

EAR CYANGUGU DIOCESE

In Partnership with

EV. KIRCHENKREIS TRIER



PARTNERSHIP NEWS

LETTER

DECEMBER 2021

ADVENT GREETINGS FROM THE BISHOP OF ANGLICAN CHURCH OF RWANDA CYANGUGU DIOCESE



Our beloved friends, brothers and sisters of Ev. Kirchenkreis Trier, grace and peace to you from God the Father and from Jesus Christ our Lord.

Close to 700 years before the birth of Jesus Christ in Bethlehem, Prophet Isaiah son of Amoz prophesied of the birth of a son whose birth will cause people seeing “a great light”. Isaiah mentions that the light was seen in Galilee by those walking and living in the land of deep darkness (Is.9:2). Matthew portrays Jesus as the fulfilment of this prophesy (Matthew 6:12-17). More interestingly, Jesus spoke of Himself as being the light of the World and that whoever follows Him would never walk in darkness, but would ever walk in the light of life (John 8:12). Jesus again spoke of His followers as being the light of the world (Matthew 5:12).

My dear friends and fellow believers, during this year’s Advent season, as we continue to reflect on nativity of our Saviour Jesus Christ and anticipating His second coming, I humbly entreat you to rethink our position and divine role of reflecting the light of Jesus to those around us in our homes, our communities, church and workplaces. The darkness of the Israelites was caused by their sin of stubborn rebellion against God and going after idolatry and all sorts of evil that characterized life without the fear and obedience of God. Similarly, darkness is vividly evident in

our contemporary world, especially where God is not honoured, or where His word is not obeyed. I encourage you to deepen your relationship with God by faith in Jesus Christ allowing His radiant light to shine to those around us through our thoughts, speech and our loving kindness to them.

Finally, we wish you a merry Christmas and a happy and prosperous new year.

PARTNERSHIP SUNDAY CELEBRATIONS JUNE 2021

The partnership Sunday for this year 2021 was celebrated by both Cyangugu Diocese and Ev. Kirchenkreis Trier on 20th June. The liturgy was prepared by Ev. Kirchenkreis Trier, and used by both both partners. The theme for this year's partnership Sunday was" YOU WILL NEVER WALK ALONE". The partnership committees exchanged statements centered in Psalms 23 and shared videos of some songs. We thank God, unlike the partnership Sunday for 2020 which was celebrated when all Churches were closed and not able to congregate, this year in Rwanda we were allowed to congregate. The partnership Sunday is one of the events that brings together hearts of both Christians in Cyangugu Diocese and in Ev. Kirchenkreis Trier. It brings joy and communion between the partner churches.

In Cyangugu the celebration of the partnership Sunday was done both in urban and rural parishes whose churches were reopened by 20th June. Below are some of the photos that were taken during the partnership Sunday celebrations.





SOLIDARITY MESSAGE

The Bishop of Anglican Church of Rwanda-Cyangugu Diocese on behalf of the entire Church shared a solidarity message to our brothers and sisters in Trier after experiencing severe floods on 15th July 2021.

“Our dear partners in Ev.Kirchenkreis Trier, brothers and sisters, we wish to let you know that we stand with you and lift you up in prayers to Our Lord's heavenly throne of mercy. From the time we heard about the calamities you experienced, and as we watched the pictures and video clips in the media, we heard of the loss of many lives, the destruction of property and infrastructure, and the evacuation of people. It is a tragic and traumatic experience indeed that is made more complex by the situation of COVID-19 global pandemic. We pray to the Lord that he would comfort the families who are mourning the loss of their loved ones and give strength to those who have been displaced and have lost their property. We want to express our heartfelt sympathy to all the broken hearted as a result of the stormy floods. May the God of mercy through loving hands of his people restore and compensate for the all the destruction. May God's world in unison join hands in making mother earth a safer place for all of us”.

This heart breaking situation experienced by our brothers and sisters in Trier was shared with the entire Church members in all Parishes and we interceded for our partners in our monthly mutual intercessions on the third Sunday 18th July 2021. The church members in Cyangugu decided to make contributions to at least support one family with part of the destroyed house utensils and they collected approximately 1000 Euro which was transferred to Trier Church in October 2021.

