

DIOCESE OF GEORGE

58TH DIOCESAN SYNOD OPENING

TUESDAY 14TH JUNE 2016 1800hrs

The 58th Synod of our Diocese of George began in a wonderfully uplifting manner. A Eucharist in every sense of the word. A celebration, a thanksgiving, a holy fellowship, an honouring of the One at whose table we gather, lit by many candles and glowing red with the spiritual symbolism of our church reflected in the dressing of altar, clergy and servers.

Bishop Brian welcomed everyone warmly, with particular mention of the honoured, invited guests, who included the Mayor of George, our CUC and Ecumenical partners including The Right Reverend Frank de Gouveia, Catholic Bishop of Oudtshoorn who would be leading all members of Synod for Bible studies following Morning Prayer each day. Bishop Brian thanked sincerely the many people and bodies who's work contribution keeps our Diocese functioning, and who assist him in his official role; the Dean, Archdeacons, Clergy, Churchwardens and Chapel wardens, Bishop's Council, The Administrator, the Diocesan Office Staff, the current Bishop's Secretary, the Chancellor, Lay leaders of Organisations, Chairpersons and Members of the Trust Board and Finance Board, and the Synod Agenda Committee. Special heartfelt thanks, commendation and an award were given to Glynis Kuscus who has recently retired after 17 years of service as the Bishop's secretary.

Bishop Brian's Charge to Synod introduced the theme which would be the guiding consideration during this Synod:

Restorative Grace!

This is a composite idea, partially related to the current debate within our country of restorative justice but equally it is considered to be more than **giving or being forgiven**. Restorative grace requires of us an acceptance of God working in and through us by his mercy and grace. He is active in us as he restores us to what he created us, individually, to be, by –

restoring my nature; restoring my gifting's; restoring my circumstances; restoring my heart;
restoring my memory; restoring me wholly, completely and absolutely as his child.

Bishop spoke in some depth on the subject of graceful forgiveness and releasing the past.

Quotes from the Charge; “ *The jewels of our humanity are generosity and forgiveness.* ”

“We cannot undo the past. What we can do is to forgive. This requires that we name wrongdoing and rightly condemn it but, in addition, we need to show a generosity of spirit as we release genuine debt.”

“We forgive by making God's forgiveness our own. Forgiveness has to include

*release from debt; release from punishment; release from guilt; release from blame;
release from shame; release of remembrance”*

“Giving and forgiving need to include the component of mercy”.

Bishop Brian then spoke of the manner in which ‘ **Restorative Grace**’ challenges us to embrace more fully our **Trinitarian and our Baptismal Dignity** – being bearers of God's image, baptised in His Name - and in turn through God's ‘restoring grace’ to recognise and accept the Trinitarian and Baptismal dignity of others. The practical application of this should be visible in our lives, and the lives of our families and congregations.

A closing quote from the Charge:

“ Restorative grace challenges us to remember the past for the sake of the present and the future. Restorative grace frees us from wrong remembering... remembering that keeps us entrapped in the past; remembering that romanticises the past; remembering that demonises the past; remembering that makes us neglect and betray the present and the future.”

DIOCESE OF GEORGE 58TH DIOCESAN SYNOD WEDNESDAY 15TH JUNE

Session 1 The Synod assembled at 08:00 for morning prayer, and Bible study, led by Bishop Francisco de Gouveia, Catholic Bishop of Oudtshoorn the study was followed with small group discussions.

Formal proceedings started at 09:50 Officers for Synod were appointed and approved, and the members got down to business. Following a number of minor questions and Answers around Synod procedures and protocol, the first resolution was put.

Resolution 1) That St Mary's, New Horizons become a Parochial District, incorporating the Chapelry of St Mark's, Wittedrift. After discussion **this resolution was carried unanimously.**

Session 2

Motion 5: Strategic Growth Plan (SGP)

Prof Johnson gave an interesting, spirited presentation on the Strategic Growth Plan covering the many aspects of this proposed plan,

+ purposes and objectives, + context and approach + Church growth markers and indicators
+ Vision, mission, values and priorities + Implementation and Measurable outputs

Prof. Johnson then presented an Organogram for the proposed organisational structure of the Strategic Growth Plan in the Diocese, to illustrate the centrality of MANCO (Management Committee) which will be led by the Bishop, include the Dean, the Archdeacons and the Chairpersons of the Finance and Trust Boards. There would be sub-committees for various portfolios. Naturally the new structures and proposals will require funding, and Prof. Johnson gave an overview of the Budget for The Strategic Growth Plan.

