

2018 Bishops' Lenten Appeal



Thank you for your support

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ

We want to say a huge thank you to everyone who supports the Bishops' Lenten Appeal! We are proud to reveal that in the 2017 campaign, together we raised over 10 million rands. Your gift represents a grateful acknowledgement of the many blessings that God has bestowed upon you: a gift, based on love from your heart. 2017 marked the 50 year anniversary since the establishment of the Bishops' Lenten Appeal (BLA). If it were not for you, the BLA would not be able to continue helping thousands of people.

The BLA is the primary channel through which our Conference reaches out to various programmes and ministries to help people who are in spiritual, emotional or physical need. This gift continues to make a huge difference to the children, women and men with whom we work. Shown in the table are the amounts dioceses have contributed. Even when the economy has taken a turn for the worse and the rate of unemployment continues to rise, we give testament to the words of Franklin D Roosevelt who said "the test of our progress is not whether we add more to the abundance of those who have much; it is whether we provide enough for those who have too little."

Seminaries, Vocations Awareness Programs

- Seminaries
- Ongoing formation of priests
- Pastoral care of vocations
- Renewal for priests (Constantia Sabbatical)
- SACOP
- Professional conduct
- Laity formation

Catholic Charities and Programmes to assist individuals and Families in Need

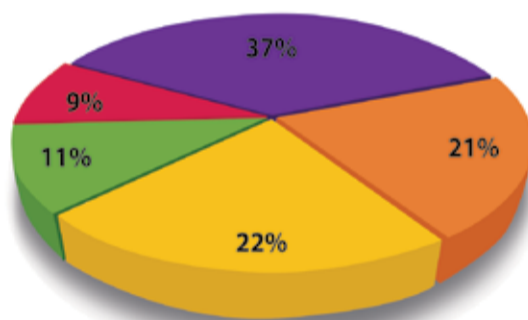
The Bishops' Lenten Appeal works with a strong network of partners to effect meaningful change in areas where systemic poverty is acute, and where human potential is diminished. We support those institutions working with marginalized communities so as to build capacity and enhance their ability to bring relief to vulnerable individuals and families.

- Poor and needy (diocesan and national grants)

- Family life
- Justice and peace
- Migrants, refugees and counter trafficking in persons
- Media and communications
- Canonical services (legal contingency fund) – A forum in which the Bishops, assisted by the legal fraternity, conduct the legal governance of the Church in Southern Africa, in accordance with Church teachings, legislation, and the 1983 Code of Canon Law. This office promotes and protects the obligations, rights and privileges of constituents throughout the Conference, advises the bishops on matters associated with the various aspects of church and civil law, provides assistance, research and consultation on all areas of church and civil law for clergy and laity.
- Bishops' Emergency Fund
- Joint Witness
- Catholic Parliamentary Liaison Office
- Home Affairs and Marriage Desk
- Specialised Ministries – Prisons, Hospitals, and Army
- Right to Life

Continued on page 2.

Bishops' Lenten Appeal 2017 Allocations



- Seminaries, vocations, awareness programmes
- Catholic charities and programmes to assist individuals and families in need
- Youth ministry, Catholic schools, religious education programmes, family life, marriage preparations
- Refugee services, human trafficking, victims assistance, Justice & Peace
- Programmes and offices assisting over 800 parishes and 2 000 outstations



Bishop Peter Holiday

Brothers and sisters, thank you

Warm Greetings to you the Church of Southern Africa as we begin the Holy Season of Lent.

A sacred season of God's abundant grace, mercy and forgiveness that leads us to be reconciled to our all loving Father and with one another. Lent offers us a time of reflection on our Christian lives in the light of faith in action. A faith that enables us to look beyond ourselves, our own needs to that of our neighbour. A question Jesus raises in the Gospel account of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10: 25-37).

