

AD CLERUM – February 2009

My Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ

Professor Jansen's powerful talk last Saturday moved many, including myself to tears. In it he spoke of those defining moments in his life that enabled him to turn away from his hatred of whites and begin a journey across the great divide to a place where he was able to encounter the common humanity that each of us shares. He went on to say that the healing of our land depends on those willing to cross that bridge and to encounter the other as they make the same journey towards us. It is a journey into truth – the truth there is not, as we have been told, many different races, but only one; the human race, created in the image of God and, in a myriad of ways, reflecting God's glory.

That talk, and the conversations that followed, got me thinking about my own journey and of those defining moments in my life that have so powerfully shaped who I am in my relationship with others.

I was privileged to have been born into a liberal middle-class family. As a schoolboy I did my bit for "the struggle" by tearing down United Party election campaign posters. Our suburb was "Progressive" - Helen Suzman was our member of parliament, and that was the way it was going to stay if I had anything to do with it. By the time I was a junior curate at St Martins my political views were such that I had attracted the attention of the security police and my rector received complaints from parishioners about my left-wing ideas. Reflecting back on those years, I realise that there was a strong element of self righteousness and pride in what I was saying and doing. I did not support what was going on – I was not one of "them." I, at least, was one of the good guys, living a comfortable life in a comfortable environment and proclaiming my outrage at the injustices around me.

At that point the bishop transferred me to a cluster of parishes in the most far flung corners of the diocese; to a place that was at the centre of some of the most draconian implementation of the then government's policy of forced relocations. And almost overnight my liberal ideas were turned upside down. Living and working with people being destroyed by blatant oppression exposed me to the realities and evils of apartheid as never before. No longer was I someone looking from the outside with moral indignation; now I was a part of what was going on. I lived with these people, laughed with them and cried with them. We built crude corrugated iron shelters and equally crude churches together; I held their children in my arms as they died of malnutrition and shared in their pain. And my heart burned with angers and hatreds that I had never before experienced in my life.

But with the angers and the hatreds came also compassion and love. Susan and I were filled with compassion, respect, admiration and love for people with a language and culture so different from our own, and yet whose lives, in their hopes and dreams for themselves and for their children were no different from our own. Though we were products of very different circles of reality, we were united in a common humanity and our oneness in Jesus Christ.

Much more difficult for us was to connect with the white members of those rural congregations – people so similar to us culturally, but whose circle of reality was so foreign to ours that, for the most part, they could not understand, still less identify with much of the work we were doing. But even there, there was a shared humanity that allowed us to engage with each other and to grow in love and understanding of each other. Though they supported an oppressive and evil system, they were not evil people, but people shaped by a circle of reality that was so blinkered as to exclude the majority of people with whom they came in contact. What they needed was what we had needed; defining moments that would break through the narrow confines of their circle of reality and allow them to experience their common humanity with those who had previously been set apart.

Such defining moments cannot be forced; they are gifts of grace. Though they cannot be forced, they can be encouraged if we are open to new experiences that run counter to the prevailing circles of reality that have shaped us and formed our present worldview. Unless our worldviews are transformed, history will simply keep repeating itself and we will pass the pain, the hurts and the

resentments on to successive generations. This is what Professor Jansen was stressing when he spoke of the Skierlik shootings by a child who had grown up in a post-apartheid South Africa. In an article he wrote on the shootings, Jansen said:-

“... Simply to dismiss Nel as an incorrigible racist is an intellectually lazy responseLike all of us he would have read that criminals run riot in this country. He too would have read the screaming headlines of every daily newspaper and found that yet another woman was raped in her home or a family hijacked on the streets. He would have seen the statistics that most of those who murder get away because of problems of capacity and competence within police services. He could probably swop stories with millions of other South Africans about personal loss and grievance. He would certainly, like most of us, ... join the growing call for the reinstatement of the death penalty. *And like every one of us, he would filter the knowledge of what was happening around him through a racially tinted lens. You see, Johan Nel not only came from among us. He is us.*” (Italics mine).

We all of us filter what is happening around us through racially tinted lenses; the lens of our circle of reality. Until we can recognise and understand the racial bias of our own circle of reality we will never have much self-insight. And it is imperative if we are going to find healing and reconciliation that our racial lenses be transformed.

I want to pose two questions for us to prayerfully consider and then to discuss at our Parish Council meeting and in our bible study and home cell groups. I am also asking each of you to feed back to me the response and reaction of your group/s to the questions so that, in the light of your responses, we can plan our journey into healing and reconciliation.

