



06 September 2019

Letter S 28 /19

Dear Parishioners,

The current xenophobic violence and attacks, kidnappings and the tragic murders of young South African women and children mentioned in the media these past few weeks, are slowly overwhelming us with despair. What about the things and events we do not hear about? Then, there are the corruption hearings playing themselves out in the background; as if the strategy is to assist South Africans to turn a blind eye or forget.

Yet, in response to all of these things, in a recent debate on gender-violence amongst political leadership, it was said that all these tragic killings are apolitical. What a sad moment for all of us in our country at this time.

What hit home and concerned me more recently, was sensing the general response from young people and how unsafe they are really feeling to leave their homes. The daily protests, hoping to bring political leadership to face the state of our nation head-on, almost seems to be a hopeless exercise.

A further response from political leadership saying, “...*the violent attacks on South African woman are a stain on the country's conscience*” is, in my personal view, not enough. With the current events unfolding as they are and political leadership still arguing about whether it is apolitical or political, leave me no option but to worry intensely.

The one question I ask myself is, “*Is our country's leadership able to make connections with what is happening at the Zondo commission, the Steinhoff's hearings, etc. and what is happening in the lives of ordinary people in our communities?*”

I am absolutely sure, if these leaders were able, their political will to intervene would have allowed action to be taken, rather than to demonstrate nothing other than political paralysis.

It is often not that easy to really engage in matters affecting our lives, due to various forces at play, whether we call them political or apolitical. There are many things we are fully aware of, and other things we do not know. But when we experience that life has become cheap and people can do with each other what they see fit to do; the weak in our communities, especially woman and children, are unable to defend themselves; and simply become objects of the strong. It is then that we know something is definitely wrong. When political leadership turns a blind eye and seeks only to further their own interests, then we know we are in trouble.

In my view therefore, what is happening in our country is much more than just staining the conscience of our country. What is staining the country is the inability to take risks and do something about it all.

This is all for now.

With love,

Selwyn