

THY KINGDOM COME

A BIBLE STUDY SERIES FOR

THE DIOCESE OF HARARE
(CPCA)

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FOREWORD

Our faith has everything to do with the Kingdom of God. This series of studies, which in line with our theme for the year “Thy Kingdom Come”, should help deepen our understanding and conviction of God’s Kingdom. I hope the studies will challenge each one of us to play our part in fulfilling the Anglican Communion Five Marks of Mission in bringing other people to be part of this Great Kingdom. I would like to encourage you all to pray the Lord’s Prayer each time you are studying this series paying particular attention to our cry to God “Thy Kingdom Come”. I wish to thank the Revd. Dr. Roy Musasiwa principal of Domboshawa Theological College for helping put together this series.

+Chad, Harare.
Bishop of the Diocese of Harare CPCA
Pentecost 2017

GUIDANCE FOR BIBLE STUDY LEADERS

As a leader, you are an important component in the success of small group Bible Studies envisaged in the series that follows. You are not expected to be a teacher, lecturer or preacher. That would make you dominate the sessions, discourage participation and make people hesitate to keep attending future sessions. Rather you are to be a facilitator and catalyst to get people to interact with each other and the materials. The following points will help you to achieve this role:

1. Come to the study prepared. Ask God to help you understand and apply the study to your own life so that you can effectively lead others.
2. Pray for the members of your group before and after the study.
3. Have participants read the passage aloud, by paragraphs, not by verses. Verses interrupt the thought.
4. Begin and end the study on time. If you get into the habit of waiting for those who are late, they will assume that the discussion begins whenever they arrive. This is also likely to make the study end late, which may disrupt people's plans and discourage them from attending future sessions.
5. A healthy small group will do more than study the Bible together, so you must leave enough time for other important activities, such as sharing and prayer. If these other activities are merely tacked on at the end, the health of the group will suffer.
6. Encourage everyone to participate. That often means encouraging the timid to talk by asking them to read a verse or answering a simple question. Once the ice is broken, they often talk again. It also means tactfully restraining the too talkative participant by referring questions to others by name. As a leader, do not yourself dominate discussion or try to give all the answers. When participants ask questions try to refer them back to the group.
7. Leaders ask the main questions, using supplementary ones only to help the group dig more deeply. If answers are superficial, add supplementary questions.
8. Encourage more than one answer to each question as each person in the group has his or her own unique perspective. So, be sure to ask, "What do the rest of you think?" or "Anyone else?" until several people have had a chance to respond. When you sense that people are ready to move on, ask the next question.
9. Try to affirm people's answers whenever possible. People are often reluctant to talk up at first, but if they know you appreciate their insights they will warm up

much more quickly. Simple words of affirmation such as “That’s a great insight,” “Good response,” “Excellent idea,” or “I hadn’t thought of that before” are enough to show people that you value their comments. When you reject people’s answers, it is easy for them to feel rejected as well, and they may decide that it is too risky to give their opinion again. A better response would be to ask them, “Which verse led you to that conclusion?” Or let the group handle the problem by asking them what they think about the question.

10. Don't be afraid of silence. People may simply be needing time to think before they respond. If the silence persists and people seem stuck, try rephrasing the question until you are confident that the group understands what is being asked.
11. Avoid going off on tangents. If people wander off course, gently bring them back to the passage and the question being considered. If they answer by reading a verse, ask them to restate the answer in their own words. Mere reading can be dull, and you must see if they understood.
12. Be conscious of the pace of the study. Try to avoid the extremes of being too rushed or spending too much time on any one question. The ideal is to move through the passage and the questions at a comfortable pace so that you finish at the end of the allotted time.
13. Pace the study well—not too fast or too slow. Plan to reach the midpoint before mid-time, so that there will be enough minutes to summarize the story and discuss the applications at the end.
14. Avoid unnecessary references to other parts of the Bible since participants will have trouble following. Christians who do not know inductive study, often substitute cross-references, ranging from Genesis to Revelation, instead of determining what the basic text means. This misses the point of the study. It also discourages participants from reading the Bible on their own, because they think you have to be an expert on the whole Bible to understand any part of it.

INTRODUCTION TO THE BIBLE STUDY SERIES

Thy kingdom come

When Jesus taught us to pray he included the key thought: “Thy kingdom come”. It is this key thought that supplies the title to this series of studies.