On behalf of the Bishops of Southern Africa I would like to say a Big Thank You for your generous hearts and response to the Golden Jubilee in 2017 of the Bishops' Lenten Appeal. Indeed the Catholic Family of God have expressed concern for their neighbour, our most needy brothers and sisters. This is **love** where God dwells says Pope Francis, shown especially by courageous and compassionate care for the weak and poor. The tremendous amount of R10 100 000 was raised in Lent 2017 despite the challenging financial times we all are experiencing. Thank you is such a small word but it comes with much appreciation from the Bishops' of Southern Africa who strive to lead God's People as shepherds of the Church.

Pope Francis in his Lenten Message quoting a passage from Matthews Gospel 'Because of the increase of iniquity, the love of many will grow cold' (Mt 24:12), highlights how **love** that is the core of the Gospel would grow cold in the hearts of many, by times of great trials and false prophets that would lead people astray. The theme of Pope Francis truly addresses the reality of South Africa today amidst much poverty and unemployment. Families struggle to live. Some listen to false prophets to seek a way out of hardship or to get rich quickly. A sense of hopelessness grips us and we stray from the true message of the Gospel and God who loves us.

In the context of the history of South Africa and the infant democracy of our country with its many challenges, racism has been one among many. The Bishops have chosen to guide the Church in the Season of Lent 2018 through a process of reflection and dialogue in our diocese, parish communities on the issue of racism. It keeps flaring up in many circles and forms in our country and needs to be addressed. We know as informed Catholics that the Church lives her faith within society, therefore we must do our part to eradicate racism.

Through dialogue we seek to bring healing, justice and peace to our beautiful country. Lent is an opportune time for this. A time to reflect on how we are loving and caring for our neighbour. Do we respect others who are different from ourselves? How are we loving one another as we love ourselves? We are called to reflect on these matters of our faith in a spirit of prayer, fasting and almsgiving. A spirit of seeking reconciliation with God and neighbour. Pope Francis ends his Lenten Message reflection on the **Easter Fire** with these encouraging words of hope, as we struggle to change our sinful ways by a conversion of the heart. "If at times the flame of charity seems to die in our hearts, know that this is never the case in the heart of God! He constantly gives us a chance to begin loving anew."

We your Bishops' accompany you on the journey of Lent to rise anew with our Easter Celebration!

Grace and blessings for a prayerful and spiritual Lent 2018

Bishop Peter Holiday

A group of South African Catholic bishops.



Continued from page 1.

- CIE
- RSDP
- CATHCA

Christian Formation

We strive to support ministries aimed at promoting dialogue and enhancing the Church's role in today's diverse societies.

- Catechetics
- Liturgy
- Evangelisation
- Ecumenism

Faith and Human Development

Programmes and religious activities that directly support, strengthen and spread the Catholic proclamation of the Gospel)

- Consultation 2017
- Theological Advisory Fund
- Research

Youth Ministry

- Youth – ACTS
- Youth – Education for Life
- Youth Ministry

The Bishop's Lenten Appeal has directly supported over 120 diocesan programmes and ministries.

For more information about the SACBC

Lenten Appeal:

Tel 012 323 6458,
lentenappeal@sacbc.org.za

In Christ sincerely
Bafana Magagula

Tabled below is the list on how the funds have been combined for distribution:

ACCOUNT	DONATION INCOME	2017	2016
1000/030	Aliwal	R 67 919	R 87 010
1000/260	Bethlehem	R 98 165	R 88 460
1000/220	Bloemfontein	R 93 600	R 56 789
1000/010	Cape Town	R 1 816 610	R 1 669 831
1000/060	De Aar	R 34 218	R 34 744
1000/200	Dundee	R 139 600	R 130 169
1000/140	Durban	R 1 574 584	R 1 431 000
1000/170	Eshowe	R 140 000	R 173 000
1000/270	Ingwavuma	R 62 485	R 61 590
1000/080	Johannesburg	R 1 740 243	R 1 973 832
1000/250	Keimoes/Upington	R 287 000	R 225 000
1000/230	Kimberley	R 454 771	R 526 700
1000/120	Klerksdorp	R 230 000	R 200 000
1000/190	Kokstad	R 194 715	R 176 350
1000/240	Kroonstad	R 126 100	R 103 134
1000/150	Mariannhill	R 350 000	R 360 000
1000/151	Manzini	R 45 101	R 28 632
1000/180	Mthatha	R 294 528	R 271 186
1000/040	Oudtshoorn	R 149 713	R 146 681
1000/100	Polokwane	R 251 000	R 120 000
1000/020	Port Elizabeth	R 516 654	R 462 660
1000/070	Pretoria	R 679 915	R 693 929
1000/050	Queenstown	R 100 669	R 102 734
1000/130	Rustenburg	R 210 191	R 215 429
1000/110	Tzaneen	R 132 048	R 103 257
1000/160	UMzimkulu	R 184 659	R 122 580
1000/090	Witbank	R 399 354	R 347 909
1000/350	Other(not allocatable)	R 9 500	R 3 900
2001/010	St John Vianney	R 12 554	R 10 177
1000/270	Holy Cross Sisters	R 2 000	R 0
	Daughters of Charity	R 3 000	R 3 000
	The Monastery	R 2 805	R 3 636
	St. Benedict School	R 5412	
	Franco Phone Community	R 5 400	
	TOTALS	R 10 409 643	R 9 938 931



Lenten Message of His Holiness Pope Francis

"Because of the increase of iniquity, the love of many will grow cold" (Mt 24:12)

I sought to describe the most evident signs of this lack of love: selfishness and spiritual sloth, sterile pessimism, the temptation to self-absorption, constant warring among ourselves, and the worldly mentality that makes us concerned only for appearances, and thus lessens our missionary zeal.⁴

What are we to do?

Perhaps we see, deep within ourselves and all about us, the signs I have just described. But the Church, our Mother and Teacher, along with the often bitter medicine of the truth, offers us in the Lenten season the soothing remedy of prayer, almsgiving and fasting.

By devoting more time to prayer, we enable our hearts to root out our secret lies and forms of self-deception,⁵ and then to find the consolation God offers. He is our Father and he wants us to live life well.

Almsgiving sets us free from greed and helps us to regard our neighbour as a brother or sister. What I possess is never mine alone. How I would like almsgiving to become a genuine style of life for each of us! How I would like us, as Christians, to follow the example of the Apostles and see in the sharing of our possessions a tangible witness of the communion that is ours in the Church! For this reason, I echo Saint Paul's exhortation to the Corinthians to take up a collection for the community of Jerusalem as something from which they themselves would benefit (cf. 2 Cor 8:10).

This is all the more fitting during the Lenten season, when many groups take up collections to assist Churches and peoples in need. Yet I would also hope that, even in our daily encounters with those who beg for our assistance, we would see such requests as coming from God himself. When we give alms, we share in God's providential care for each of his children. If, through me, God helps someone today, will he not tomorrow provide for my own needs? For no one is more generous than God.⁶

Fasting weakens our tendency to violence; it disarms us and becomes an important opportunity for growth. On the one hand, it allows us to experience what the destitute and the starving have to endure. On the other hand, it expresses our own spiritual hunger and thirst for life in God. Fasting wakes us up. It makes us more attentive to God and our neighbour. It revives our desire to obey God, who alone is capable of satisfying our hunger.

I would also like my invitation to extend beyond the bounds of the Catholic Church, and to reach all of you, men and women of good will, who are open to hearing God's voice. Perhaps, like ourselves, you are disturbed by the spread of iniquity in the world, you are concerned about the chill that paralyzes hearts and actions, and you see a weakening in our sense of being members of the one human family. Join us, then, in raising our plea to God, in fasting, and in offering whatever you can to our brothers and sisters in need!

The fire of Easter

Above all, I urge the members of the Church to take up the Lenten journey with enthusiasm, sustained by almsgiving, fasting and prayer. If, at times, the flame of charity seems to die in our own hearts, know that this is never the case in the heart of God! He constantly gives us a chance to begin loving anew.