The two questions are:-

1. What are the racial attitudes and behaviours most prevalent within your circle of reality (home, school, church, community) and how are these reflected in your own attitudes and behaviours?
2. What defining moments have you had with people different from you in terms of colour, ethnicity, nationality, gender or sexual orientation that has brought you into a new awareness of your common humanity and has challenged your own bias and stereotypes?

As we journey together, may God transform us, bind our wounds, and heal our history,



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The Diocesan Conference

I thank all of you who attended the Conference – it was heartening to see the significant number of young people there and those who, though not elected by their parishes, asked to come in their individual capacity. Obviously there is a limit to the number of independent people we can accommodate, but it is encouraging to see such a level of commitment to the diocese.

From what I have heard, a great many parishes made a point of reporting back to the parish during the Sunday services. Thank you for that – if our process is to bear any fruit, then it is imperative that parishes are involved in the process and that as many people as possible are drawn into the discussions.

In my reflection this month I have posed two questions and have asked that this be discussed in parish councils, bible study groups etc. and that feedback be given on the responses received. Please take this seriously as the success of the exercise depends on your wholehearted support. 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.
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 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 what has been said to God and praying that God will bring healing to us all.

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Of Archdeacons and Archdeaconries

Our Management Team have agreed on the proposed Archdeaconry boundaries and the matter is now in its final stages. So as not to delay the sending out of the Ad Clerum, I will send under separate cover details of the Archdeaconries and an explanation of how they will work.

Management Committee has suggested that, instead of Archdeaconries electing their Pastoral Dean, I should rather appoint people to this position. Their reasoning is that, if elected, many will prove ineffective for all the same reasons that electing Archdeacons proved ineffective. I would welcome your response and comments on this – silence will be deemed to imply your endorsement of the recommendation.

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Change of Plans

As all of you know I went over to Canada on my way to Lambeth as my brother, Colin, who lives there, had been diagnosed as having a particularly virulent form of cancer. Initial treatment brought remission, but he has now relapsed and is dying. Even if he responds to a new regime of treatment with new drugs that is being proposed, his life expectancy is only months. As they have no other family in Canada, Susan and I are planning to go across and spend as much time with them as is possible.

Despite having regularly planned to take a sabbatical, I have not yet taken long leave since becoming bishop, and so have a reasonable period of leave available. Dates have yet to be finalised, but it is probable that we will leave somewhere around the 22nd February and return in time for Holy Week. This means that I will need to reschedule my pastoral visits to parishes planned for that period, and to tender my apologies for others. I apologise for any inconveniences that my absence will cause, but am sure that you will all understand my need to be with my family at this time. Please keep us all in your prayers.

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Ash Wednesday

The All Africa Council of Churches called for a Day of Prayer for Zimbabwe on 15th January, but the request arrived too late for notice to be given. Archbishop Thabo has therefore asked that Ash Wednesday be a Day of Prayer for Zimbabwe. The failure of both SADC and our own political leaders to provide strong moral leadership means that we are all complicit in the genocide that is happening in that country. More people have died in the struggle in Zimbabwe over the past few years than in our struggle against apartheid.

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Lent Course

Although we had agreed at our Biblical Giving Conference last year that we would do a Lent Course on that topic, the Archbishop has commissioned a Lent Course for the whole province. I have seen it and believe it to be most appropriate for our theme of reconciliation. We should receive the course material within the next week and will forward them on to you, perhaps with a few additional questions relevant to our diocesan process.

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Spiritual Formation

Clergy Day: Our first Clergy event for the year is a two day LEMON workshop to be held at St Stephen's, Sunninghill from 09h00-15h00 on 3rd and 4th February 2009.

Retreats and Quiet Days: Bishop Peter Lee will be leading a retreat, "The Shadow of the Cross," from 27th February to 1st March. Sister Liz Alberts will be leading a directed retreat from 6th to 8th March. Both retreats will take place at St Benedicts.

The next Diocesan Quiet Day at Bishop's House will be on Tuesday, 24th February.

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Reading Recommendations

A book that is very pertinent to our Diocesan Conference and this month's reflection is "Miguel De La Torre's book, "Liberating Jonah – Forming an Ethics of Reconciliation." Written from the perspective of those marginalised by society it challenges and confronts superficial attempts at papering over the cracks without addressing the fundamental issues. It offers a number of constructive suggestions for ways forward. I commend it to you.

