



Diocese of Johannesburg

# FROM THE OFFICE OF THE ANGLICAN BISHOP DIOCESE OF JOHANNESBURG



Our Vision is: To Achieve the Practice of the Ministry of All Believers

## Pastoral Letter Churches opening for worship 29 May 2020

Dear Saints

I am writing to you, following the President's announcement this past Tuesday night, the 26<sup>th</sup> of May, where he announced that places of worship were permitted to resume services with effect from the 1st of June, albeit under strict conditions. This morning I had a meeting with our Diocesan Chapter to prayerfully reflect on this development.

Firstly, we wish to express our gratitude and appreciation to the Religious Leaders and the SACC leadership for having made representation to the President and the National Command Council, in easing the regulations around religious gatherings. We also welcome the pronouncement of clergy ministry as an essential service as this will enable and ensure the ongoing pastoral ministry for our parishioners.

Whilst Chapter was excited and supported the easing of the regulations, we noted with sadness that most of our parishes may not have done sufficient preparations that would have enabled compliance with the set regulations for religious organisations. In our endeavour to protect and preserve lives of our parishioners we have resolved that contact worship be further delayed for a period of at least two months with the hope of gathering for public worship in August 2020, depending on the developments within the country. The objective is to ensure that within this period all necessary and relevant health and safety preparations are initiated and implemented at parish level by the local leadership. Many of these measures will have financial implications which need to be taken into account during the budget review processes underway.

Attached are the detailed compliance regulations for all religious formations which have been contextually adapted for our church. It is very clear that this pandemic will be with us for a long while. I therefore, request each parish leadership to:

- Familiarise themselves with the attached regulations and to draw from them in producing a Parish Covid 19 Compliance Plan.
- This plan should be submitted to your local archdeacon by the end of June 2020.
- It may be necessary and perhaps advisable that you to establish a parish Covid 19 Compliance Team to assist with the production and ongoing

implementation of these measures within the parish. I have already established an advisory team at Diocesan level.

I would therefore encourage and plead with all clergy and Parish Councils to take all the necessary health and safety precautions as they continue to care for God's people.

Let us continue to pray for one another in these uncertain times and join the rest of the religious communities in the national day of prayer. As Archdeacon Moses Thabethe, in his recent weekly letter to his Parish quoted a parishioner saying: The devil says to God: "See, I have closed down all your churches," to which God replies: "On the contrary, I have opened one in every home."

So, be blessed as God visits your home this Pentecost and abides with you.

The Rt Revd Dr Steve Moreo  
Bishop of Johannesburg