One such moment of grace will be, again this year, the "24 Hours for the Lord" initiative, which invites the entire Church community to celebrate the sacrament of Reconciliation in the context of Eucharistic adoration. In 2018, inspired by the words of Psalm 130:4, "With you is forgiveness", this will take place from Friday, 9 March to Saturday, 10 March. In each diocese, at least one church will remain open for twenty-four consecutive hours, offering an opportunity for both Eucharistic adoration and sacramental confession.

During the Easter Vigil, we will celebrate once more the moving rite of the lighting of the Easter candle. Drawn from the "new fire", this light will slowly overcome the darkness and illuminate the liturgical assembly. "May the light of Christ rising in glory dispel the darkness of our hearts and minds",⁷ and enable all of us to relive the experience of the disciples on the way to Emmaus. By listening to God's word and drawing nourishment from the table of the Eucharist, may our hearts be ever more ardent in faith, hope and love.

With affection and the promise of my prayers for all of you, I send you my blessing. Please do not forget to pray for me.

Francis

From the Vatican, 1 November 2017
Solemnity of All Saints

Notes on page 4.

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Once again, the Pasch of the Lord draws near! In our preparation for Easter, God in his providence offers us each year the season of Lent as a "sacramental sign of our conversion".¹ Lent summons us, and enables us, to come back to the Lord wholeheartedly and in every aspect of our life.

With this message, I would like again this year to help the entire Church experience this time of grace anew, with joy and in truth. I will take my cue from the words of Jesus in the Gospel of Matthew: "Because of the increase of iniquity, the love of many will grow cold" (24:12).

These words appear in Christ's preaching about the end of time. They were spoken in Jerusalem, on the Mount of Olives, where the Lord's passion would begin. In reply to a question of the disciples, Jesus foretells a great tribulation and describes a situation in which the community of believers might well find itself: amid great trials, false prophets would lead people astray and the love that is the core of the Gospel would grow cold in the hearts of many.

False prophets

Let us listen to the Gospel passage and try to understand the guise such false prophets can assume.

They can appear as "snake charmers", who manipulate human emotions in order to enslave others and lead them where they would have them go. How many of God's children are mesmerized by momentary pleasures, mistaking them for true happiness! How many men and women live entranced by the dream of wealth, which only makes them slaves to profit and petty interests! How many go through life believing that they are sufficient unto themselves, and end up entrapped by loneliness!

False prophets can also be "charlatans", who offer easy and immediate solutions to suffering that soon prove utterly useless. How many young people are taken in by the panacea of drugs, of disposable relationships, of easy but dishonest gains! How many more are ensnared in a thoroughly "virtual" existence, in which relationships appear quick and straight-forward, only to prove meaningless! These swindlers, in peddling things that have no real value, rob people of all that is most precious: dignity, freedom and the ability to love. They appeal to our vanity, our trust in appearances, but in the end they only make fools of us. Nor should we be surprised. In order to confound the human heart, the devil, who is "a liar and the father of lies" (Jn 8:44), has always presented evil as good, falsehood as truth. That is why each of us is called to peer into our heart to see if we are falling prey to the lies of these false prophets. We must learn to look closely, beneath the surface, and to recognize what leaves a good and lasting mark on our hearts, because it comes from God and is truly for our benefit.

A cold heart

In his description of hell, Dante Alighieri pictures the devil seated on a throne of ice,² in frozen and loveless isolation. We might well ask ourselves how it happens that charity can turn cold within us. What are the signs that indicate that our love is beginning to cool?

More than anything else, what destroys charity is greed for money, "the root of all evil" (1 Tim 6:10). The rejection of God and his peace soon follows; we prefer our own desolation rather than the comfort found in his word and the sacraments.³ All this leads to violence against anyone we think is a threat to our own "certainties": the unborn child, the elderly and infirm, the migrant, the alien among us, or our neighbour who does not live up to our expectations.

Creation itself becomes a silent witness to this cooling of charity. The earth is poisoned by refuse, discarded out of carelessness or for self-interest. The seas, themselves polluted, engulf the remains of countless shipwrecked victims of forced migration. The heavens, which in God's plan, were created to sing his praises, are rent by engines raining down implements of death.

