

To clergy and deanery lay chairs (please share this letter as you feel appropriate)

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

I'm writing first of all as I know that many of you are concerned following reports in the media about the consecration of a curate licensed to a parish in this Diocese as a bishop in REACH SA (Reformed Evangelical Anglican Church of Southern Africa). I can confirm that the Archbishop of York and I were not informed in advance about this event. In order to achieve some clarity I have asked Archdeacon Geoff to investigate this matter.

But secondly, I'm writing to share my conviction that our task now is to keep our focus on the journey we are making to live out our vision 'growing church bringing hope' and we mustn't allow anything to distract us from that. It's an exciting journey and there are many green shoots emerging:

- just this week sixty people from twenty one of our parishes took part in our first diocesan 'Leading your Church into Growth' course;
- the Month of Guided Prayer strand is gathering momentum and a good number of people have expressed a firm interest in taking part later in the year;
- we have been invited to be a Pilot Diocese for both the 'Setting God's People Free' initiative and for the Ministry Division 'Vocations Hub' project;
- and this coming Pentecost fourteen men and women will be ordained as Deacons and seven as Priests in the Church of God.

It is an exciting journey but to be sure there will be many challenges along the way and we will need to travel with resilience, courage, and, above all, hope in the transforming power of Jesus.

At the launch of our 'growing church bringing hope' vision in March, I shared some of my reflections about the connection between the outward, physical journey - in my case cycling across the States - and the inner spiritual journey of faith. One of the most important things I learned was how much we need companions on the journey, how important it is to travel together and support and encourage one another. As clergy we will have the chance to do that on June 15th when we come together for our Bishops' Study Day and I am looking forward to that tremendously. The second opportunity comes in a few weeks' time when we can all join together in prayer for [Thy Kingdom Come](#), a global movement of prayer launched by our Archbishops. This [Novena of Prayer](#), leading up to Pentecost begins on 25th May and this is something everyone can take part in. On 3rd June, Pentecost Eve, at 7.00 p.m. our Cathedral will host a [Beacon Event](#) (book free tickets [here](#)) for Thy Kingdom Come. I am delighted to say that I have just learnt that Bishop Ingeborg will be joining us for this. It would be marvellous if as many of us as possible could come to this service of praise and prayer for the gift and empowering of the Holy Spirit to equip us to touch the lives of others with the truth and grace of Christ so that individuals and communities are transformed. I probably need to say that the worship will be more charismatic in style than we normally experience at the Cathedral and some of us might find ourselves out of our comfort zone – but that might even be good for us, and I suspect the disciples were also shaken out of their comfort zone at the first Pentecost!

The last thing I want to say is the most important – and that is to share with you my deep appreciation for the faithful ministry you are offering day after day in parishes and chaplaincies, often in very challenging circumstances – a ministry of love and service which touches people's lives at the deepest level. It is a privilege to be your Bishop and I am so proud of you all.

With every blessing,

+ Christine

