

## Week 3- Collapse of public services

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### Opening hymn (Lenten hymn)

#### Opening prayer

Merciful Father, send forth your Spirit upon us the people of Southern Africa. May we hear anew the voice of Jesus Christ, inviting us to walk with him across the turbulent waters of our time: "Courage, it is I. Do not be afraid."

By the grace of the Holy Spirit empower us to bring comfort to the restless, hope to those who despair, healing to victims of violence and reconciliation where there is division.

May the Holy Spirit heal our families and communities. Grant us ethical and courageous leaders who put the good of the people before their own interest.

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, we commit ourselves to speak the truth with courage, to act justly in all we do, to share with those in need, and always and everywhere to respect your gift of life as we strive to proclaim the values of the Kingdom in solidarity with all people of good will. Amen.

#### Brief Introduction

One of the problems we face as a nation is the collapse of public services. Sometimes, these are linked to corruption and mismanagement of municipalities and state owned enterprises. As a result, people are finding it difficult to access the services that are important for poverty eradication and economic recovery (electricity or energy, water services, sanitation services, lack of community recreational facilities for our youth, poor quality of education in public schools or colleges, potholes, broken infrastructure, failures in service delivery in public clinics and hospitals)

#### *The role of the government*

How satisfied are you with the way the government is handling the problems of service delivery and broken infrastructure? What more should the government do to address this problem?

#### *Our role as ordinary citizens and as Christians*

Is there a role that we as ordinary citizens can play to address the problem of failed municipalities and state owned enterprises?

“We remind all South Africans that each of us is responsible for building our country’s economy, including the municipalities and state owned enterprises.” (SACBC, Pastoral statement on the economy, 2022).

### **Sharing our personal experiences**

How is the problem of electricity (load shedding) and water services affecting your life and that of your family? Share your personal experiences of failure in service delivery by municipalities: experiences of municipalities failing to provide community recreation facilities to the youth, street lights to ensure community protection at night, sewerage problems, water services, potholes, etc. Are we electing right people in our municipalities? Are we doing enough to hold them to account?

**Being challenged by the Gospel and the Catholic Social Teaching** “We have responsibility to work together as communities to stop the culture of cable theft, non-payment of municipal rates, vandalism and damage to infrastructure” (SACBC, pastoral statement on the economy, 2022). How does this message challenge you as a citizen and as a Christian?

What role do I play to challenge those involved in violent protests, vandalism and the destruction of infrastructure? What role do I play to end illegal dumping in my community?

As part of my ecological conversion, to what extent do I use electricity and water sparingly?

### **Action**

As an act of repentance, what can I (we) do this week in line with the above sharing?

### **Spontaneous prayers**

Allow time for those who wish to make a petition in prayer on behalf of the group. Our Father ... Hail Mary ...

**Closing Prayer (Use the one on page 5)**