

Miktaav Qoph (Letter 19)

Dear Reader,

This newsletter will be the second to dwell on the spiritual input, deliberations and recommendations of 18th Synod of the Cape Orange Diocese who met under the theme: ***TOWARDS A NEW MORALITY.***

Again, the recommendations will be a guide and the measurable steps that can be taken to achieve a better Church and society where we operate. Creative steps, beyond this framework, will however be encouraged as that too will contribute towards the establishment and realization of the kingdom of God.

Thanks to Jacques Jansen, Pastor Wilfred Baxter for trigger thoughts today to spice it up a little.

Blessed is the one who takes the time to read this newsletter.

1. What shall we say about all these?

{Reflections on the current national and international news events will be mirrored by/in the Word of God to console, direct and challenge (where needed).}

There is more to the current industrial action (strike) that meets the eye and yet from a **moral** point of view there are some serious issues that need to be addressed:

On the one hand, government must act above board and within acceptable standards in their own remuneration to prevent their employees from asking: 'And what about us?' meaning we want our (big) slice of the cake too!

It helps very little when calculations are made and the verdict is made that there is no money, when the headlines splash it out how money is wasted on trivia, amongst other soccer tickets.

It is sad that whilst engaging in the strike, all morals and compassion are thrown overboard in certain cases, and fellow citizens, the most vulnerable, who cannot go to private hospitals, for example, are treated as dogs, tossed aside to give birth in the open or prevented from accessing life saving medication.

We need to seriously move towards a new morality by seeing that I am my brother's/sister's keeper, who is made in the image of God. He/ she (referring to our Black brothers and sisters) have been deprived so long of their dignity by Apartheid and now we still look down upon them and treat them in terms of the Apartheid perceptions. As soon as we realize that we do not harm the government by mistreating others, but ourselves, the better. There will be no freedom if we do not respect those at the bottom of society and raise their level to standards that we aspire for ourselves. Let us not be our own enemy by creating castes and differentiating social groups in society.

Let us stop despising one another, neither to save face that we are in charge or that our money is at stake here.

2. Joy with the sorrow.

Let's reflect a little on this song by the Easter Brothers:

*As the world look upon me as I struggle along
They say I got nothing, but they are so wrong
In my heart I'm rejoicing Oh How I wish they can see
Thank you Lord for your blessings on me*

(Chorus)

There's a roof up above me, I've a good place to sleep
There's food on my table and shoes on my feet
You gave me your love Lord and a fine family
Thank you Lord for your blessings on me

I know I'm not wealthy; and these clothes are not new
I don't have much money, but Lord I have you
And to me that's all that matters, though the world may not see
Thank you Lord for your blessings on me

To those who mourn the loss of a loved one today

(Thus says the Lord God :) I will do more good to you than ever before. Then you will know that I am the Lord (Ezek.36:11)

The Lord has promised good to me

His Word my hope secure

He will my shield and portion be

As long as life endure.

May He carry you Today

3. Chess (nee CHURCH) moves: Bishop to...

{All the movements of the Bishop (and deans), where they sow, plant, water will be made known so you can pray to God for these ventures at your Prayer groups and during Worship services}

Our Bishop and quite a few other clergy and laity will soon undertake a trip to Heidedal, Bloemfontein for the dedication of a new church building of this congregation. The celebrations will start on Friday 3rd September with a Cantate evening –meaning a praise evening based on the hymns of the Cantate hymnbook. The aim is to revisit what has warmed the hearts for decades before moving into the new phase of the dedication on Sunday 5th September.

Please pray for the traveling and everything that will be done on this weekend. Of course you are also welcome to attend!

4. Spotlight on....The Synod decisions

- ❖ That the clergy should capacitate members of Christian Education, Prayer Men's League, Prayer Women's League, Young Adults League and Youth

League through Bible study sessions so as effectively carry out the campaign for moral upliftment in the Church.

- ❖ That the Church should add its voice against all forms of corruption and injustice.