Love can also grow cold in our own communities. In the Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*,



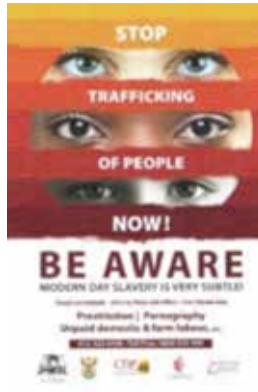
Counter Trafficking in Persons Office

This office was set up in 2008 and housed at the SACBC head office, 399 Paul Kruger Street, Pretoria.

Our vision is the creation of a world in which all its people are safe, respected, valued and given the dignity which is their God given right: a world where no one seeks to exploit and enslave another for the purpose of any gain.

Our main objective is the protection of potential victims of trafficking; therefore a main area of concern for CTIP is the mobilising of concerned people to act in the area of prevention by protecting potential victims of human trafficking. This we do in various ways:

- 2 -3 day capacity building workshops
- Presentations in schools and parishes
- Awareness raising campaigns
- Networking with government and other organisations and also includes Talitha Kum network
- Research



- Co-ordination of trainees
- Providing resource material for trainees (manuals, leaflets, posters, syllabus for schools, booklets for campaigns etc).
- Certain amount of survivor support post shelter – towards accommodation and education
- Fundraising – the office raises its own funds. Capacity building programmes mainly consists of:
 - defining human trafficking;
 - the Palermo Protocol;
 - who the traffickers are;
 - the modus operandi of traffickers;
 - methods of controlling victims;
 - how to identify a victim of

- trafficking;
- victim assistance;
- human trafficking – as a serious human rights violation;
- the social teaching of the Church;
- plan of action by participants. Participants of workshops draw up their own plan of action and continue the awareness-raising and prevention campaigns in their parishes and among the wider community in their vicinity. Trainees often form their own groups – giving a particular name to it.

Awareness-raising campaigns and interfaith services are conducted especially during the month of February each year (St Bakhita month).

Field work/research

- Shelter visits
- Visits to border areas e.g. Malelane (near Mozambique border), Ladybrand (near Lesotho border)

Survivor assistance post shelter

- Pay for lodging
- Help with toiletries etc
- Help find jobs
- Help with documentation.



SPRED (Special Religious Development)



Year mass was held on 18th November at Blessed Joseph Gerard Parish, Freedom Park. This parish began in an informal settlement and has grown because RDP houses have been built nearby. The priest in charge is Fr Mandla Skhosana OMI.

How the Bishops' Lenten Appeal (BLA) assists Spred

The support has enabled us to respond to requests in the Bishop's Conference to establish Spred programmes. The programme is an experiential/symbolic liturgical catechesis designed to include all baptised members of the parish community in the celebration of the mass and the life of the parish.

The goal is inclusion and participation by preparing people with special needs in small faith-sharing communities with a one-on-one volunteer – a faith companion who will share a faith journey with the faith friend until total inclusion in the sacramental life of the parish has been achieved.

BLA funding beneficiaries

Statistics in South Africa are given as

between 8-10 per cent of the population and growing, as people with disabilities of one form or another. Many are still hidden by families; many families suffer pain and rejection through having a family member with a disability, including those within the parish community. Families may be told their family member cannot receive the sacraments, this attitude is out of ignorance and fear. In Canon Law; no. 777.4 it states appropriate catechesis needs to be provided according to the person's ability.

The Spred programme provides a safe, loving, accepting and caring space where a person can develop their faith and thus become

included in the parish liturgy. Many, through participation in the sacraments within the parish community, become accepted. This brings great joy to families who in the past only knew pain. The happiness the Spred group gives within the parish is their gift to the community.

Spred was the first programme of its kind when I developed it over twenty years ago. It has been translated into several languages. Each year a manual outlining the annual theological theme is written. The faith programme is based on five axis – Creation; Election/Calling; Covenant; Salvation; Sanctification.

The programme follows the Church's year and the natural seasons of the year; the symbols are taken from nature appropriate to the time of the year.

