**INTRODUCTION**

The St George’s Cathedral and the Restitution Foundation invite you to join a reflective journey evoked by sites of significance on Robben Island. We welcome you to these spaces and offer this liturgy as kindle to your contemplation.

This journey of reflection is somewhat different to the available tours of Robben Island, which you might like to take at another time. This pilgrimage offers space to reflect on our journeys with the issues of our time.

The liturgy is intended to support your community in reflection and to create a shared experience and to challenge boundaries. We suggest shared leadership and a gentle pace.

**CREATING COMMUNITY**

**Reflection Site: Departure at Robben Island Gateway**

*Join the circle. Invite everyone to introduce themselves just by giving their name.*

**Reader:** Now that same day, two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about eleven kilometers from Jerusalem. They were talking with each other about everything that had happened. As they talked and discussed these things with each other, Jesus himself came up and walked along with them; but they were kept from recognizing him. He asked them, “what are you discussing with each other as you walk along?” They stood still, their faces downcast.

One of them named Cleopas, asked him, “Are you only a visitor to Jerusalem and do not know the things that have happened there in these days?” “What things?” he asked. “About Jesus of Nazareth,” they replied. “He was a prophet, powerful in word and deed before God and all the people. The chief priests and our rulers handed him over to be sentenced to death, and they crucified him; but we had hoped that he was the one who was going to redeem Israel. And what is more, it is the third day since all this took place. In addition, the women amazed us. They went to the tomb early this morning but did not find his body. They came and told us that they had seen a vision of angels who said he was alive. Then some of our companions went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said. But him they did not see.”

He said to them, “How foolish you are and how slow you are to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Did not the Christ have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?” And beginning with Moses and all the prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the scriptures concerning himself. As they approached the village to which they were going, Jesus acted as if he were going further but they urged him strongly, “Stay with us, for it is nearly evening; the day is almost over.” So he went in to stay with them. When he was at the table with them, he took bread, gave thanks, broke it and began to give it to them. Then their eyes were opened and they recognized him and he disappeared from their sight. They asked each other “Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the scriptures to us?” They got up and returned at once to Jerusalem. There they found the Eleven, and those with them, assembled together and saying, “It is true! The Lord has risen and he has appeared to Simon.” Then the two told what had happened on the way and how Jesus was recognized by them when he broke the bread.

*Luke 24:13-25 (New International Version)*

**Reader:** Today we are invited to journey, to explore and to reflect with each other, and within ourselves. We will walk to sites on Robben Island where we will pause in reflection to consider themes (creation, community, faith, justice, diversity, identity and work) and to find our own response. Through this we are invited to reflect on the prisons we create for ourselves and for others. Each site will allow us to reflect on the challenges of our current context and how we are called to respond with compassion. This is a road of pain and suffering, but also one of challenge to create hope.

Like those who have been banished to the Island in our past – the Xhosa chiefs and Sayed Abdurahman Moturu, the Prince of Madura and Muslim cleric of the 18th century, the mentally ill, the lepers, the leaders of political change and criminals, we will go across to the island by boat – leaving behind our lives of busyness, power and assumption to find a space to reflect on our own journeys of life, faith and identity within our complex country and time.

To create our reflective community, I’d like to invite you to:

* Be present in this moment by putting your life on hold – please switch off cell phones or at least keep them silent and undisruptive to others
* Share in this community by taking up the reading at each site
* Be open to new thoughts and new reflections
* Be good to yourself and care for yourself and each other – step out if it is too much.

As we journey we are particularly privileged guests of the Robben Island Museum. We’ve been asked to follow a few guidelines, which will allow ongoing visits. We’ve been asked:

* To remain on the road network and stay with the group
* To leave heritage in place (e.g. bones, porcelain pieces, old bottles)
* Not to tamper with sites of particular historical interest such as the military installations, architecture or natural landscape
* Not to use or move museum property
* Not to make fires and to only smoke in designated areas
* Not to walk in the penguin breeding area or interfere with birds or animals
* To refrain from going onto the rocky shore around the Island between November until end March to avoid disturbing the Black African Oystercatchers which are nesting
* To report injured birds or animals to Securicor officials or RIM staff
* Not to litter
* Not to drink alcohol in the view of tourists, swim, sunbathe or to behave in an unruly manner

Care needs to be taken with the Island artifacts and furniture, and should there be damage this needs to be reported to the RIM staff

We encourage you to spend time with people you do not know.

