

**PASTORAL LETTER TO THE PEOPLE OF THE CATHOLIC
ARCHDIOCESE OF DURBAN:
RENEW TO BE A COMMUNITY SERVING HUMANITY (JULY 1989)**

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

This letter is a special invitation coming to you from the two of us, the Archbishop and Bishop Khumalo. We want you to join the spiritual journey of Renew in the Archdiocese of Durban.

Over many years of faithful ministry our priests have dedicated themselves to the care of your spiritual life, through sermons, Sunday liturgies, celebration of other sacraments, catechetical instruction, retreats and parish missions. We are deeply grateful for that wonderful service.

Through it our parishes are spiritually alive. Now we want them to become even more alive and we want that greater life to be seen and felt throughout the archdiocese.

In our letter for the launch of the Pastoral Plan on Pentecost Sunday this year we wrote of the joy, hope and excitement that filled our hearts. We were looking forward to what we expected would be done in the Archdiocese of Durban through the Pastoral Plan fulfilled by the Renew process.

We have found echoes of this joy, hope and excitement in many people. They see in the Plan and in Renew a wonderful opportunity for our Church to express itself with greater fervour and to live its life with greater vigour.

What is intensely gratifying is the way that the Diocesan Renew Team is carrying out its task. Just to be near them is to be filled with their enthusiasm. Just to see them at work makes you wonder where all their joyous energy comes from. But of course one need not wonder for long. When the Holy Spirit takes over the minds and hearts and energies, a team of workers becomes a spiritual power house.

Through planning, meetings and training sessions, many hundreds of people have become involved in the process of Renew. They seem happy to find themselves caught up in a great united effort marked by prayer, love, and the promise of work for Christ and His Church.

Many are beginning to see in the Pastoral Plan and its fulfilment by Renew an answer to the question: What is the Church doing about the problems that people experience in their faith life?

As you know only too well these problems include:

- The break-up of marriage and family life;

- The tragic ease with which young people fall away from the practise of the faith or look outside the Catholic Church for the satisfaction of their religious needs;
- The difficulty of living and acting in a truly Christian way in South Africa's racial situation;
- The impression of having to battle alone and without support to remain faithful to Christ and His Church.

Doesn't it excite you to experience that for the first time in our history thousands of people in all parishes are being invited to join together in a great common effort of Christian formation and are already beginning to respond? Isn't this the Church trying to respond to the question: What are you doing to help us with our problems?

The Church is saying: You are part of the Church, you are part of Christ. Help solve the problems by joining in the effort, the action, the prayer, the loving sacrifice and the joy of Renew.

Here is a plan. Here is a process. Here are dedicated people, in the Diocesan Team, planning and preparing the great effort; planning and preparing in such a way that plenty of room remains for people to choose how they join in and participate.

The Plan has two very important elements: Community and service.

Service means playing an active part in the life of the Church, in what it does to meet the needs of people. Serving others is following in the footsteps of Jesus and doing what He did, "The Son of Man came", he said, "not to be served but to serve" (Mt 20:28).

Community means working together in teams or groups in our parishes in which people find support, cooperation and Christian love. Alone we are divided and weak. But if we share with others and let the world see that the Church is a community of disciples filled with the presence of the risen Lord we can look forward to doing God's work with confidence. Through His grace may the launch of Renew be a powerful and enthusiastic affirmation of what we hope to achieve in terms of community and service.

We, your bishops, look forward to that day and all that must follow it. We look forward to that day when having heard The Lord's Call (Season1) and having made Our Response (Season 2) we are Empowered by the Spirit (Season3) and become faithful disciples (Season 4) and learn to share the Gospel Message with others (Season 5).

All this, please God, will result in a new emphasis on sharing in the mission of Jesus; resulting too in whatever new forms are required in the life of the parish and the archdiocese.

By means of Renew, empowered by God's grace and supported by the prayers of our Blessed Mother, let us go forward to become **Community Serving Humanity**.

Our blessing comes to you with the assurance of our love for you and union with you in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Signed:

+DENIS HURLEY OMI, Archbishop of Durban

+DOMONIC J KHUMALO OMI, Auxiliary Bishop