

Report from the Diocese of Maralal 2016

Receive Calvary greetings in the Mighty name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Bwana Asifiwe! It is my trust that MU in the Diocese of Chichester is well. I am sorry that I could not respond to your mail on time.

First I would like to appreciate your love; and that of the mothers of Chichester. We were overjoyed to learn that we feature prominently in your prayer meetings. This shows the strong friendship and bond that exists; and which you have continued to cherish between the sister Dioceses of Kericho, Nyahururu and now our own Diocese Maralal. Convey our message of love and appreciation to the Mothers' Union of Chichester. Continue praying for us because the work the Lord has entrusted us in the Northern part of Kenya requires prayers, enormous resources and encouragement such as the one you conveyed through your mail. Ahsante! (Thank you).

It is very kind of you to have been following news of our new Diocese. This has really encouraged us that we have true partners in Christ who pray for us always. The ushering of the new Diocese on 4th of October 2015 was a memorable event for us both as a family and the Maralal Christians. The occasion was graced by his grace the Archbishop of Kenya, and the Bishop of All Saints' Diocese Nairobi: the Most Rev. Dr. Eliud Wabukala, fourteen Anglican Bishops, a Catholic Bishop and a host of many government officials. As soon as the euphoria of the new Diocese subsided, we then embarked on laying the foundation of new Diocese with the formation of the Diocesan Synod, Standing committee of synod, creation of various departments including the MU department and various Diocesan boards. In order to consolidate the gains and create synergy, we saw it prudent to recruit a Mothers' Union Worker: Mrs Julia Leaduma; a zealous lady with passion to serve Christ. She is remunerated through member's contribution. Though this is becoming a burden for the new Diocese, nonetheless we are not discouraged as the Lord is the giver of everything.

Samburu County is towards the Northern part of Kenya. It is a very vast and is mostly inhabited by the nomadic pastoralists though some parts like Maralal; where the Diocesan offices and County headquarters are domicile practices mixed farming. Larger area is non-arable and therefore, cannot sustain crop farming. Maralal which is the largest urban centre is over 340 kilometres from Nairobi; the Kenyan Capital City. Other parishes are between 25 to over 200 Kilometres from Maralal.

It is true that Samburu is the largest ethnic group in the area with an estimated population of over 200,000. Other minor ethnic groups are Turkana, Kikuyu, Rendile, Pokot, Somali and Ndorobo (closer cousins to Samburu). These groups with an exception of Kikuyu who are urban dwellers; are in constant conflicts due to nomadic pastoralism, limited pastures, water points and other resources. This has given birth to the retrogressive culture of cattle rustling which has seen many people lose their lives and livelihoods. However, the Church together with other stakeholders has been in the forefront in fighting against this retrogressive aspect and fostering peace amongst the pastoral communities. In fact, the Diocesan Bishop Chairs various Church related bodies within and without the County with the sole aim of restoring relations through peace.

There are a number of negative cultural practices within the County which has placed the church in constant conflicts with the communities who practise them viz Female

Genital Mutilation/Cut, Forceful and early marriages, Wife inheritance, school going age children herding and negative cultural aspects which are not in tandem with biblical teaching. This is the environment under which the church and indeed the Mothers' Union department is operating.

As said earlier, we operate within a very unique environment so; my visits to the Mothers' have been limited to the occasions when the Bishop visits the Parishes during his pastoral programs. We organize yearly a Mothers' Union conference; which brings all the mothers' from our vast Diocese to a central place. This years' conference will be held at Loosuk Parish which is 30 kilometres from Maralal on 22nd to 26th August,2016.The attendance of this conferences has always been good with over three hundred participants from all the eight parishes attending.

There is a very great need in our Diocese on adult literacy and basic literacy and numeracy skills. Suffice to say that, over 80% of the people in our County are very illiterate. Therefore, this is a need which if addressed can enable the Christians and especially mothers' to read the bible and other church literature. Indeed literacy coped with parenting is a tool for evangelization.Currently,there is no parish which has an adult literacy class due to limited man power within our parishes as well as financial resources to achieve the same.

The mothers' Union departmental activities have been limited to pastoral programs, weekly prayer meetings in all the Parishes, bead making as an income generating activity and maternal child health; which is addressed through the ANGLICORD project.ANGLICORD(Anglican Overseas Aid) has been partnering with the Diocese in the mentioned area through the Diocese of Mt. Kenya West.However,this funding will come to an end this month and this will portend a very huge gap for us as a department especially in the critical area of maternal child health. We aspire as a department to seek other networks and partners in order for us to meet the needs of mothers in the Diocese. Pray for us.

Communication in the most of the parts of the Diocese is not good. However, we can access electronic mail, mobile network and passable roads within the urban centres.Infact,the road network is poor in almost all the parts of the County with no single kilometre of a tarmack road. Maralal town has the centre of the town paved with some tarmack based on probase technology from Malaysia.

Lastly as I conclude this long letter, I would like to appreciate your interest in learning about our new Diocese. Therefore, kindly ask any question you will wish answered. It is only through such a queries are we able to communicate, pray and learn about each other.

Pass my warm regards and that of the Mothers' Union coordinator and the Diocesan Bishop to all your Christians and the MU.Thank once again for remembering us.

Yours in Christs' Service,

Dorcias Lesuuda-Mothers' Union President, Diocese of Maralal.