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Let us Pray (in the language of your choice):

***Our Father in heaven***

***hallowed be your Name***

***your kingdom come***

***your will be done***

***on earth as in heaven.***

***Give us today our daily bread.***

***Forgive us our sins***

***as we forgive those who sin against us.***

***Save us from the time of trial***

***And deliver us from evil.***

***For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours***

***now and for ever.***

***AMEN***

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**THE FERRY TRIP TO ROBBEN ISLAND**

*As you set off on this sea journey, take time, in silence, to observe the domed sky and to feel the rhythm of the sea swells and the drumming of the wind in your ears. Delight in the cormorants and other sea birds and look out for dolphins surfing in the waves. Watch the mountain receding into the distance. Reflect on the magnificence of creation and take time to acknowledge that we humans are an integral part of this ancient and great work.*

*Imagine the feelings and loneliness of the prisoners as they were shipped away from this familiar symbol of home across the bay to the unknown.*

**FIRST THEME: CREATION**

**Reflection site: A site looking back at Cape Town and Table Mountain**

*Look around you at the Island. Become aware of the heavy ‘footprint’ human beings have stamped on the landscape. The cumbersome concrete dolosse which form the breakwater enclosing the harbour, the large and noisy building housing the diesel generator, the rusting remains of prison and defense facilities and the austere fortified buildings are a reminder of our grim history. Note the infestation of thirsty invasive alien trees and shrubs, which along with the introduced animals have decimated the indigenous flora on this side of the island. The arid landscape shows no sign of the wetland once described on the Island. What have we done?*

*Close your eyes and imagine this island before we transformed its vibrant landscape and biodiversity.*

**Reader:** The beauty and isolation of this place is awe-inspiring. The distant view of the mountain across the bay is magnificent and evocative. Wind and water reflect the shifting moods of the weather – sparkling waves that dance lightly onto the sun-drenched shore from a turquoise sea can be whipped up quickly into a hostile, lashing assault, transformed by gales under dark and brooding skies.

Timelessly, the mountain, “Hoerrikwagga!” as the ancients name her, guards the gateway to the continent. Over millennia she has silently celebrated the rhythms of nature, the cycles of the sun and the moon, the seasons of creation, rejoicing in the Creator’s bounty. But over recent centuries, she has also brooded over pain, brutality and destruction wrought by humankind. She has seen nature ravaged by greed in the name of “development”. The windswept island prison is a symbol of the pain and brutality that all of creation has suffered at the hands of human selfishness and arrogance.

**Reader:** For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in the hope that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God.

*Romans 8:20-21 (New International Version)*

**Task:**

In twos or threes share with each other (for a minute or two) how the beauty of the environment around you touches your soul.

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**Reflection site: The hide at the Penguin Board Walk**

**Reader:** We come to this place to find a symbol of hope. The African Penguin, which is listed as a vulnerable species, became extinct on Robben Island in the 1800’s because people had ruthlessly collected their eggs for food and destroyed their nesting habitat. In 1983, these flightless seabirds were reintroduced to the Island. They mate for life and, as lifelong partners, they share in the incubation of their two eggs and in feeding and caring for their young. They live in colonies – communities - and are acutely sensitive to human disturbance, oil and other pollution. They are vulnerable like so much of creation, yet they have chosen to give this island another chance and once again to make it their home.

Consider the human history of Robben Island, a place where freedom, democracy and the human spirit ultimately triumphed over oppression.

**Task:**

In twos or threes share with each other (for a minute or two) how you could contribute to the restoration of creation.

**Prayer:**

**Leader:** Lord, too often we break our bond with the earth,

**People:** We long for healing: we choose life.

AMEN

**SECOND THEME: COMMUNITY**

**Reflection site: At the back entrance of the visitors’ centre**

**Reader:** Here political prisoners received visits from their families and lawyers. Plate-glass separated prisoners and visitors. They communicated through a faulty sound system as physical contact was not allowed.

We gather at the prison visitors’ centre remembering the hope and pain shared by both the banished prisoners and their visiting family members. These visits were long awaited. There was so much to be said about life at home and life within the prison. So much to be shared through the glass in such a short time. Yet with little reason, guards cancelled the visits of people who had traveled long distances, censored information that was shared and prevented real connection.

**Reader:** Then his mother and his brothers came; and standing outside, they sent to him and called him. A crowd was sitting around him; and they said to him, “Your mother and your brothers and sisters are outside, asking for you.”

And he replied, “Who are my mother and my brothers?” And looking at those who sat around him, he said, “Here are my mother and my brothers!” Whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother”.

*Mark 3:31-35 (New International Version)*

**Task:**

Embrace each other as a sign that we can feel and touch

Share with each other (in a minute or two) in groups of twos or threes the importance of family and community to you.

