



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 3 **01 June 2026**

Dear Sisters and Brothers

In one of my homilies, I said that the Holy Spirit is a resident of the Church. I further said that the Holy Spirit dwells in the Church of God. I inferred that the third person of the Trinity is not subordinate to the other two persons of the Trinity, but that they complement one another.

What is the significance of the Holy Spirit's presence in the church? The Holy Spirit resides within the church, inspiring it to carry forward the mission of Jesus Christ in the world, known as *Missio Dei*.

The world, including our country and continent, faces numerous challenges in the 21st century. Both the global community and our nation are confronted with issues such as conflicts, poverty, unemployment, gender-based violence, discrimination, crime, and xenophobia. The enumeration continues.

It is for the Church, especially the Church in Johannesburg, the country's economic hub and one of its most populous cities, to respond theologically to these challenges.

Xenophobia

As a cosmopolitan diocese, we must be at the forefront of condemning xenophobic attacks and violence, given that our membership is drawn from all over the world. Our Parishes must adopt a multi-pronged strategy: teaching our people the importance of unity and oneness, praying for unity and oneness, and, where possible, helping victims of the attacks. We must also, as a church, condemn the attacks and discourage our people from participating in them, whether in person or on social media. We must not turn against one another. Current economic and social challenges must not drive us apart. As Africans, we face the burden of poverty, unemployment, crime, and disease because of corruption and poor governance in most of our countries, including South Africa.

Our message is clear and unequivocal:

No to Xenophobia. Law enforcement agencies must deal with criminals, and the government has a responsibility to improve its citizens' standard of living.

Gender based Violence

The problem of gender-based violence appears to be worsening daily in our city, and the church is not immune to its effects. In April, a young person from one of our Soweto churches was reportedly sexually abused. Please continue to pray for those affected by gender-based violence and for the rehabilitation of those who commit it.

As a diocese, we need to strengthen both our Gender desk and the Safe and Inclusive Church Ministry (SAIC), which operate at the provincial and diocesan levels. We have requested the appointment of two Safe Church officers per parish. Some officers attended training organised by the Province at St Benedict House, Rosettenville. From July 2026, officers trained at the provincial level will oversee Safe Church training for all Archdeaconries within our diocese. Please ensure your parish has trained Safe Church officers.

Additionally, our Gender desk, led by Revd Theo Khanyile and the team, is actively engaged in this ministry. We urge all Parishes, guilds and Archdeaconries to collaborate with them. As Anglicans in Johannesburg, we must continue to educate our community about gender-based violence. I have attached a prayer on gender-based violence from the Gender desk. Please use it on Sundays and observe a moment of silence as we intercede for victims and for the end of gender-based violence.

Anglicare

We also express gratitude for the ministry of Anglicare counsellors. If you require counselling services, please reach out to Anglicare. My aim is to have trained Anglicare counsellors present in every diocesan parish. To make this possible, we need volunteers from all our parishes to undergo training and, eventually, be licensed by the Bishop as Anglicare counsellors.

Diocesan Social Outreach portfolio

We are in the process of reviving our diocesan social outreach team to coordinate our social outreach initiatives across the diocese.

Diocesan Council

Our Diocesan Council meeting will be held on Saturday, 27 July 2026, at St Joseph's Diocesan Centre, starting at 8h30. Archdeacons must ensure that all clerical and lay representatives attend. The Diocesan Council is the highest decision-making body between synods.

Provincial Synod and Diocesan Synod

Our provincial synod will be held from Sunday, 20 September to 23 September 2026 at Kopanong Conference Centre.

Please pray for our representatives and members of our Provincial Synod. Our Diocesan synod will be held in August 2027.

Clergy Day

Our June Clergy Day is scheduled for Tuesday, 2 June 2026. It will feature the first of two sessions focused on the responsible use of social media for both lay and ordained church members.

Our July Clergy Day will be held on Tuesday, 7 July 2026, from 9 am to 16h00. Our guest will be Rev Canon Bruce Woolley, Director of ACSA Growing the Church (GtC), who will present a Bible Study on Wheels from Teach Every Nation (TEN).

Clergy Training

As your Bishop, one of my main goals is to ensure that each parish in our diocese is staffed by well-trained, full-time clergy. We give thanks to God for the dedicated service of our laypeople across the diocese and in our parishes. We value those who serve faithfully as churchwardens, treasurers, verifiers, parish councillors, choristers, servers, parish ministers, and all others involved in church ministry. Our diocese must continue to live out its vision, which highlights the ministry of all believers. It is essential that we promote collaboration between the ordained and lay members of our church. Additionally, we need a robust succession plan to develop well-trained clergy with strong character, deep spirituality, and the ability to meet the challenges of the 21st century.

Discernment Conference

We thank God for those who attended our discernment conference on Friday, 29 May 2026. We also thank their families and mentors and extend our gratitude to the parishes for their support and mentorship. We thank the ordained and lay people who served as panellists in the discernment process. Discernment is one of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, and it is ongoing.

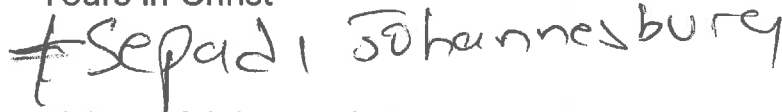
Clergy Retreat

Our Diocesan Clergy retreat is scheduled for Monday, 17 August, to Friday, 21 August 2026, at eMseni Christian Centre. A Jesuit spiritual director will lead the retreat. We encourage all clergy to attend. Churchwardens and Councillors must please ensure that the parish pays for its Clergy.

Chancellor

We congratulate our former Deputy Chancellor, Advocate Bongani Manentsa, who has been appointed Chancellor of the Diocese with effect from 1 April 2026. We thank God for the other officials of our Diocese, namely Registrar Ms Tebogo Molefe, Bursar Mr Thabiso Buku and Deputy Bursar Mr Darry McMullen.

Yours in Christ

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sepadi Johannesburg". The signature is written in a cursive style with a cross at the beginning of the first word.

Bishop of Johannesburg