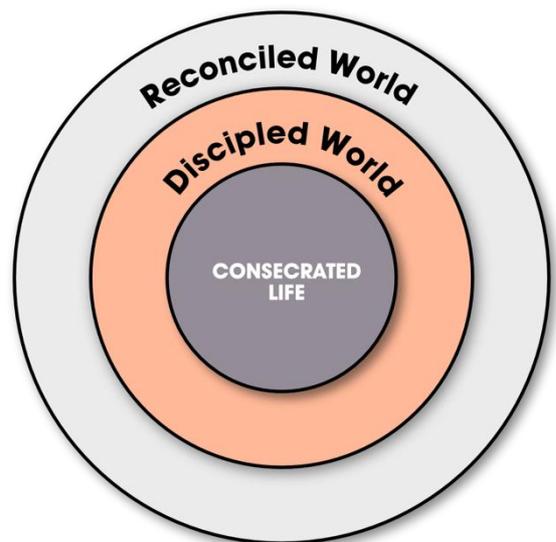
The thought: “Thy kingdom come” is not just a petition for God to bring about this reality while we remain as passive spectators. No. This is an invitation for his disciples to actively participate in bringing about the kingdom of God. What an awesome responsibility, and at the same time what a wonderful privilege! We should be excited that God has chosen to make us participate in this enterprise.

Now if we are to do this, we need to be very clear what the Kingdom of God is and the signs that it is increasing coming to us and to our world. The question is, what does the Kingdom of God look like? To begin with the Kingdom of God is God exercising his rule over his people and the whole of his creation. There cannot be a kingdom without a king, and God is the king. At the same time, there cannot be a kingdom when the king has no sphere over which he exercises his reign. The more we, his people, honour his name in thought, word and deed, the more his will is done on earth as it is in heaven, the greater is the measure of the coming of his kingdom.

In this series of studies, we focus on the three biggest manifestations of the coming of the Kingdom of God. In the 2016 book: *Intentional Discipleship and Disciple-Making: An Anglican Guide for Christian Life and Formation* by the Anglican Consultative Council, Archbishop The Most Revd Ng Moon Hing of the Diocese of West Malaysia and Primate of the Church of the Province of South East Asia reveals that Justin Welby, Archbishop of Canterbury has chosen three ministry priorities for his tenure of office. These are “the renewal of prayer and religious life, evangelism, and reconciliation”. These priorities are, in fact, important manifestations of the Kingdom of God.

To slightly reword these priorities, we can say that the Kingdom of God is revealed by:

1. A consecrated life
2. Discipled communities
3. A reconciled world.



In our diagrammatic representation of these three realities, the consecrated life is the inner circle. Without a life dedicated to God and shown in our life of worship, prayer and obedience we cannot bring about the Kingdom of God in any other area. But

once our lives are so dedicated to God we will want to work very hard to bring others into such a blessed relationship through outreaching activities of evangelism and discipleship represented by the middle circle. But since God's rule must extend to the entire created world, we will also participate in seeking reconciliation of human beings to each other, and human beings to their environment. That ultimate reconciliation is represented by the outer circle.

These three manifestations of the Kingdom of God are so huge that we will devote two studies to each area. Even then we will not be able to do justice to the topics. It is therefore essential that you do your own study and meditation using the daily Scriptures that are given for the six days in between each study.

STUDY ONE
A CONSECRATED LIFE PART ONE
TEXT: 1 PETER 2:4-12

A. Background

Peter wrote this letter to Christians, mainly Gentiles, scattered throughout five provinces of the Roman Empire at a time when they were under persecution. Peter was sensing that some Christians might want to give up being a distinct people separated to the Lord in order to escape persecution. He therefore wrote to strengthen them to stay committed to the Lord despite persecution.

In the Old Testament, only Jews were regarded as God's Chosen race, and they were given moral and ceremonial laws which they had to obey to show that they were holy and separated for God's exclusive use. But now because of Jesus dying on the cross and being raised from the dead, all Christian are now called the chosen race, holy and separated for God's use. They should now behave in a way that shows their separateness. That includes their spiritual life of worship and prayer, but also their obedience to God which should show that they are different from the world.