**Prayer:**

**Leader:** Lord, too often we break our bond with one another

**People:** We long for healing: We choose life.

AMEN

**THIRD THEME: FAITH**

**Reflection site: The Kramat**

**Reader:** This Kramat is a symbol of the burial place of Pangerau Chakra Denigrat, the Asian Prince of Madura who died on the island in 1754. He was one of the Muslim leaders and high ranking officials who resisted Dutch colonisation in the East Indies. The Dutch banished some of these leaders to Robben Island in 1682. A simple shrine was built in his memory and his remains were later returned to his son in Indonesia. Near the Kramat there is also the grave of Hadjie Matarim who died on the Island in 1755.

This pain and suffering reminds us of the victims of war and violence today, perpetrated because they represent “the other”, “the different” or the less powerful. We remember how religion has been used to destroy in the Middle East, Sudan, Rwanda, India. We remember how religion has been used to falsely empower and enrich in South Africa,

**Task:**

Greet each other with the words As-Salam-u-Alaikum *(Peace be upon you)*

Reply with the words wa-Alaikumussalam (*And unto you peace*)

**Reader:** Faith stories often have their beginnings in the desire for freedom. The Creator who made humanity wills us freedom from whatever hinders our dignity and our capacity to be fully human. The spirit which resisted the repression, banishment and isolation of this island, comes from a faithful heart which believed in human dignity and worth, despite what was being done to their bodies by the powers of their time.

**Confession:**

**Leader:** Lord, we confess our lack of love for our brothers and sisters whose faith tradition differs from ours.

**People:** Forgive us and transform our hearts of aggression into hearts of compassion.

**FOURTH THEME: JUSTICE**

**Reflection site: Main door of prison**

**Reader:** We stand outside the Maximum Security Prison reflecting on the suffering of long term prisoners who sacrificed their lives for the ideals of freedom.

The years 1960 and 1961 were a key turning point in South African resistance politics and in the way the state responded. In March 1960 the apartheid state responded violently to protests against ‘pass laws’ in various places, including Sharpeville, Langa and Pondoland. The apartheid state crushed the uprising and arrested hundreds of people. A number were imprisoned on the Island. Even though they were charged with offences under the common law, they were really the first political prisoners on the Island under apartheid.

We remember the pain of separation, censorship, hard labour, the cold and hunger. We also remember the camaraderie, counteracting the cruelty of the wardens.

**Reflection site: Prison Courtyard**

***Meditation: On the Island*** – *by Dennis Brutus a former political prisoner on Robben Island*

1. Cement-grey floors and walls

cement-grey days

cement-grey time

and a grey susurration

as of seas breaking

winds blowing

and rains drizzling

A barred existence

so that one did not need to look

at doors or windows

to know that they were sundered by bars

and one locked in a grey gelid stream

of unmoving time

2. When the rain came

it came in a quick moving squall

moving across the island

murmuring from afar

then drumming on the roof

then marching fading away.

And sometimes one mistook

the weary tramp of feet

as the men came shuffling from the quarry

white-dust-filmed and shambling

for the rain

that came and drummed and marched away. (?)

3 It was not quite envy

nor impatience

nor irritation

but a mixture of feelings

one felt

for the aloof deep-green dreaming firs

that poised in the island air

withdrawn, composed and still.

4 On Saturday afternoons we were embalmed in time

like specimen moths pressed under glass;

we were immobile in the sunlit afternoon

waiting,

Visiting time:

until suddenly like a book snapped shut

all possibilities vanished as zero hour passed

and we knew another week would have to pass.

**Reader:** When Pilate saw that he was getting nowhere, but that instead an uproar was starting, he took water and washed his hands in front of the crowd. "I am innocent of this man's blood," he said. "It is your responsibility!" All the people answered, "Let his blood be on us and on our children!"

*Matthew 27:24-25* (*New International Version)*

**Reflection site: Inside the prison**

**Task:**

A time of silent reflection on the significance of this place; the fact that a prison cell and prison on an island came to signify freedom. Think of what holds you back and what the implication of this place is for you.

Walk through an open door in the prison symbolizing the end of incarceration and injustice.

**Prayer:**

**Leader:** O God of light

**People:** We share the breath of life.

AMEN

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**FIFTH THEME: DIVERSITY**

**Reflection site: Leper Cemetery**

**Reader:** During the 1846-1931 period, Robben Island was used as a hospital site for people with leprosy, the mentally and chronically ill. The island was chosen in order to isolate stigmatized people from the rest of the society. As there was no cure and little effective treatment available for leprosy, mental illness and other chronic illnesses, Robben Island was a kind of prison for the hospital patients too.

Many people have died on this island.