On completion of the presentation, the President called for a proposal to accept the report on the Strategic Growth Plan. This was proposed and was approved by Synod. The Synod then moved into Conference to discuss the motion. There followed a period of intense discussion and debate, some valid concerns and intrepidation and much faith expressed. One member made the comment that the plan had been discussed via Archdeaconry and Diocesan visitations and had been widely communicated. She emphasised that the SGP is for the future of our children. We need to walk in faith and be prepared to plant a seed before obtaining growth.

After further discussion, mainly in support of the SGP, Prof. Johnson responded briefly, pointing out that the Church and the University have similar problems and that the Church needed to have belief in the SGP, as Anglicans across the diocese need this plan to work.

Session 3

Motion 5: Strategic Growth Plan (Continued)

The Motion was put to the vote in three parts:

Motion 5.1: That this Synod recommends the implementation of the Strategic Growth Through Restorative Grace Plan as from 1st July 2016 **was approved.**

Motion 5.2: That this Synod approves the establishment of the Management Committee, which body shall ensure that the Strategic Growth Through Restorative Grace Plan is implemented as of 01 July 2016 **was approved.**

Motion 5.3: That this Synod approves the use of the finances offered by the Trust Board as seed money for the first year of the Strategic Growth Through Restorative Grace Plan. **Was approved**

The Motion was carried.

Measures 1, 2, and 3

Mr David Carter explained the purpose of these measures which were to amend the Rules and Regulations to bring them into line with Article XIX of the Canons. There was nothing "really new" in the amendments but they would simplify matters for members of the Trust Board: **Measures 1, 2 and 3 were accepted unanimously.**

RESOLUTION 2: That St Mary's Blanco to be declared a Parish

This process started in 2008 with the creation of a Parochial District, now, the Parochial District is seeking Parish status and they have met all requirements and commitments to the Diocese. **The Resolution was carried unanimously.**

A special Motion in terms of Rule30(a) (1V) as arising from the Bishops Charge was then proposed.

MOTION - THAT THIS SYNOD NOTE WITH CONCERN THE LATEST SPATE OF VIOLENT CRIMINAL KILLINGS THROUGHOUT OUR DIOCESE AND WISHES TO

- 1) EXPRESS MORAL OUTRAGE AT THE UNTIMELY DEATHS OF VICTIMS OF VIOLENT CRIMES**
- 2) WISHES TO EXPRESS SINCERE CONDOLENCES TO THE FAMILIES OF SUCH VICTIMS.**

THEREFORE CALL UPON SYNOD TO:

- 1)Set aside the timeslot allocated for evensong on Thursday 16 June 2016 for a prayer Vigil at Church of St Alban and 36 Clinic Street being the site of the murder
- 2)To urge its membership to play a long-term role in providing support and sanctuary to those who need it.
- 3) Encourage its members to make their buildings available as centres of prayer and educational initiatives.
- 4)Encourage its members to employ their skill in the area of counselling and support to victims of violent crime and their families. **The motion was carried unanimously**

MOTION 3: Financial Support for the College of The Transfiguration

Members of Synod were encouraged to support the Motion, as limited funds are available for COTT to meet the many challenges it faces.

An amendment was proposed to the wording of the motion 1) of the Motion should read "Every Parish and Chapelry in the Diocese accepts in principle the need to make a financial contribution, paid directly to the Diocese, for the benefit of the College of the Transfiguration as from 01 January 2017". This amendment was accepted by Synod. After further discussion **the Motion was carried.**

Session 4

MOTION 4: Creation and the Environment This motion seeks to encourage every member of the Diocese to take seriously the call "to strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and to sustain and renew life on the earth" one of the 5 marks of Mission as declared by ACSA. After a powerful presentation and further discussion, **the Motion was carried unanimously.**

MOTION 1: First Holy Communion.

It was proposed that the Parishes in the Diocese are not acting in accordance with a resolution of the Provincial Synod 10 years ago in regard to implementing First Holy Communion. The need for a change in the mind-set regarding Confirmation & Communion was emphasised.

The President stated that, for clarity, no decision made on provincial level is mandatory

The Motion was put and was carried.

Bishop Brian advised that he will be sending Pastoral Guidelines to each Parish, around the introduction, instruction and implementation of First Holy Communion.

The Synod adjourned for EVENING PRAYER

Thursday 16th June

First Session

The day started at 08:00 with Morning Prayer and Bible Study, led by Bishop de Gouveiya.