With the help from the Lenten appeal there has been tremen-

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The Lenten Programme on Racism

by SACBC Justice and Peace Commission

In 2016, our bishops issued a pastoral letter on racism and racial divisions. The bishops declared that "we need to have a candid conversation on racism and its manifestations in order to adequately and seriously address racism and racial divisions in our country."

During Lenten season in 2018, our bishops invite us to reflect on our role as Christians in dismantling racism and fostering racial reconciliation in Southern Africa. SACBC Justice and Peace Commission has prepared a guide and programme to assist parishes and church groups in their Lenten reflection on racial reconciliation.

Our challenge as a nation

Twenty-four years into constitutional democracy, it is clear that our country has not adequately healed from its painful history of apartheid and colonialism. "The Holy Spirit calls us as a country to be healed." (Pastoral letter on racism). More needs to be done so that we may become a healed and reconciled nation.

In 2017, the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation conducted a survey on the state of racial reconciliation in South Africa.

- 60.2% said that they have experienced racism personally at some point;
- Of these, 11.9% said that they experience racism either all the time or most of the time.
- 68.9% of black people, 67.6% of Indians, 62.9% of Coloureds and 58.6% of whites said they have little or no trust in people of different race groups.

Race continues to influence the way we relate to one another socially, economically and politically. As our country now faces economic hardships, we increasingly find ourselves racially polarized around various issues: land and property rights, unemployment and affirmative action, education access and racial privilege, undue influence by Gupta family as opposed to state capture by white monopoly capital.

In such times as these, as followers of Christ, we are called to bear witness to Christ, the Reconciler. Through His death and resurrection, Christ has reconciled us to God and to one another as diverse racial groups.

As a people of God who have an encounter of the Crucified and Risen Christ, we should be at the forefront of dismantling racism and fostering racial reconciliation in a country that is deeply divided along racial and class lines.

We should lead society in healing and transforming racial relationships to a level where our nation, our dioceses, our parishes, our

religious congregations and our schools become a space where "there is no longer Jew or Gentile, slave or free, male and female." (Galatians 3: 28).

As agents of racial reconciliation, we should be aware that racial reconciliation will not happen if we do not address critical issues of justice:

- the economic inequalities present in our society as a result of past racial discriminatory laws and practices,
- the link between race, power and privilege, and
- issues of our social trauma as a country which result from the violence of centuries of colonialism and the violent decades of apartheid. (SACBC Pastoral letter on Racism)

There can never be a genuine and lasting racial reconciliation if and when the pursuit of justice, equality and dignity is lacking.

As agents of reconciliation in the society, we should also seek racial justice and racial reconciliation within the Church itself, especially in our parishes, in our schools and in our religious congregation. Otherwise, our witness to God's reconciliation in and through Christ would not be credible and effective.

What we can do to contribute to racial reconciliation

In its 2017 survey on racial reconciliation, the Institute of Justice and Reconciliation found that a large number of South Africans have great hope that racial reconciliation will happen in South Africa. We should build on this hope of the nation.

In the programme that we have prepared on racism and racial reconciliation, we invite all the faithful to do activities as part of your Lenten observance:

- Go for the Sacrament of Reconciliation and repent our involvement in the sin of racism and racial divisions; *Remember that "while reaching out to one another, in open and honest dialogue, the sacrament of Reconciliation becomes especially important and meaningful because through it we come in our sinfulness to our all merciful Father for healing and forgiveness"* (SACBC Pastoral letter on racism).

- Take time to make close friendships with at least one person (or more) who belong to a different race, ethnic group, and nationality; listen to their stories and know them deeply. *Remember that "we should refrain from loving only people who are just like ourselves. In loving only those who share our racial and ethnic backgrounds, we fall short*

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SPRED – continued from page 3.

dous growth in many diocese. Attitudes are changing – people with special needs are beginning to be acknowledged as a group, with not only needs, but gifts that can contribute greatly to the parish community.

