

# ***ARCHBISHOP OPENING ADDRESS***

Bishop Cawcutt, our former Auxiliary Bishop and while now retired and rested, as such, still a worker in the Lord's Vineyard. I welcome you.

My brother Priests, valued co-workers, my Deacons, also valued as co-workers of the bishop and priests. I (welcome you all). Religious Brothers and Sisters - Consecrated persons and you my dear Brothers and Sisters of the Laity. Welcome to all of you. A special welcome to Sister Bidy, who will help facilitate the Synod. Sister Bidy is no stranger to Cape Town. She is a Notre Dame Sister, who at one time was stationed in Cape Town.

That will be the last time in these days, that you will be itemized (categorized) in that way. From hence I will simply call you Brothers and Sisters, all-friends, people of God. In welcoming you all, I already want to thank you all for involving yourselves in the preparation for the Synod and a special word of thanks must go to the Preparatory Commission, Father Sean Cahill, Sister Alma and their team.

So we have arrived at the day the opening of our Synod. It has been a journey of faith. It has been an Abraham experience, this period from 1<sup>st</sup> November 2005 until today. The period of preparation has indeed been such, it has been a journey in faith as we do not really know where and how we are headed and what fruits will be produced . We might and we should have hopes though.

Yes, it has indeed been an operation in faith, and it has been a time of listening. Listening to the Lord, Listening to His Spirit, Listening to each other. For me, Listening and Hearing the voices speaking to me sometimes quietly, Sometimes less quietly.

All this listening and hearing will continue in these days.

But the preparation has not been all smooth sailing, the Abraham experience was hardly smooth sailing for him, For Abraham it wasn't through quiet waters, indeed it was over desert territory and that had its own difficulties.

Leading to this day, leading up to this important moment in the life of the Church of Cape Town, indeed leading up to this special moment of grace. There hasn't been equal participation and involvement that there should have been from all throughout the Archdiocese. The participation has not been as widespread as it had been hoped. There hasn't been equal participation but it has been enough, substantial enough, for us to nevertheless go forward. So, Let's be honest here!

This is a hurdle which we tried to jump all throughout the preparatory period. Some have been more enthusiastic than others. Some have prayed more intensely than others for the success of this operation of faith. Some haven't even prayed.

In all this, I have, nevertheless, as Archbishop, been encouraged and consoled by the one voice I heard at one of the Preparatory meetings - and it was a women who spoke. She

simply said, “ I am passionate about the Church”.

By that I knew she meant that she was passionate about her faith, passionate about what the Church is and about what the Church is trying to do, serving the Lord, serving God’s people.

I have since prayed for like passion for myself and for all who make up this local Church.

I needed to prayer like that , because I know that there was some who were, some who are opposed to the Synod. If not opposed, then maybe just not supportive.

There were voices which said something to the effect that the timing of the Synod was not right, and that because I am 73 years old, and have practically reached my sell by date, and on the verge of retiring, that the timing of the Synod was not right.

But the church continues. The church will continue, we build on the foundation of the past. The work of the church continues and will continue.

Yes, I should tender my resignation at 75 but anything could happen.

But I could die before then, I could be asked by the Pope to stay on or I might as some bishops have done, might simply forget to tender my resignation.

Fear not I am not likely to do that

Whatever happens here in the days of Synod, will and must be something on which the Church will continue to build.

The Synod must produce good fruits. The listening and hearing must not be about words. The listening and the hearing must result in effective action.

And so we go forward in faith

Hopefully during these days these few hour we will truly be together truly united and that we will jump together. That is my charge to you. That is the challenge for all of us.

May Our Patroness, Our Lady of the Flight into Egypt connect with us in these days and help us too, in our jumping. May God bless us and all our endeavours.