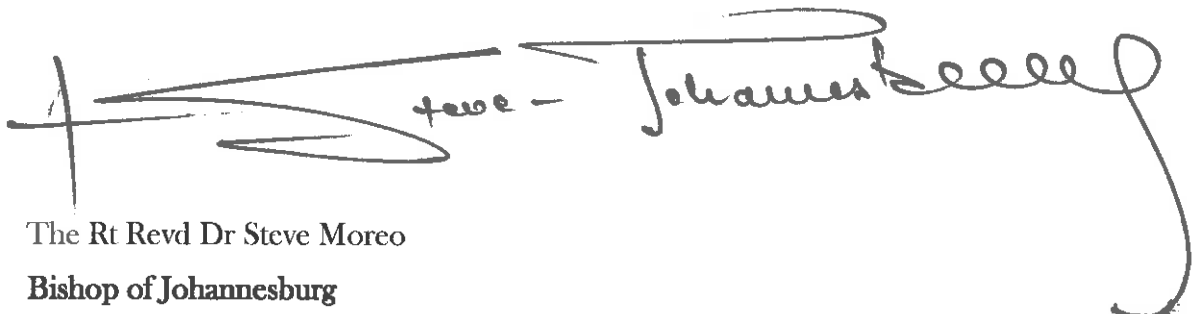
I write this letter also just weeks after a change in political leadership in South Africa. Many in our Diocese will have breathed a sigh of relief and think that a sudden panacea has been found for all the country's ills. We should not do so. As I have indicated in previous communications that was a mistake we made post-1994. While all went well initially in the late 1990s, we now have recent history showing us what damage was later done to our country, partly because the intentionality of modern day disciples was allowed to dissipate. Let me be clear. Easter Sunday *does* follow Good Friday - but it required the faith, steadfastness and intentionality of that little band of Jews who followed Christ to the Cross, to the tomb, and then to the Resurrection and Ascension. Intentional discipleship is not cheap, as another 20<sup>th</sup> century theologian who suffered greatly for his faith, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, would remind us.

As intentional disciples, we need to live out our lives as Anglicans, people who come from a great tradition and who embrace a wide theological understanding; people who will minister in unity, no matter what those differences in understanding might be. But we need to do so with justice and fairness, righteousness and integrity, because in so doing we will be true to a Bible that speaks to us about just these things. I pray that this may be your commitment as you journey to Good Friday through to the day on which we celebrate the Resurrection and further on as intentional disciples.

After Easter, we will be preparing for the Diocesan conference to be held on 19 May and all Parishes will be asked to send Catalytic Passion Champions in our three focus areas of intentional discipleship, Intentional children and youth ministry, and Intentional Ongoing Leadership Formation. I will also be doing meditations on intentional discipleship in the near future, in which I will share further my understanding, teaching and vision about intentional discipleship.

May I take this opportunity, on behalf of Liziwe and the rest of my family, to wish you and your loved ones a meditative Holy week and joyful Easter.

Shalom

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Steve - Johannesbeee". The signature is stylized and somewhat illegible due to the cursive and overlapping lines. It is positioned above the typed name of the signatory.

The Rt Revd Dr Steve Moreo  
**Bishop of Johannesburg**