Beneficiaries of the funding

Through the fund a group of volunteers in Cape Town has been developed to lead the Spred programme. These enthusiastic and dedicated volunteers have a genuine concern for both the Church and its interaction with people who have special needs. Plans for 2018 include a weekend away for team training, discernment and planning to develop Spred throughout the Archdiocese.

A group in the Archdiocese of Durban in the KwaZulu-Natal Midlands are met periodically for retreats and reflection days as well as other groups in Durban.

Most deaneries have trainers to assist with presentations and development of Spred but the



central and South Deaneries are still in need.

Visits to areas further afield have been undertaken to table and further develop the Spred programme – these include Witbank/ Middelburg, Kroonstad and Midrand/Pretoria.

Areas of support

Key support comes from the Bishops I work with and their interest in seeing this programme assist the many families and family members who have disabilities or developmental problems. Financial support for Spred comes from the Bishops' Lenten Appeal alone for which I am very grateful.

Sr TM Healey

Notes – Lenten Message Pope Francis:

- 1 Roman Missal, Collect for the First Sunday of Lent (Italian).
- 2 Inferno XXXIV, 28-29.
- 3 "It is curious, but many times we are afraid of consolation, of being comforted. Or rather, we feel more secure in sorrow and desolation. Do you know why? Because in sorrow we feel almost as protagonists. However, in consolation the Holy Spirit is the protagonist!" (Angelus, 7 December 2014).
- 4 Evangelii Gaudium, 76-109.
- 5 Cf. BENEDICT XVI, Encyclical Letter Spe Salvi, 33.
- 6 Cf. PIUS XII, Encyclical Letter Fidei Donum, III.
- 7 Roman Missal (Third Edition), Easter Vigil, Lucernariu

The Lenten Programme on Racism – continued from page 4.

of fulfilling the demands of love which the Gospel calls for. The words of our Lord challenge us that if we greet only our brothers and sisters, "what more are you doing than others? Do not even the non-believers do the same?" Matthew 5: 47 (SACBC Pastoral letter on racism)

- Take time as a family, as a parish, as a sodality, as a religious congregation, as a choir/youth group to do a Lenten prayer campaign on racial reconciliation. We should consecrate the broken relationships in our country to the Sacred Heart of Jesus through the Intercession of Our Lady. Remember that "the task of reconciliation therefore requires watchfulness and ardent prayer on the part of each" (SACBC Pastoral letter on racism).
- Organise a group discussion on racism (both personal racism and institutional racism) in your small Christian Community, parish, religious congregation, sodality, choir group/youth group.

"May the Lord of Peace grant our nation the peace, the healing and the reconciliation that we seek." cf. 2 Th. 3.16 (SACBC Pastoral letter on racism).

Denis Hurley Peace Institute (DHPI)

The Church has had many successes in fields such as education, health, pastoral care, development, justice and social concerns. The contribution towards peace building remains an ongoing agenda.

DHPI implemented a three year project aimed to promote peace in Swaziland, Lesotho and Zimbabwe. DHPI is also building the capacity of the Justice and Peace structures in several dioceses also in some civic societies. Workshops on capacity building and developing a monitoring and evaluation strategy were conducted to assist CCJP groups to employ a results-based approach as opposed to just being activity driven projects.

DHPI has long appreciated that peace is much more than the absence of war. Our actions and efforts contribute to the dream of Nelson Mandela who once said, "I dream of an Africa which is in peace with itself." George Clooney (a famous peace activist and actor) once said, "Peace is a full time job. It's protecting civilians, overseeing elections, and disarming ex-combatants. Peace, like war, must be waged."

Remember that "we need to have a candid conversation on racism and its manifestations in order to adequately and seriously address racism and racial divisions in our country" (SACBC Pastoral letter on racism).

- Take time to speak to those people that we have wronged through our racist remarks and racist behaviour. We should seek forgiveness from them. We should make amends.
- Speak out and challenge people who engage in racist remarks and racist behaviour. You may find such people in your family, workplace, school, social media platform and parish. Become a bridge builder in these places.
- In farming communities, devise a programme to work together across racial lines to address the following: the killing of white farmers, and unfair treatment of black farm workers.
- Sign an anti-racism pledge. May the Lenten season this year deepen our personal encounter God's mercy.