This life of being separated from the world for God's holy use is called consecration. That is indeed the first mark or evidence that God's kingdom or rule is being exercised in the life of those who have been called out of the world to belong to him and worship him alone.

B. Observation and Interpretation

1. Verses 4-5 give two pictures of Christians (the church) as (a) living stones joined to Christ who is the Cornerstone and (b) holy priests offering spiritual sacrifices to God.

a) What is the relationship between being joined to Christ and being separated (consecrated) for God's holy use?

b) What should be the Christian's attitude towards praise, worship and prayer so that these are "spiritual sacrifices" acceptable to God through Jesus Christ?

2. Verse 9a says: "But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession". What is the significance of being:

a) a chosen people:

b) a royal priesthood:

c) a holy nation:

d) God's special possession:

e) _____

C. Making the Truth Personal

Referring to our passage (and with particular reference to verses 11 and 12) how should your identity as a Christian make you different from the people in the world?

D. Your Six Day Reading Plan on a Consecrated Life

We show that the Kingdom of God has come into our personal lives by the extent to which we separate ourselves from the world and become committed to Him.

Please go through the following passages and jot down one key thing you have learnt from each passage about a consecrated life.

Day 1 Rom 12:1 _____

Day 2 1 Corinthians 6:15-20 _____

Day 3: 1 Samuel 1:24-28 _____

Day 4: Psalm 51:1-12

Day 5: John 4:21-24

Day 6: John 17:13-19

STUDY TWO: A CONSECRATED LIFE PART TWO

TEXT: ROMANS 6:1-14

A. Background

Last week we learnt that the life of being separated from the world for God's holy use is called consecration. That is indeed the first mark or evidence that God's kingdom or rule is being exercised in the life of those who have been called out of the world to belong to him and worship him alone.

St Paul in Romans makes the point that we are saved by grace alone, through faith alone in Christ alone and not by works of the law. That made some Jews accuse Paul of promoting sin, since the more we sin the more grace can abound. In our passage, today Paul answers this accusation and says "No way! We can't continue to sin just because we are saved by grace. On the contrary, we are saved by grace because we are united with Christ – united with him in his death, burial and resurrection. Baptism by emersion was demonstrating this death to the old life, burial of the old life and resurrection of the new life in Christ.

Those who are conscious of their identity in Christ will indeed consecrate themselves. That is why verse 13 says: "Do not offer any part of yourself to sin as an instrument of wickedness, but rather offer yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life; and offer every part of yourself to him as an instrument of righteousness". What a way to show the coming of the rule of God in our lives – not by the self-generated power of obeying the law, but by God's power working in us to be able and willing to do according to His good pleasure (Philippians 2:13).

B. Observation and Interpretation

1. In verses 1-7 Paul says when we are in Christ, our old lives have been crucified with Him, and have been buried with Christ. How do you think this fact can defeat the power of sin in our lives?

2. In verses 8-11 Paul says the power of Jesus' resurrection can help us to live a new life. What is the connection between Jesus' resurrection and our new life?

C. Making the Truth Personal

1. In verses 12-14 Paul makes the truth of the implication of our unity in Jesus' death and resurrection very personal. State in what ways you will "offer every part of yourself to Him as an instrument of righteousness". You can start from your head (mind) and go down until you come to your feet.

2. For meditation:

Think about and personally apply the following suggestions for your Christian growth made in the book *Intentional Discipleship And Disciple-Making: An Anglican Guide For Christian Life and Formation*:

- a) Regularly attending public worship and especially the Holy Communion.
- b) The practice of private prayer, Bible reading, and self-discipline.
- c) Bringing the teaching and example of Christ into your everyday life.

D. Your Six Day Reading Plan on a Consecrated Life

This week we go through a meditation of a song of consecration written by Frances Ridley Havergal (1836-1879). Her greatest desire was that every part of herself should be dedicated to God's use. The song is "Take my life and let it be consecrated Lord to thee". As you meditate on each stanza please ask yourself how this song can be true of you also.

Day 1: Take my life and let it be
Consecrated, Lord, to Thee.
Take my moments and my days,
Let them flow in endless praise.

Compare with Ps 150 and apply to your life _____

Day 2: Take my hands and let them move

Compare with Isaiah 52:7 and apply to your life _____

At the impulse of Thy love.
Take my feet and let them be
Swift and beautiful for Thee.