ADMINISTRATIVE UPDATES

Since the Diocese of Cyangugu started in 1992, it has been using a holistic approach of Ministry working through four departments which include; Evangelism, Education, Health and Development. These departments were not clearly showing where social response and diaconia fall irrespective of the fact the Diocese has several Diaconal projects and programs. Since August

2021, there has been some kind of restructuring to enhance clarity of which department is responsible for what especially social response and Diaconia. The new departments include; Evangelism, social response and Diaconia, Capital development and estates management, and department of Finance and Administration. Much as the departments are interdependent and have complementary and cross cutting functions, this restructuring has given a clear focus to each department. This was aimed at enhancing efficiency in service delivery and ministry growth.

COVID-19 SITUATION IN RWANDA

Since the first case of COVID 19 was identified in Rwanda in March 2020, the government put very strict measures to minimize the spread of the virus. Though some of the measures made life difficult for some people, especially the challenge of failure to get food during the time of total lock down, the efforts made Rwanda as a country register a few cases of people contracting the virus and few people who died of COVID-19 compared to most countries in Africa and globally.

As of Tuesday 7th December 2021, Rwanda had a total of 100,449 people who contracted COVID-19 Virus since March 2020 of whom a total of 1343 died, and only six people were still hospitalized with none in critical condition. All others fully recovered.

Rwanda has so far vaccinated more than a Half of the population. As of 7th December 2021, 3,880,262 people had received both doses and 6,388,237 people had received the first dose of the vaccine. In the whole week, from 1st to 7th December, Rwanda Registered one person who died of COVID-19. The average rate of people who are found having COVID-19 virus in a sample of random tests made in different age groups in different parts of the country has been at 0.2% for the last two to three months.

UPDATES OF SPECIFIC CHURCH PROJECTS AND PROGRAMS AFTER COVID-19 HAS “BEEN PUT TO CONTROL” IN RWANDA

Through the four departments as newly restructured (Evangelism, Social response and diaconia, Capital development and estates management, and finance and administration) and the Diocese of Cyangugu has resumed its ministry with a holistic approach.

Most church programs in its holistic ministry have resumed especially in the second half of this year 2021. Schools are open, most of the Parish Churches and other sub parish Churches in the Diocese which meet the standards are open, guest houses are open though the clientele is still low the fact that tourist are not yet many as it used to be before COVID-19. Out 48 Churches in the Diocese of Cyangugu, 35 are open. The Diocese has embarked of its normal operations with people (all age groups) allowed to congregate up to 75% of the Capacity of the Church building.

EVANGELISM

Church planting and Church building has continued. Since March 2021, new five Churches have been opened, out of which two are officially dedicated and the remaining three are scheduled to be officially dedicated early next year. The photos were taken on the dedication day of one of the newly opened rural churches called Nyenji Church:



Since June, the bishop has been able to move around different parishes doing confirmation. He has done confirmation in eleven parishes in three Archdeaconries where a total of over 600 people have been confirmed. Below are some of the photos taken during confirmation.



CHURCH MINISTRY THROUGH MOTHERS UNION, FATHERS' UNION AND YOUTHS' UNION

To address the generational challenges and gender biases, the Diocese has adopted a strategic approach of engaging different groups of people in active church ministry. This has helped to bring together people (Women, men, youths and children) into groups(unions) with specific, complementary and somehow cross cutting responsibilities and objectives of building an inclusive, responsive, vibrant and growing Church. In Cyangugu Diocese, we thank God because

all these groups have revived into active church ministry “post COVID-19” lock downs which had made church ministry more or less “dormant”.

It is historical that the Anglican Church globally started mothers’ union as a unit responsible for nurturing Christians to have peaceful God fearing homes and families with good care for children. This is done by manifesting Christian love in faith and action through giving social, psychological, physical and economic support to people in need. The core of the approach of mothers’ union is belief that when there is no peace in families, we can’t have a flourishing and growing Church.