Synod proceedings resumed at 10:00

UNOPPOSED MOTIONS

1. That this Synod congratulates the Right Reverend Allan John Kannemeyer on his election, consecration and enthronement as the Bishop of Pretoria. This Synod to send warm and affectionate greetings to him, his family and the people of the Diocese of Pretoria, assuring them of our prayers.
2. That this Synod send warm and affectionate greetings to Fr Roland Prince and his family, wishing him well in his ministry in the Diocese of Natal and assuring him and his family of our prayers.
3. That this Synod congratulates the Revd Sandile Mila on his appointment as Chaplain to the Department of Correctional Services in the Southern District, wishing him and his family well and assuring them of our prayers.
4. This Synod sends best wishes and thanks to the Very Revd Titus Daniels for work done as Dean and Cleric in this Diocese and wishing him God's speed as he leaves this Diocese to take up a new position in the Diocese of Saldana Bay.
5. This Synod congratulates the Right Revd Momentum Makhanya on his election and consecration as the Bishop of Zululand, our Provincial Diocesan Link. Wishing him well and our prayers for the future and his ministry.
6. This Synod congratulates Mr Mthobi Fihla from St Bernard Mizeki Mossel Bay on his 50th birthday and thanks God for his life.
7. That this Synod congratulates the Right Revd Luke Pato on his election and consecration as the Bishop of Namibia. Wishing him God's speed and assuring him of our prayers for the future.

HOURS OF SITTING: The Synod agreed to adjourn today at 16:00, prior to the visit to St Alban's as agreed by Synod in response to the Special Motion proposal.

MOTION 2: Social Development Department

The need was stressed, for the Diocese to create a department to provide social development support to the various communities, within the Diocese. **The Motion was carried unanimously.**

There followed a series of Synod Reports:

TRUST BOARD REPORT The Chairman of Trust Board, presented the Trust Board audited financial statements, summarising them briefly. The Statements were accepted unanimously.

The Chairman then presented the Trust Board Report and answered questions from members.

The Synod adopted the report unanimously.

FINANCE BOARD REPORT The Diocesan Administrator, presented the audited annual financial report of the Finance Board. Several questions of clarification were raised and answered. It was proposed, on a point of order, the report not be accepted but held over until the next Session. This was approved.

The SYNOD ADJOURNED at 12:15 for the Youth Day Service

Second Session 3

The Very Revd Titus Daniels reported on the Youth Day Service, saying that he had been inspired by the service and said that the Youth offered a powerful witness to the glory of God and that we should give them more opportunities to participate in our worship services.

Audited Financial Report

The Diocesan Administrator proposed that the audited financial report be put to Synod for acceptance.

Synod unanimously approved the financial report.

Finance Board Report

The Chairman of the Finance Board, presented the tabled Finance Board Report as set out in Second Agenda Book, Page 14. He highlighted two problem areas:

- 1) Some Parishes do not submit their audited annual financial statements, due by 31st March each year.
- 2) Some Parishes do not respond to their assessment letters. He regarded this as an unacceptable disregard of good governance principles. In conclusion, he thanked the Bishop and the members of the Finance Board for their support. **Synod accepted the report unanimously.**

CONCEPT BUDGET: The first draft of the 2017 budget was introduced. It was requested for recommendations to be considered by the Board of Finance. It will be taken to the various archdeaconries at a later stage and permission was sought to take it to the Diocesan Council later in the year. The Diocesan Administrator presented the budget. After lengthy discussion and debate, there was a proposal from the floor that a special meeting of the Diocesan Council be called later in the year to accept the 2017 budget.

The President called for a formal proposal that the elections should be held on Friday morning. **This was accepted unanimously by Synod.**

Synod adjourned at 16:25 to attend the Procession of Witness at St Alban's, Pacaltsdorp.

Friday 17th June Synod resumed at 09:55.

First Session

Bishop de Gouveiya was thanked on behalf of the members of Synod and presented with a book as a token of thanks.

Answers to question of which notice has been given: The question raised on Thursday was repeated:

Q1) Having passed Motion 1 concerning "Holy Communion before Confirmation", what measures will be put in place to strengthen the importance and necessity of the Sacramental Rite of confirmation in the life of the baptised communicant?

RESPONSE: The sacrament of confirmation can never be diminished because it is for the empowerment of equipping the baptised to fully participate in the life of the Church. Pastoral guidelines need to be developed along with vigorous discipleship training to make us ready to serve the Church of God effectively. There is a taking away of a specific sense of fear and the goal post shift from confirmation training to discipleship for those candidates involved. The sacrament of confirmation is important for empowerment and equipping the baptised to fully participate in the life of the Church.

Q2) Since the Doctrine of Hamartiology deals with the nature of sin and its grave consequences within the scheme of salvation, how does the concept of restorative grace hinder or strengthen the local Church to impose restorative discipline where sin abounds recalcitrantly?

