



FROM THE BISHOP'S DESK

Letter to All Parents in the Diocese of George - 16th June 2021

Beloved in the Lord,

I greet you on this 45th commemoration of our nation's Youth Day, mindful of the tremendous stress and strain many of you have had to endure during the past year. Our Diocese has sadly not been spared any of the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic with the loss of life in some cases and the loss of business and work in others. Younger parents are suffering the additional stress of an education backlog for their school-Going offspring, whereas older parents are concerned by the difficulties their children have to face. Homelessness, hunger and poverty have been highlighted but also heightened and deepened by the pandemic. It is probably fair to say that many Of us have never encountered anything like it before.

It has been four- and- a-half decades since the horrors encountered in Soweto, Langa and elsewhere in the country on this fateful day. The hope that 1994 held for so many appears to have been wallowed by the drought of despair. Whilst many families have been granted housing, many more need to be housed. Service delivery in many communities is at an all-time low. Educational standards appear to have slipped and job expectations appear to have all but ceased. Our children are the major victims as our nation seeks to combat poverty.

What stands out for me about the features of the 1976-uprisings is the determination and courage of youth. The way in which the young recognised and acted upon the devious way in which the government of the day attempted to use language to jeopardize the academic performance, and subsequently, limit the career opportunities and ultimately, hamper or compromise the general progress, success and quality of life of a certain portion of the nation. The youth of 1976 did not trust the adults and believe that they would assist them to challenge a government. Let our young people believe in us and trust that we will protect them, step in and step up when their well-being is being threatened. Young people are generally energetic, enthusiastic and innovative: we as adults should guide, support and encourage them to use and channel their energy in the right direction. We should also create opportunities and platforms for them to explore, examine and comment or discuss issues of the day. They have a voice: let us as adults (



parents, teachers, coaches, Sunday-school teachers, youth leaders, grandparents) help them find their voices and use them appropriately and effectively. Let us not silence them, but listen to them. Let us not use language of them and us to exclude them. Let us speak a language of possibility, of inclusion, of empowerment, of inspiration, enabling language, uplifting language, a language of faith, hope and belief in them and their ability to bring about change.

From the time of Adam and Eve, Holy Scripture has depicted children as an integral part of God's creative plan. They are His gift to families. The Church, in turn, has celebrated children as it celebrates the Incarnation. Children were among the first martyrs in the slaughter of the innocents.

Scripture recognizes that the young require nurture and guidance. It reminds us of the need for both disciplined parents and disciplined children. The orphan and widow gain special mention as we all are reminded of the need for their special care and protection.

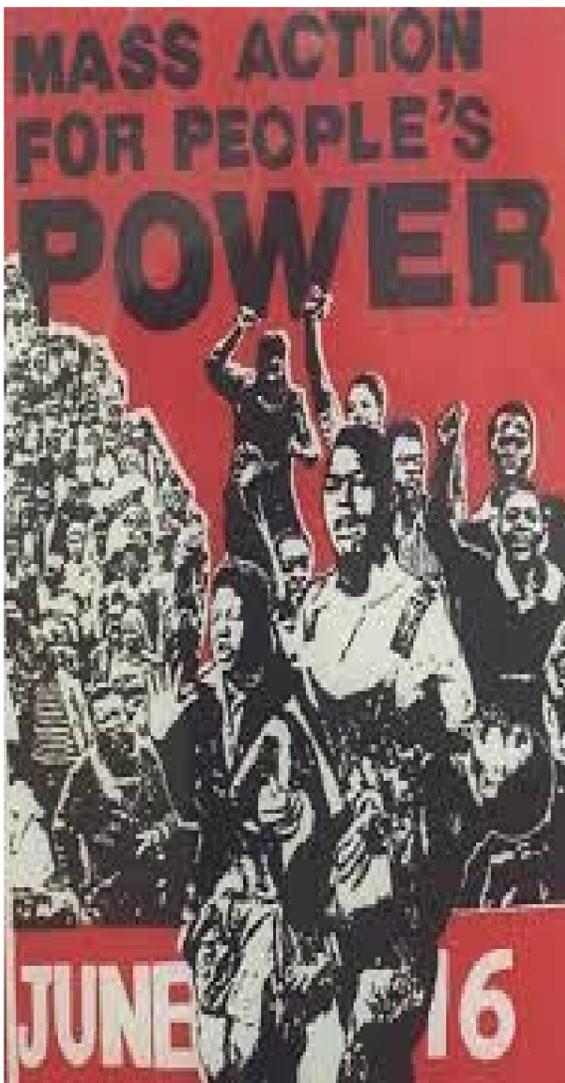
You and I need to remember that our Christian faith calls us to worship, love and care. The tumult of our times must not deter us from seeking and hoping for something better for our youth. We must not be waylaid by the false promises of the world, the flesh and the devil. Nor should we be ensnared by misleading messages presented by the media in all its forms.

In the recent past, the Diocese has sought to accommodate our youth at parish level via Sunday School, Choir, the Brigade, Servers' Guild and Youth Fellowships at weekly and monthly meetings. Since the outbreak of COVID-19, these activities have had to be severely curtailed as church halls and sanctuaries have been emptied in the interest of preserving life. We will need to do all in our power to restore these activities as soon as possible.

All our hope on God is founded thus there is always hope even in the darkest moments of our lives. Indeed, hope in the Lord shall renew your strength.

Your father in God and servant in Christ,

+Brian George



PRAYER DURING THE COVID-19 CRISIS

Heavenly Father, we thank you for the gift of good health and peace that we have enjoyed for so many years. As we find ourselves in this time of crisis today, we ask for your divine intervention and mercy to be upon each of us.

Come and guide the minds of those working to discover a treatment to the COVID-19 virus. Grant them wisdom, knowledge, and clarity of mind, so that all peoples will be free from the threat of this ailment.

We also pray for the healthcare workers that are standing in the front line of this battle. Father, we thank you for their hearts of service, putting the needs of society before their own, generously responding to the cry of Your people. We ask that You will grant them strength and protection. As they give of themselves in selfless service, may You fill them with your Holy Spirit as they work to be Your healing hands and feet!

Father, we also surrender to You all those who have been afflicted with the virus. Grant them Your healing grace, merciful Father, so that they may recover swiftly and continue to be witnesses of Your love in their lives.

Mother Mary, we ask for your intercession in this great time of need. Cover each of us with your blue mantle of protection, so that we may be preserved in good health to continue to glorify your son, Jesus Christ! We make this prayer through Christ, our Saviour and Redeemer.

AMEN.