Day 3: Take my voice and let me sing,
Always, only for my King.
Take my lips and let them be
Filled with messages from Thee

Compare with Ps 147:1-7 and apply
to your life _____

Day 4: Take my silver and my gold,
Not a mite would I withhold.
Take my intellect and use
Every pow'r as Thou shalt choose.

Compare with 2 Cor 8:1-5 and apply
to your life _____

Day 5: Take my will and make it Thine,
It shall be no longer mine.
Take my heart, it is Thine own,
It shall be Thy royal throne.

Compare with Mt 26:36-46 and apply
to your life _____

Day 6: Take my love, my Lord, I pour
At Thy feet its treasure store.
Take myself and I will be
Ever, only, all for Thee.

Compare with Mt 22:34-40 and apply
to your life _____

STUDY THREE: DISCIPLED COMMUNITIES PART ONE (THE WORK OF EVANGELISM)

TEXT: Lk 9:1-6

A. Background

This series of studies is on the theme: “Thy kingdom come”. Our first two studies discussed the coming of God’s rule to our own lives shown by us separating ourselves (consecration) for God’s holy use.

But God’s rule is much bigger than ourselves. That rule must reach more and more people. The wonder is that God has chosen to use us to spread that rule to all people within our reach. We cannot enjoy the benefits of the Kingdom of God and keep it to ourselves. Our task is that of discipling communities, and this begins with communicating to them the Good News of salvation through Jesus Christ. This is the lesson that Jesus wanted them to learn when in Luke 9:1-6 he called his twelve disciples together and sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal. The aim of this exercise can best be expressed in the words of the popular verse John 3:16: “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life”.

If we belong to the Kingdom of God we must share God’s love to the world by taking the gospel to as many people as He enables us to. That love is our first motive. The second motive is obedience. We cannot claim to be under the Kingdom of God and be disobedient to His oft-repeated command to preach the gospel to the world.

We notice something else in this passage. Our preaching must be accompanied by a demonstration of God’s loving power. That is why Jesus gave them power and authority over all demons and to cure diseases. The preaching of the good news (the gospel) must always be accompanied by the demonstration of His power, not to satisfy curiosity (as tends to happen these days) but to meet real needs.

B. Observation and Interpretation

1. In verses 1-2 we read: “Then Jesus called the twelve together and gave them power and authority over all demons and to cure diseases, and he sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal”.

- a) Of the three outreach activities (proclaiming, healing and casting out demons) which one is the most commonly practiced in your experience and why?

- b) Of the three outreach activities (proclaiming, healing and casting out demons) which one is the least practiced in your experience and why?

2. Verses 3-5 Jesus says those who evangelize must be able to depend on God who supplies their needs through those who are evangelized. What does this say about our need to support God's workers?

C. Making the Truth Personal

1. In verse 6 we read: "They departed and went through the villages, bringing the good news and curing diseases everywhere". Why do you think their ready obedience to proclaim and demonstrate the gospel is not matched by a similar obedience today? How do you think our level of obedience to take the gospel to others can be improved?

2. What will you do to improve the boldness of your spoken witness to your faith in Christ?

D. Your Six Day Reading Plan on a Consecrated Life

The evidence of the church being sent to take the gospel to the whole world is abundant in all four gospels and Acts. For each of the coming six days please say what you learn from the given reading:

Day 1: Matt 10:16-20 _____

Day 2 1 Mark 6:6-13 _____

Day 3: Lk 10:1-7 _____

Day 4: John 20:21-23 _____

Day 5: Acts 1:8 _____

Day 6: Acts 4:13-20 _____

STUDY FOUR: DISCIPLED COMMUNITIES PART 2 (THE WORK OF DISCIPLESHIP)

TEXT: MATTHEW 28:16-20

A. Background

Last week our concern was with extending the Kingdom of God by reaching out to other communities with the Good News, and demonstrating that good news with acts of love and power. That is the work of evangelism.

Unfortunately, many Christians believe that when we have evangelized we have fulfilled all that God requires of us. But that is not so according to the words of the Great Commission that we are going to study today. Before Jesus Christ departed from this earth he issued what has become known as the Great Commission that forms the subject of our study today. The words of the Great Commission are very important because they form Jesus' last charge to the church. When someone important is about to depart from this world you are likely to take very seriously their last words to you, right? That is what the Great Commission is like to the church.