Readings and Prayers

Year B	First reading	Psalm	Second reading	Gospel
Ash Wednesday February 14, 2018	Joel 2:1-2, 12-17 or Isaiah 58:1-12	Psalm 51:1-17	2 Corinthians 5:20b-6:10	Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21
Righteous God, in humility and repentance we bring our failures in caring, helping, and loving, we bring the pain we have caused others, we bring the injustice in society of which we are a part, to the transforming power of your grace. Grant us the courage to accept the healing you offer and to turn again toward the sunrise of your reign, that we may walk with you in the promise of peace you have willed for all the children of the earth, and have made known to us in Christ Jesus. Amen.				
First Sunday of Lent February 18, 2018	Genesis 9:8-17	Psalm 25:1-10	1 Peter 3:18-22	Mark 1:9-15
Lord our God, you formed your people from the clay of the earth and breathed unto them the spirit of life, but they turned from your face and sinned. In this time of repentance we call out for your mercy. Bring us back to you and to the life your Son won for us by his death on the cross for he lives and reigns for ever and ever.				
Second Sunday of Lent February 25, 2018	Genesis 17:1-7, 15-16	Psalm 22: 23-31	Romans 4:13-25	Mark 8:31-38 or Mark 9:2-9
Father of light, in you is found no shadow of change but only the fullness of life and limitless truth. Open our hearts to the voice of your Word and free us from the original darkness that shadows our vision. Restore our sight that we may look upon your Son who calls us to repentance and a change of heart, for he lives and reigns with you for ever and ever.				
Third Sunday of Lent March 4, 2018	Exodus 20:1-17	Psalm 19	1 Corinthians 1:18-25	John 2:13-22
God of all compassion, Father of all goodness, to heal the wounds our sins and selfishness bring upon us, you bid us to turn to fasting, prayer and sharing with our brothers and sisters. We acknowledge our sinfulness, our guilt is ever before us: when our weakness causes discouragement, let your compassion fill us with hope and lead us through a Lent of repentance to the Beauty of Easter Joy.				
Fourth Sunday of Lent March 11, 2018	Chronicles 36:14-16, 19-23	Psalm 136:1-6	Ephesians 2:4-10	John 3:14-21
Let us pray [that by growing in love this Lenten season we may bring peace of Christ to our world] God our Father, your Word, Jesus Christ, spoke peace to a sinful world and brought mankind the gift of reconciliation by the suffering and death he endured. Teach us, the people who bear his name, to follow the example he gave us: may our faith, hope, and charity turn hatred to love, conflict to peace, death to eternal life.				
Fifth Sunday of Lent March 18, 2018	Jeremiah 31: 031-34	Psalm 50:3-4.12-15	Hebrews 5:7 -9	John 12:20-33
Let us pray [for the courage to embrace the world in the name of Christ] Father in heaven, the love of your Son led him to accept the suffering of the cross that everyone might glory in new life. Change our selfishness into self-giving. Help us to embrace the world you have given us, that we may transform the darkness of its pain into the life and joy of Easter.				
Procession of the Palms March 25, 2018 Sixth Sunday in Lent		Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29		Mark 11:1-11 or John 12:12-16
Sovereign God, you have established your rule over the human heart, not by force but by the servant example of Jesus Christ your Son. Move us by your Spirit to join the joyful procession of those who confess Christ Jesus with their tongues and praise him with their lives.				
Palm Sunday of the Passion of the Lord March 25, 2018 Sixth Sunday in Lent	Isaiah 50:4-9a	Psalm 21:8-9.17-24	Philippians 2:5-11	Mark 14:1-15:47 or Mark 15:1-39, (40-47)
Let us pray [for a closer union with Christ during this holy season] Almighty, ever-living God, you have given the human race Jesus Christ our Saviour as a model of humility. He fulfilled your will by becoming man and giving his life on the cross. Help us to bear witness to you by following his example of suffering and make us worthy to share in his resurrection.				

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