(the meaning of the word *Hamartiology*, based on the Greek word for sin was explained for clarity)

RESPONSE 'Grace' is a favour freely done while 'discipline' is connected with punishment. Restorative grace can only strengthen our local church. Those applying discipline should be exemplary. The discipline must not divide.

Unopposed motions:

1) That this Synod sends warm and affectionate greetings to retired Canon Sidwell Thelejane wishing him well and a speedy recovery. Synod conveys our deepest gratitude for his ministry, leadership and counsel in the training and formation of members of the Guild of St John's Fellowship of Vocation.

2) This Synod sends best wishes and congratulations to the Bernard Mizeki Men's Guild on the celebration of the 120th Anniversary and Commemoration that will be held tomorrow in Oudtshoorn.

3) That this Synod conveys its deepest gratitude to the chairpersons of the Trust Board and Finance Board. That this Synod thanks Mr David Carter and Mr Philip Williams for their diligence and service to our Diocese over the past three years.

4) That this Synod conveys its deepest gratitude to the members of the Trust Board and Finance Board for their service rendered to the Diocese for the past three years.

5) That this Synod expresses its greatest appreciation to the young people of our Diocese for their participation, and encourages them to continue on the way of Christ.

6) That this Synod thanks the organisers of the Vigil Service at St Alban's Pacaltsdorp, in particular The Revd Edwin Pockpass, as well as for the transport provided by African Express. We thank them as Hope is being rekindled.

7) That this Synod sends its appreciation and thanks for Mr Nico Pedro and his unwavering, faithful sacrifice for the attainment of our freedom in these our communities. We ask that this Synod acknowledge his contribution.

All the unopposed Motions were accepted unanimously.

Elections

The President explained the voting procedures. All elections to take place in the allocated chamber and voting can only take place within the designated house.

Presentation of Reports from the Archdeaconries and Diocesan Organisations

Election Results

Provincial Synod:

Clergy: Revd Jerome Prins, Revd Arthur Stephens, Revd Edwin Pockpass,

Alternates: Revd Chassley Fredericks, Revd Eben Pretorius, Revd Susan Rhode

Laity: Mr Gladwin Harker, Ms Susan Williams, Lay Canon Ingrid Titus

Alternate: Ms Elizabeth Ndede, Ms Sharon Robberts

Provincial Standing Committee

Clergy: Revd Jerome Prins, Alternate: Revd Arthur Stephens

Laity: Mr Gladwin Harker, Alternate: Ms Susan Williams

The Advisory Committee

Clergy: Revd Sharon Domingo-Blaauw, Revd Calvin Frans, Revd Russel Claassen, The Ven. Isaac Josephs

Alternate: The Ven. Peter Rhodes

Laity: Mr Linda Majola, Ms Lynette Johnson, Ms Dinah Moodien, Mr Neil Petersen

Alternate: Mr Peter Gaylard

Trust Board

Clergy: Revd Rudy Laws, Revd Darian Petersen, Revd Wayne Potgieter, Revd Jerome Prins

Alternate: Revd Mr Simphiwe Mhobo, Revd Eben Pretorius

Laity: Mr Barry Danvers, Mr Alex du Plessis, Mr Gordon Hayward, Mr Neil Petersen, Mr Charles Rowe, Ms Roslyn Saptoe

Finance Board

Laity: Mr Leonard Bruintjies, Mr Desmond Leonard, Mr Linda Majola, Mr Henry Mitchell, Ms Roslyn Saptoe,

Alternates: Ms Olwen Toms, Mr Greahymme Williams, Mr Rustin Constance, Mr Ian Haig

Diocesan Council

Cathedral: Revd Sharon Domingo-Blaauw, Mr Henry Mitchell

George: Revd Rudi Laws, Mr Phillip Williams

Knysna: Revd Neil Weber, Mr Desmond Leonard , Alternates: Mr Peter Gaylard, Mr Peter Vieyra

Riversdale: Revd Darian Petersen, Mr Charles Adams

Karoo: Revd Gregory Jantjies, Mr Barend Visser

Mossel Bay: Revd Susan Rhode, Mr Naven Josephs

Acceptance of elections: The Synod accepted the results of the election unanimously.

+As the time was late and many people had far to travel home Synod agreed reluctantly but unanimously, to put the Eucharist aside and proceed to closure.

+The Very Revd Titus Daniels thanked all involved in organising and running the Synod.

+Revd Jerome Prins thanked the Dean.

+Revd Minnaar gave prayers of blessing to the Dean and the President confirmed that the Dean would be moving to Namaqualand.

Synod closed with the formal signing of the Records and Minutes , prayer and Blessing around the altar.