In the original Greek language, an analysis of verse 19 of our reading puts an emphasis on the main verb which is "make disciples". The other verbs: going, baptizing and teaching are called participles or helping verbs. They are examples of activities that are necessary to fulfill the main action which is to make disciples. We cannot succeed in making the Kingdom of God come unless we disciple other people so that they too, like us, can respond to the rule of God or king.

B. Observation and Interpretation

1. Look at verse 16. Although the death and resurrection of Jesus happened down south in Judea (the seat of the rulers, the Council of the Jews, the Scribes and Pharisees), Jesus chose to issue his last great instruction from Galilee (the land of simple peasants and fishermen). What does that tell you about who the Great Commission is meant for?

2. In verse 18 Jesus said "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me".
 - a) How does this verse compare with Philippians 2:9-11?

b) How does this authority help us to appreciate the importance of the saying “Thy kingdom come”?

3. In verse 19 we are commanded to “make disciples of all nations”. A disciple is a follower of Jesus Christ. But since Jesus is no longer walking on this earth how do we still become his followers?

C. Making the Truth Personal

1. In verse 20 the act of discipling others includes “teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you”. For example, he has commanded us to love one another. Share as many other examples as you can of what Jesus has commanded us.

2. The result of such discipling must be that we become increasingly like Jesus. What was Jesus like? Do you think you are like Jesus in those qualities?

Your Six Day Reading Plan on a Consecrated Life

During this week, we are concentrating on various discipleship activities that we need to practice for ourselves as well as helping other people to practice. A specialist discipleship ministry called

The Navigators have the following diagram that nicely summarizes what discipleship is all about. For each item please consider how you can personally apply the teaching.



Day 1: A disciple revolves around the lordship of Jesus Christ (Philippians 2:9-11?)

Day 2: A disciple communicates with God daily through prayer (1 Thess 5:17)

Day 3: A disciple reads God's Word daily in order to know the mind of God for his or her life (2 Tim 3:16-17)

Day 4: A disciple grows in fellowship with other believers by attending services, prayer meetings and Bible Study groups (Hob 10:24-25)

Day 5: A disciple must always witness to other people through words and deeds (Acts 1:8).

Day 6: A disciple must live a daily life of obedience.

STUDY FIVE: A RECONCILED WORLD PART ONE (RECONCILIATION AMONG HUMAN BEINGS)

TEXT: PSALM 133; MATT 5:9

A. Background

We want the Kingdom of God to come, and that is why we pray for it daily. But God's kingdom also requires that we as Christians work tirelessly to achieve reconciliation in our broken world, and in Zimbabwe in particular. In the words of *The Zimbabwe We Want* document: "The incarnation is all about God, who had been wronged and seriously offended by the human rebellion against him in Adam and Eve, taking the first step to bring about reconciliation between himself and humanity. In our human understanding it is the guilty party that must take the first step and seek forgiveness from the person who has been wronged. What transpired in Jesus Christ defies all human imagination and understanding of what reconciliation is all about".

The Zimbabwe We Want document goes on to explain how the message of reconciliation is at the heart of the Church and constitutes its core business. That is why Jesus says "Blessed are the peace-makers, for they shall be called Children of God" (Matt 5:9). Why are we so blessed when we bring about reconciliation? We all know that disharmony disrupts relationships to the extent that society becomes ill, and energy is diverted to conflict rather to productive activities. The strength of reconciliation is clearly seen and demonstrated when humanity forgives each other and live as brothers and sisters (Ps 133:1).

B. Observation and Interpretation

1. Ps 133:1 says "How good and pleasant it is when God's people live together in unity!"
 - a) Some things are good but not pleasant, while other things are pleasant but not good. What do you think is the significance of the fact that unity is both good and pleasant?

- b) So, if unity is so good and so pleasant how come there is so much in-fighting among Christians?

2. Psalm 133 ends in verse 3 by saying why unity is so important: "For there the Lord bestows his blessing, even life forevermore".

a) List as many blessings as you can that come out of unity.

b) List as many problems as you can that arise out of disunity.

3. Matt 5:9 says, "Blessed are the peace-makers, for they shall be called Children of God"

a) How does this verse help to explain the statement from the introduction that says, "The message of reconciliation is at the heart of the Church and constitutes its core business".

b) What role do you think forgiveness plays in the promotion of reconciliation?

c) What is the relationship between forgiveness and reconciliation?

