



from *The Diocese of Saldanha Bay*

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THE BISHOP'S STATEMENT
The Right Reverend Raphael B.V Hess

Dear People of God in the Diocese of Saldanha Bay

Yesterday, the 25th June 2020, I met with the Chapter of the Diocese to counsel together for mission and ministry in our Diocese.

We considered in depth and at length the questions of **WHETHER** and **WHEN**, we should **OPEN THE DOORS of CHURCHES?**

We were of **ONE MIND** that the health and safety of everyone in our Churches is our first priority.

We were of **ONE MIND** that we should be totally compliant with the legal requirements, imposed by our Government. We must adhere to these regulations, without exception.

We were of **ONE MIND** that the ministry of WORD and SACRAMENT is our "core business" and that this ministry is our chief joy and function.

We are of **ONE MIND** that the Church is not closed, and that we continue being the **Church at Home for the World.**

This being the feeling of our hearts and minds the following are therefore resolved in the Diocese of Saldanha Bay.

1. **NO FIXED DATE** for the Opening of the Doors of our Churches.

The Diocese resolves at this time **NOT TO GIVE a FIXED DATE** on which the Doors of our Churches shall be open for Worship.

2. **A PHASED PROCESS** for the Opening of the Doors.

The Diocese resolves at this time to have a phased approach to the Opening of the Doors.

Our Diocese stretches across 800km and covers two National Provinces, viz. the Western Cape and the Northern Cape.

It therefore has within its borders both the HIGHEST and the LOWEST outbreak of the Covid-19 Pandemic.

Our Parishes in different parts of the Diocese may be opening the Doors of their Churches at different times to others.

3. FULL and TOTAL COMPLIANCE REQUIRED

Each Parish shall be required to receive Diocesan Permission for the Opening of the Church Doors.

The Diocese resolves at this time that BEFORE any Parish Opens the Doors of the Church for Worship, that the Parish confirms with the Diocese that it has prepared the Parish Church and Precincts in accordance with the regulations, and that all the protocols and requirements are in place.

4. The Bishop issues **LETTERS of PERMISSION**

The Diocese resolves at this time that the Parish, having prepared and complied with all the Requirements for the Opening of the Church Doors, shall receive from the Bishop of the Diocese 'Letters of Permission' to Open the Doors of the Church.

5. THE DOORS are OPENED

A DATE and TIME shall be announced by the Parish and the new experience of Worship begins within the parameters, and confines of the Covid-19 Pandemic requirements.

6. **FURTHER MATTERS** were considered and resolved at our Meeting yesterday, 25th June 2020. These are:

(i) **The Care of the Clergy**

It was seriously observed that Clergy over 60 years old, and Clergy with chronic health conditions or with family members with co-morbidities are at High Risk of contracting the Virus.

Clergy in our Anglican Province of Southern Africa have already contracted the Coronavirus and are in isolation and receiving Medical attention.

It is suspected that they contracted the virus in the course of their ministerial duties, for example, conducting Funerals.

The Diocese resolves at this time that no cleric shall be compelled to Officiate at Church Liturgies, when the Doors are Opened.

The Bishop shall be consulted in each case, and alternative plans will be made to provide an Officiant for the Liturgy, where the Priest is not available, or unable to Officiate at this time of Covid-19.

(ii) **The Return of TWO DOCUMENTS by 30th June 2020**

The Chapter Meeting endorsed the Two Documents sent out by the Bishop of the Diocese, viz.

- (a) The Official Diocesan Covid-19 Checklist for the Opening of the Doors of our Churches.
- (b) A Diocesan Survey

The Rectors, Vicars, Churchwardens and Chapelwardens are requested to ensure the completion of these Forms and the Return to the Diocese before or on the **30th June 2020**.

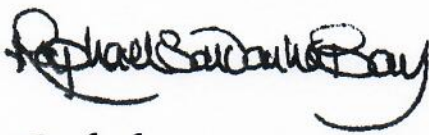
Both documents will provide us with essential and valuable information to plan and prepare for our Mission in the Diocese.

7. END of STATEMENT!

This then concludes this statement carrying the heart and mind of the Bishop and the Chapter of the Diocese, as we took counsel for the Spiritual and Material Care of the Diocese of Saldanha Bay.

With every good wish and gratitude

Yours in Christ,



+Raphael