Of the recent past, most Dioceses started Fathers union to complement mothers’ union in holistic church ministry starting at family level. In Cyangugu Diocese the fathers’ union started in 2019 with the Cathedral as a pilot Parish. Fathers union has five major responsibilities, i.e, to be true witnesses of Christ’s salvation in families and in the church, to build homes and families grounded on Christian and Anglican Values, to love their spouses and their children, to mobilise other men to build God fearing families and to give social economic support to people and families in need. On 5th December 2021, the second phase of committed 7 men joined fathers’ union after two months training in addition to 30 men who joined in 2019. In the photos below is the inauguration and commissioning ceremony of new fathers’ union members at Christ King cathedral in Kamembe town.



The photos below show mothers union and fathers union at Christ the king cathedral procession



To avoid a generational gap, the Diocese also started a youths' union with a theme centered in Ephesians 4:13. The youth union is aimed at holistically empowering the youths and disciple them into mature Christians. In Cyanguu Diocese, the youths' union started in 2018 and is as of today active in 75% of the parishes in the Diocese. The youth union has the following strategic objectives: Unifying the youths and increasing their active participation in Church ministry, Positively influencing their way of thinking towards Christianity through bible lessons, Nurturing them to grow socially, physically, intellectually and spiritually, Fighting against drug abuse, Creating sexuality awareness and prevention of premarital sex with its associated challenges, Identifying their potentials and orienting them to use their unified efforts and talents to develop themselves and actively support Church ministry, Enhancing Job creation and reduce unemployment among the youths, Identifying socio economic challenges in their respective local contexts and take part in addressing the challenges.

Below are some of the photos for the youths' union members in different parishes taken while in their processions during special Sunday services in their respective parishes after re-opening of Churches in this year 2021.



SOCIAL RESPONSE AND DIACONIA

Through the social response and diaconia department, the Diocese has institutions like schools, health centers and health posts, plus all other project geared towards social economic empowerment of community members which include single mothers program, maternal health programs, hands producing, saving and credit programs, agrifaith ministry, anti-malnutrition campaign(feeding program), health mums project, prison and hospital outreach project, and compassion assisted child development projects among others.

UPDATES OF SINGLE ON SINGLE MOTHERS' PROGRAM.

Single mothers program is the major program implemented by the Diocese of Cyangugu in partnership with **Ev. Kirchenkreis Trier**. The idea of this program was conceived after looking into many options and contextual realities and considering the social-economic and psychological challenges the single mothers were passing through. Under this program, Mothers union coordinates these young girls and manifests to them the love of God through counseling, spiritual life sharing and life skills training. As a way of empowering single mothers, the Diocese trains single mothers in life skills and vocational skills like tailoring, knitting, weaving, baking and other entrepreneurial skills to empower them for self-employment and sustainable income generation to survive on with their babies.

Before the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic the program had reached out to 180 single mother of which 30 had been trained and had graduated in tailoring. Early 2020, we had recruited more 95 and they had just started their training at the Single mothers' house in Kamembe town. Challengingly, the 95 were not able to continue their training due to Covid 19 restrictions and lock downs. This number was divided into small groups of 20 people of which the first group of 20 finished their training and are waiting graduation in the last week of December. 25 single mothers in Gashirabwoba were trained in baking and 25 in Gashonga were trained in Basket weaving. In the photos below, on the left are single mothers from Gashirabwoba exhibiting their pastry and confectionary products after the training. On the right are single mothers in Gashonga during a basket weaving training.



Currently, another group of 20 are being trained in tailoring at the Main center in the Single mothers' house in Kamembe town. 19 single mothers in Gashonga are being trained in tailoring and 5 are being trained in sweater weaving.

Below are some of the photos of single mothers undertaking their training at Kamembe single mothers house (main center)



In a broader sense much effort has been put in awareness creation geared towards prevention of teenage pregnancies and community mindset change towards inclusion of single mothers, for them to be treated as fellow human kind who need to be loved, encouraged and supported for them to live with hope and joy. Most of them have been reconciled with their families and 3 have supported to go back to school for formal education.