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Vestry 2009

My prayers are with you for your Annual Vestry meetings. If you let me know the date of your vestry I will make a special point of praying for you on that day. Please ensure that all returns are submitted immediately following the Vestry. (Details of Vestry returns and of the Vestry process itself were given in both the December and January Ad Clerum). Please contact me if you have any problems in respect of Vestry.

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Family News

Provincial News:

- I imagine that all of you have heard that **Godfrey Henwood** is one of the nominees for the forthcoming elective assembly to be held in the Diocese of Highveld from 12th – 14th February. The other nominees are Dean David Bannerman, Archdeacon Sharon Dinnie, Canon Mark Long, Revd Joe Mdhleia and Revd Edward Sithole. Please remember the Diocese and those nominated in your prayers as they seek to discern God's will for the diocese.

Diocesan News:

- The blessing of the new church buildings for the **Parish of Manche Masemola, East Bank** will take place at 14h00 on Sunday 1st February. All are invited.
- **Geoff Paxton**, a former priest of this diocese, has just been diagnosed as having a metastasised melanoma and that no treatment is possible. Geoff's can be contacted at 074. 432. 0361 and I am sure that he would welcome a call.

- **Luke Pato** was in hospital with severe abdominal pains. The cause of the problem has now been identified, a remedy prescribed, and Luke is back at home. He attended the opening of the Diocesan Conference, but was not well enough to last the day. Please keep him in your prayers as he rebuilds his strength.
- **Steve Moreo** would like to thank everyone for their prayers and support. Please continue to pray for Liziwe's full recovery. For more information please contact Steve on 082 377 5533.
- **Neo Motlabane's** mother, **Celestina**, has been admitted to Chris Hani Baragwanath Hospital suffering from Low Blood Pressure. Please remember her and the family in your prayers.
- **Gerald Hicks** has also been in hospital with pneumonia. Although he is now out of hospital and back at home, his general state of health is poor. Please pray for him and Audrey at this time.
- **Margaret Steward** has been undergoing medical tests for an as yet undiagnosed illness. I have not yet heard the results of the tests. Please remember them in your prayers at this time.
- **Gerard Sharp** continues with radiation for his non-malignant tumour. He is feeling much better, and is hoping that his doctors will allow him to return to work during the course of this month.
- **Pearl Sharp's** twin sister, Ruby, died on 15th January after a long and debilitating illness. Please remember Pearl and all the family in your prayers at this time.
- **Mothusimang and Tumi Makata** would like to express their feeling of gratitude to all those who gave support during the loss of their baby. May God bless and keep you kind.

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Moves, Appointments and Vacancies

- **Nigel Mollink** has been appointed Interim Pastor in the Parish of St Michael, Bryanston, as from 1st February. I commend him to your prayers.
- **Alan Williams** has been appointed as Interim Pastor of the Parish of St Luke's, Orchards, with effect from 1st March 2009. Please keep him in your prayers.
- **Kevin Balkwill, Shona Fleming, Cathy Lee, Alinah Mohomane, Parker Monala, Alice Mugglestone and Chris Uitzinger** will be made deacon and **Lucy Austin and Bradley Moloi** will be ordained to the priesthood in the Cathedral Parish of St Mary the Virgin at **14h30** on Saturday 7th February. Please remember them in your prayers at this time.

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Dates for Diary

FEBRUARY

Sun	1	SfM Worship Training	Auckland Park	
Sun	1	Siyafundisa: Official Site Visit	Tladi	09h00
Mon	2	Ordination Retreat (2nd -6th)		
Tues	3	Clergy Day (LEMON)	Sunninghill	09h00-15h00
Wed	4	Clergy Day (LEMON)	Sunninghill	09h00-15h00
Wed	4	Siyafundisa: Combined meeting	Moroka	09h30-15h30
Thurs	5	Siyafundisa: Combined meeting	Westonaria	09h30-15h30
Fri	6	Ordination Rehearsal	Cathedral	10h00
Fri	6	Siyafundisa: Official Site Visit	Alexandra	10h00
Sat	7	Ordination of Deacons & Priests	Cathedral	14h30
Sat	7	AWF AGM		
Sat	7	Siyafundisa: Official Site Visit	Fochville	14h00
Sun	8	Siyafundisa: Official Site Visit	Khutsong	09h00
Sun	8	Bishop's Pastoral Visit: Ferreirastown	St Albans	
Tues	10	National Summit for a Sustainable Future		
Wed	11	National Summit for a Sustainable Future		
Thurs	12	National Summit for a Sustainable Future		
Thurs	12	Elective Assembly: Highveld Diocese		
Fri	13	Elective Assembly: Highveld Diocese		
Fri	13	Siyafundisa: Official Site Visit (13th - 15th)	Kagiso	16h00
Sat	14	Elective Assembly: Highveld Diocese		
Sat	14	STILIM for Lay Leaders	Linden	08h30-12h30
Sat	14	Diaconal Training	Weltevreden Park	09h00-12h00
Sat	14	Diocesan AIDS Quarterly Meeting		
Sat	14	Regional Conf: Provincial Liturgical Committee		