We are standing here at the southern end of the graveyard. To the west and north there are rows of graves under Myrtle and Wattle trees. The leprosarium graveyard may have once extended to the Maximum Security Prison because human bones were dug up there in the 1960’s and 1970’s.

**Reader:** Diversity is at the very heart of God’s divine self and being. God’s self-revelation is expressed most fully in diversity and difference. Dead-end ungodliness is expressed in the stubborn insistence on sameness and exclusivity. Creative Godliness is expressed in difference – male - female, gay – straight; white - black, tall - short. To perceive the breadth, length, depth and height of the divine nature, we begin that journey by embracing diversity. It is an invitation to discover the God who includes the Moabitess and the Samaritan, the blind and the deaf, those who live with HIV & AIDS and leprosy. It is the journey of enrichment rather than of tolerance.

**Reader:** An argument arose among them as to who was the greatest. But Jesus, aware of their inner thoughts, took a little child and put it by his side, and he said to them, “Whoever welcomes this child in my name welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me; for the least among all of you is the greatest.” *Luke 9:46 – 48(New International Version)*

**Task:**

In twos or threes share with each other (for a minute or two) your thoughts on why people find it difficult to embrace “the other” within societies.

**Prayer:**

**Leader:** O God of life

**People:** Let us share your light.

AMEN

**SIXTH THEME: IDENTITY**

**Reflection site: Robert Sobukwe House**

**Reader:** Robert Sobukwe, the leader of the PAC, was held in solitary confinement here. He was not allowed to communicate with anyone including his warders. Sobukwe used various gestures to communicate symbolically with other prisoners like clenched fists full of sand, holding them aloft and opening his fingers so that the soil fell to the ground indicating that the land belongs to the people.

Here, at the house where Robert Sobukwe was imprisoned, we hold onto the lessons which he taught.

Robert Sobukwe was perhaps the most unjustly held on the island – not by a court, but by an annual review by the Minister of Justice. Yet Robert Sobukwe teaches us to celebrate our identities, our heritage and our culture – and to celebrate the identities, heritage and culture of others around us. His teachings hold us to the peoples of our continent - consciously connecting us with Africa whilst forcing us to encounter ourselves.

**Reader:** Hearing that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, the Pharisees got together. One of them, an expert in the law, tested him with this question: "Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?"

Jesus replied: " 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbour as yourself. 'All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments." *Matthew 22:34-40 (New International Version)*

**Task:**

In twos or threes share with each other (for a minute or two) what it means to you to be an African?

**Prayer:**

God bless Africa

Guard our children

Guide our leaders

And give us peace

For Jesus Christ’s sake

AMEN

**SEVENTH THEME: WORK**

**Reflection site: Lime Quarry**

**Reader:** Lime was first quarried here during the Dutch colonial period. From 1963 political prisoners were forced to labour here. The glare of the limestone and the dusty conditions caused permanent damage to prisoners’ eyes. Much of the limestone was used to surface the roads giving them their shimmering glare. This quarry was where the greatest dehumanizing abuse was committed by warders.

The prisoners suffered on this island, hewing rock and mining lime to build their own prison. Work may allow us to express great creativity and generosity, or entrap us in paths not of our own choosing.

**Reader:**

They shall build houses and inhabit them;

they shall plant vineyards and eat their fruit.

They shall not build and another inhabit;

they shall not plant vineyards and another eat;

for like the days of a tree shall the days of my people be,

and my chosen shall long enjoy the work of their hands.

They shall not labour in vain, or bear children for calamity;

for they shall be offspring blessed by the Lord –

and their descendants as well.

*Isaiah 65:21-23(New International Version)*

**Reader:** Our response to grace and strength is labour that seeks no reward, as it has its origins in gratitude and connectedness. The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are at work constantly bringing life, nurturing love, replenishing hope and strengthening unity. Work flows from this place, like rivers of life on a parched land. Labour that is extracted from another under threat or duress or with the goal to exploit and humiliate, is not of God’s plan.

*Reflect in silence on the following quotations:*

"Work is for people not people for work. Everyone should be able to draw from work the means of providing for his (or her) life and that of his (or her) family, and of serving the human community."

*Catholic Catechism 2428*

"A just wage is the legitimate fruit of work. To refuse or withhold it can be a grave injustice. In determining fair pay, both the needs and the contributions of each person must be taken into account … Agreement between the parties is not sufficient to justify morally the amount to be received in wages."

*Catholic Catechism 2434*

**Prayer:**

**Leader:** O God of light and life

**People:** Let us build your kingdom.

AMEN

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**ARRVING AT THE CHURCH OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD**

Eucharist

Blessing

May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

AMEN

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