

Pew leaflet letter Sunday 9th April 2017

Dear Cathedral family

When we as the Church speak or comment on political events, we do this not as members of political parties, or to promote this or that political agenda. We do this out of concern for what is happening in our country; for the well-being of us all; for the protection of our democracy. We speak – or try to do so – from a moral perspective: what is right and good? What is best for peace? Is power and privilege being used in the best way, by those in authority over our land?

I am deeply concerned about the implications of the recent Cabinet reshuffle, and in particular the removal of Pravin Gordhan from the position of Minister of Finance. There is concern that this will open the door for the looting of the public purse by the highest in the land. The moves by parliamentary opposition parties for a vote of no-confidence in the President will be an important test: will those within the ANC who have expressed their concern about recent developments have the moral courage to stand for the truth, and vote against their President? We call on them to do so. It is time for President Zuma to go.

Following the Cabinet reshuffle, Archbishop Thabo Makgoba issued the following statement (31st March 2017):

“President Zuma's dismissal of the stellar team at the finance ministry constitutes an assault on the poor of South Africa.

Who stands to lose when we can't raise foreign investment to finance growth in our country? The poor. Who stands to lose when interest rates on the money we already owe gobbles up our nation's resources? The poor.

Who stands to gain when corrupt elites enrich themselves on the side while doing deals worth billions of rands with state-owned enterprises? The people of suburbs like Saxonwold.

Ignorance can be educated but there is no cure for recklessness. The President's decisions are a frightening example of a leader who has continually showed his profound indifference to the economic health of South Africa. It is telling that he failed to secure agreement to this reckless move even from within his own party and the ruling alliance.

When this last happened, Minister Gordhan and his team swung into gallant action mobilising society in a campaign to regain the battered confidence of investors. All of this good work is now in danger of being reversed at one fell swoop.

I hope the ruling party will reflect on how they are betraying the hopes of our people and take appropriate action. Civil society too will have to consider for how long we stand by helplessly and watch the gains of our democracy destroyed.”

On Palm Sunday, we go with the crowds as they accompany Jesus in his triumphal procession into Jerusalem. We witness publicly to the lordship of Christ over all authorities, principalities and powers. During Holy Week, we journey with the disciples into the darkness and betrayal of these days, the desolation of Good Friday, the despair of Holy Saturday. We prepare for the celebration of Easter and the hope

and promise of new life. As we do so, we go into our own places and experiences of darkness and betrayal, our desolation and our despair. Christ is there with us.

My love to you all

Andrew Hunter