C. Making the Truth Personal

Think of a situation of conflict (e.g. among your relatives or in your church) where there is conflict. Write down what you believe God wants you to do to promote reconciliation in that situation.

D. Your Six Day Reading Plan on a Consecrated Life

Write down what the Lord is teaching you concerning reconciliation from the following Scriptures

Day 1: 2 Corinthians 5:18-21

Day 2: Matthew 18:15-17

Day 3: Matthew 5:23-26

Day 4: Romans 12:14-21

Day 5: Philippians 2:1-13

Day 6: Isaiah 1:18

STUDY SIX: A RECONCILED WORLD PART TWO (RECONCILIATION WITH NATURE)

TEXT: GENESIS 3:17-19; ROM 8:18-25; REV 22:1-5

A. Background

We often associate reconciliation with the restoration of harmony between individual human beings, communities or nations who are in conflict with one another. That is very important, and that was our concern during the whole of last week. But when Adam and Eve sinned, disharmony happened in four related directions: (a) between human beings and their God; (b) between human beings and human beings, (c) within each of us as human beings and (d) between human beings and the created order of nature. Reconciliation is required in all four areas, and the more that happens the more we help to bring about the Kingdom of God.

Our concern this week is with the fourth area: reconciliation between human beings and the environment. Why is this an important part of our mission as Christians? First, we are told in our Genesis reading that when sin came into the world the resulting curse was extended to the ground which was now to bring forth thorns and thistles. Cultivating the fields was now to become hard (by sweat). The relationship between human beings and the environment was now spoiled. That is why we see human beings being carelessly cruel to the environment and then reaping the nasty consequences of this cruelty. We poison water sources, recklessly cut down forests, endanger plants and animals and cause soil erosion – all for short term gain. What a terrible legacy to leave to future generations!

But we are told that God does not intend things to remain this way. Our Romans passage tells us that the groaning of creation is that of pains of childbirth and eager hope as it looks forward to the day when it will join God's children in glorious freedom from death and decay. We then see the fulfilment of this in Revelations 22. While we await the full implementation of this hope, we work towards harmonizing the relationship between human beings and the rest of creation. It is all a part of our cry: "Thy kingdom come".

B. Observation and Interpretation

1. Gen 3:17-18 talks about the environmental consequences of sin. List as many environmental disasters as you can think of that result from human abuse of the environment.

2. Gen 3:18 says “By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread”. At the same time work was always part of the creative intent of God for human beings even before the coming of sin. In the light of this what is your opinion of the “prosperity gospel” that promises “riches from the blue” without wealth creation?

3. Romans 8:18-22 tells us that the groaning of creation is now more than that of the curse but more importantly speaks of the hopeful pains of childbirth as creation looks forward to the day when it will join God’s children in glorious freedom from death and decay. What is this telling you about how we should handle creation (the environment)?

4. In Revelation 22:1-5 are given a preview of the fulfillment of complete reconciliation between human beings and creation. How might this motivate you and the church to work towards reconciliation between human beings and the natural environment?

C. Making the Truth Personal

When many people think of environmental problems they become intimidated into doing nothing because the task looks too big. Write down how you can personally defeat this intimidation by starting small and achieving small wins.

D. Your Six Day Reading Plan

What do the following Scriptures tell us about the importance of the environment (created nature) and the importance of us taking good care of it?

Day 1: Gene 1:28-31

Day 2: Ps 24:1-4

Day 3: Ps 8:1-9

Day 4: Ps 19:1-6

Day 5: Matt 6:26-30

Day 6: Rev 4:11

CONCLUSION

We hope this Bible Study Series has resulted in your spiritual growth and that it has sharpened your appetite for God's word. As you pray daily the Lord's Prayer be ever mindful of the Kingdom of God. You have a role to play in bringing about God's Kingdom in the diocese, in Zimbabwe and in the world at large. Continue to seek the Lord through his word. May what you learn continue to be evident in your lives as you serve Him in whatever way God leads you. Gracious Father, "Thy Kingdom come". Stay blessed!

+ *Chad Harare*

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Bishop of the Diocese of Harare CPCA

Pentecost 2017