Sat	14	Siyafundisa: Valentine's Youth Concert	Kagiso Hall	18h00
Sun	15	Bishop's Pastoral Visit: Bedfordview	St Margaret's	
Sun	15	Siyafundisa: Orientation Week	TBA	TBA
Mon	16	Episcopal Synod		
Tues	17	Episcopal Synod		
Wed	18	Episcopal Synod		
Wed	18	Trustees + DFB + Archdeacons		16h00-19h00
Thurs	19	Episcopal Synod		
Fri	20	Episcopal Synod		
Fri	20	Siyafundisa: Official Site Visit	Berea	18h00
Fri	20	St Benedict's Retreat: Dumping Superwoman – Maria Frahm-Arp (20th – 22nd)		
Sat	21	Final Date for Notice of Vestry / lists for nomination of Churchwardens & Council		
Sat	21	POST	Bedfordview	09h00-16h00
Sat	21	Siyafundisa: LSF Weekend (21st -22nd)		
Sun	22	Bishop's Pastoral Visit: Jeppestown	St Mary the Less	
Mon	23	Provincial Media Meeting		
Tues	24	Bishop's House Quiet Day	JP Centre	09h00-15h00
Wed	25	ASH WEDNESDAY		
Wed	25	Siyafundisa: Official Site Visit	Randfontein	14h00
Thurs	26	<i>Independent Schools Half Term Begins</i>		
Thurs	26	Siyafundisa: Official Site Visit	Emdeni	10h00
Fri	27	Siyafundisa: Official Site Visit	Orlando East	16h00
Fri	27	St Benedicts Retreat: The Shadow of the Cross – + Peter Lee (27th Feb -1st March)		
Sat	28	Siyafundisa: Parents' Workshop		
Sat	28	Mothers' Union: AGM		
Sat	28	SfM/FoV Ordinands' Programme	St Joseph's	09h00-17h00

MARCH

Sun	1	Bishop's Pastoral Visit: Kensington	St Andrew's	
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>		
Tues	3	Clergy Day		
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	FoV		
Sun	8	Final date for YE Accounts on Notice Board / Nominations close.		
Sun	8	Bishop's Pastoral Visit: Belgravia	St John	
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	09h00-12h00
Sun	15	Final date for Vestry		
Sun	15	Siyafundisa: Official Site Visit	Bekkersdal	08h00
Sat	21	HUMAN RIGHTS DAY		
Sat	21	POST	Bedfordview	09h00-16h00
Sun	22	Bishop's Pastoral Visit: Malvern	St Patrick's	
Sun	22	Siyafundisa: Official Site Visit	Toekomsrus	08h00
Wed	25	Siyafundisa: Clergy Training	TBA	TBA
Wed	25	Retired Clergy Tea		
Thurs	26	Mothers' Union: Lady Day		
Fri	27	<i>Government Schools Close</i>		
Fri	27	Siyafundisa: Official Site Visit	Toekomsrus	18h00
Sat	28	SfM/FoV Ordinands' Programme	St Joseph's	09h00-17h00
Sun	29	SfM Worship Training	Ruimsig	

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*.
- **St Catherine's, Bramley** invites you to an evening of Gospel Songs of Love on Friday, 27 February 2009 at 6:30 for 7pm. Tickets: R15.00 and includes refreshments. For more details: 084 312 3810.
- **St Peter's, Auckland Park** will be hosting their annual Golf Day on 1st March 2009 at Randfontein Golf Club in aid of raising funds to support numerous ministries. Tee off is from 11h30. The cost is R180,00 per player and R720.00 per four-ball. Each player will receive a R100.00 discount voucher from the Golfers' World. Further information may be obtained from the Golf Day Co-ordinator, Cardiff Townsend on 011 760 5544 or 084 714 2434.
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