EXTENSION OF THE PROGRAM

To minimize the distance walked by single mothers to the single Mothers house in Kamembe town (next to the cathedral) which was costly to travel daily going for the training, we resolved to extend the tailoring training services to other two stations where there are single mothers interested in the skill. So far the new site in Gashonga Parish has started operating and we are planning to have another Centre in Nyakarenzo sector (Cyimbogo Parish). The photo below shows the single mothers and the community opinion leaders in Nyakarenzo during meetings conducted by mothers' union worker in a where the church is planning to rent space for training single mothers



In Gashonga, we are using space in the Church building to train 24 Single mothers. The single mothers in Gashonga are happy for having this training extended to their Parish. The first group

of 25 single mothers had opted for basket weaving which is not marketable as tailoring because they could not afford traveling to Kamembe main training centre (the single mothers house) which is at distance of more than 20 kilometers away. In Gashonga area, there are no other specialized tailors and the local market is reasonably big for such services. Below are some of the photos of the new group in Gashonga undertaking their lessons in tailoring and weaving;



These new locations were chosen basing on the number of single mothers and their readiness to learn the tailoring skill. However, the Single mothers house remain the central and well equipped center where they travel once in a while to study specific lessons.

SOME OF THE SIGNIFICANT STORIES OF SINGLE MOTHERS



This is Fidele Mukakabera, one of the first beneficially trainees, she is participating in school uniforms making, where she earns income to meet her basic needs. She gained self-esteem and is living a happy and hopeful life with her child.



This is Ancilla, one of the trainees in second group of 20 singlemothers. Once she was selected to join single mothers group to be trained, she felt loved and developed a sense of belonging being thought of by the Church and given an opportunity to learn a skill that will help her to sustainably earn income to meet her basic needs and support her children. She likes tailoring although she is not able to write, but she is talented in tailoring. She participates in school uniforms making. She has four children, three of them were born from her brother, whom she did not know that her

father has out of marriage. They met in Kamembe town both of them looking for wellbeing in town, the guy knew the girl before, and the boy had a heart of revenge because his father (the father of that girl at the same time) did not take care of him since he was born. So Ancilla come to know that they are biological step children to a single father after having three children. Culturally she could not stay with him after knowing that he is her brother. She left with her three children because the brother(husband) had no intentions of caring for the children. Shortly, in her struggles to care for the Children, Ancilla fell in love with another man, they produced together one baby boy but the man was not ready to care for four children of which three are not his. He abandoned her and she now stays with her four children in in one rented room.

OTHER UPDATES IN SOCIAL RESPONSE AND DIACONIA

Schools in Rwanda have fully opened and lessons and other school activities are operating normally. The Diocese of Cyangug has 17 schools out of which 12 are operated in partnership with the government and 5 are purely primary schools. Those operated in partnership with the government are free universal primary and secondary schools and are basically located in rural areas. Most of the private schools are located in urban areas and most of them are technical and vocational education training schools. Below are some photos showing excitement of pupils after re opening of schools:



SOME NEWS ABOUT DIOCESAN HEALTH FACILITIES

The Diocese has two health centers and five health posts. One of the health is very new because its construction work started in June 2019. The new health Centre in Gihundwe Sector Shagasha cell was completed and started opening in June 2021. In the photo below the staff at the new Shagasha health Centre are in front of the main building.



All our two health centers are testing and vaccination centers for COVID-19 among other health services

CHARITY WORKS DONE DURING ADVENT SEASON

During advent season as most Christians are preparing to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ the Diocese always has a program of supporting the people in need especially the poorest, the prisoners, the disabled, the orphans and the widows. In this year 2021, at Christ the King cathedral, the Vicar and the Bishop mobilized Christians to support the widows and widowers. The bishop with his wife, the Vicar and other senior Church members had a one-day session with the over 50 widows and widowers sharing with them a message of hope and love and at the end every participant was given a gift at the end of the session.



PRAYER REQUESTS

- Covid-19 to end and for life normalizes in the whole world.
- Economic recovery of most families, institutions/organizations and countries especially those that were adversely affected by COVID-19 with its associated challenges.
- Completion of Church buildings under construction.
- God's providence for school fees of 15 pastors undertaking theological training to be able to complete their courses and meet the government requirement for all pastors.
- Continued revival especially among the youths who are the future leaders of the Church.
- This Advent season to bring Hope, Love, Joy and Peace to God's people and have a spirit of sharing with people in need.

GOD BLESS YOU

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