Some long overdue:

1. Circuits and Parishes must submit yearly financial statements as decided upon by Diocesan Council.
2. Circuit Councils must ensure that all Parishes in their respective Circuits honour their monthly assessments.
3. All circuits to establish audit committees.
4. Circuits to ensure that Finance and Planning Committees are established at Congregational, Parish and Circuit level.
5. All Parishes must practice some financial principles to ensure financial growth.
6. The proposed assessment increase for 2011 be accepted. Circuit Councils to divide the Circuit Assessments amongst Parishes in their Circuits.
7. Diocesan Finance and Planning Committee to investigate a workable financial services model that will ultimately lead to financial sustainability for the Diocese.
8. The urgent institution of a financial recovery plan made up of:
 - i. a theological paper on the morality of tithing, pledging and offering.
 - ii. a meeting for all treasurers at all levels per circuit with the initiation by the circuit financial planning (FPC) with the assistance/guidance of head office.
 - iii. the setting up of a circuit fund.
 - iv. An urgent rescue plan for Ikageng Centre so as to meet the escalated municipal related account.

Some of the Bishop's dreams

- The bishop is encouraged to and starts a programme that enhances leadership skills in the diocese particularly amongst the youth.

- ❑ The training of Christian education teachers must be done very soon and that the human resource available to the diocese to be utilized.
- ❑ A developmental programme for Christian education and stewardship needs to be put in place by the Commission on Faith and Order
- ❑ There are many relationships that we have established as a diocese. Partnership should be felt at a local level and that its benefits should be for the general membership of the diocese.
- ❑ The South to South relationships are very much important for us and Parishes are encouraged, where possible to share with our local partner Church, namely the Ethiopian Episcopal Church

Urgent dreams

- ❑ The Development Committee, Property Management Committee, Constitutional Committee, Faith and order, Hymnal and Liturgy, Christian education, Stewardship and Archives committees meet as soon as possible to carry out their mandate.
- ❑ The partnership committees at all levels must be accountable to the relevant councils and not be independent. There must be a symbiotic relationship between the ecumenical officers and the chairpersons so as to promote transparency and accountability.
- ❑ We recommend that there be a diocesan wide involvement in contributing articles to the webmaster whereby our ministry could be accessed by the wider community.
- ❑ All parishioners should subscribe to the website so that they can get information.
- ❑ An urgent call for foreign/Swedish aid to utilize the Ikageng centre as a math's and science centre for the surrounding community as per the bishop's vision.
- ❑ The establishment of Circuit Property management committees in all circuits for the management of church properties per circuit.
- ❑ The harnessing of the COD website, through data collection and the informed contributions to meet the challenges of moral decay.

- ❑ The establishment of a skilled circuit HR Team to develop skills so as to assist struggling Parishes with administrative, financial, leadership and other challenges.
- ❑ Small sustainable diaconate projects per parish to address the challenges in the various communities
- ❑ To rescind the previous decision regarding relieving Deans from Parish Duties
- ❑ To train lay leaders for effective leadership in congregations.
- ❑ That the Diocesan Council revives the Diocesan music organization.
- ❑ Request the services of additional full-time co-workers for Northern Cape Circuit.

Next time more decisions.....

5. What about.... Starting a Spring food garden

With spring in the air it is time to get outdoors, enjoy the sun and the singing of the birds. Let us follow the example of Pastor Baxter (and his Ixtus garden project) and Pastor Khumalo at the Thabong Church garden who combined this wonderful weather and opportunity to life by starting food gardens.

With a small section of land at a time (door size), you will soon be able to have food for a whole month as you rotate amongst your different garden beds. I suggest you start with some no fuss vegetables like spinach and tomatoes, but the choice is yours.

You will soon realize that you get some vital exercise ever so often; deep relaxation as you takes time off to water your garden. A sense of achievement and the wonder of God's creation when you see your seeds germinate. You will beautify the environment and inspire others to follow your example when you share your fresh produce with them.

You will now start to recycle your bio-degradable waste as you enrich your soil with compost that does not cost you a cent. Talking of money you will save a fortune and have healthy food free from commercially used pesticides that silently harm your

health. Not into vegetables? Of course you can start a flower garden!! You will be able to beautify the church.

Let's get digging!

6. Just by the way Or vital?.....Your key to freedom

For freedom Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourself be burdened again by a yoke of slavery (Gal.5:1).

Free your heart from hatred>forgive!

Free your mind from worries>most never happen!

Free yourself from materialism>live simply and appreciate what you have!

Free yourself from greed> give more!

Free yourself from human dependency> depend and expect more from God!

Your key to freedom lies in your power to control your thoughts (Tim Connor)

Wishful thinking

Dreams without planning are the cause of all failure; Dreams with planning are the cause of all success.

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Eagerly waiting to hear from you!

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