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MASVINGO

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DIOCESE OF MASVINGO REPORT 13 JULY 2020

On 30 March 2020, the Government announced that the country would go under lockdown due to COVID 19 pandemic. After one month, the lockdown was extended for an indefinite period, but businesses were allowed to open subject to adherence to COVID 19 regulations. The first COVID 19 case was announced on 20th March 2020. Confirmed cases are now 826 and 18 deaths. About 88,000 people have been tested. This number is far too low and it is highly likely that COVID 19 cases are more than the figures being announced by the government. Confirmed cases are mainly returnees from South Africa and Botswana. The returnees upon arrival in Zimbabwe are placed in government quarantine centres. There are reports that these centres are poorly equipped to deal with COVID 19 cases among the returnees. It is reported that most of the returnees get infected in these quarantine centres.

Currently doctors and nurses are on strike over pay and working conditions. The health workers have not been given adequate protective clothing as they contain the pandemic. Those seeking treatment are being turned away because there is no one to attend to them. Staying away by doctors and nurses is coming at a time when COVID 19 cases are increasing in the country. There are fears in the country that if there is an outbreak of COVID 19 in the country, many people will die because our health delivery system is very weak. Furthermore there is inadequate preparedness in health institutions country wide to contain COVID19.

The economic and financial crisis continues to deepen in the country. Prices for goods and services continue to rise making it very difficult for families to survive, especially those in urban areas. Many people are in need of food aid due to the recent draught. There is also a very high rate of unemployment in the country. Those who were employed have lost their jobs due to COVID 19. People living in high density areas are crowded and it's very difficult for them to safeguard themselves against getting infected since it's difficult to adhere to social distancing which is a very important COVID 19 guideline in responding to the pandemic.

Schools in Zimbabwe were closed on 24th March 2020 to contain the spread of COVID 19. Before the pandemic, the education system in the country was stretched due to economic crisis in the country. Drought is also a contributing factor. Diocesan schools are not spared from these crises. The start of the phased reopening of Primary and Secondary Schools has been set for 28 July 2020. Exam classes i.e. Grade 7, Forms 4 and 6 will resume on the 28th of July. Grade 6 and forms 3 and 5 will come after three weeks. The remaining pupils will come in three more phases. There are, however fears that boarding schools are not fully prepared to contain COVID 19.

On 11 June 2020 the government announced that Church buildings could be opened for worship while adhering to COVID 19 regulations. No more than fifty people are to be in a Church building at any given time. The Bishop issued a Pastoral letter giving guidelines to be followed during the reopening of Church buildings in the Diocese of Masvingo.

The COVID 19 pandemic has had a very negative impact on the Diocese. The mission of the Church has been affected and most plans for 2020 derailed. With Church buildings closed, the Bishop and Clergy had to think outside the box and come up with strategies to continue to minister to the Faithful, strictly observing COVID 19 regulations. This has not been easy since situations are different from place to place. The Bishop encouraged Clergy to be resourceful and initiative in order for the Church to be relevant to contemporary issues especially COVID 19. As a Diocese we continue to struggle to get used to the new normal, but it's not easy. We however continue to hold fast onto our faith and continue to worship even during these very difficult times. There is disillusionment, fear and anxiety among our people because of the pandemic. To address this, Clergy were sent resources to use as they shepherd the Faithful during the era of COVID 19. The Bishop and Clergy continue to raise people's hope in a situation that is characterized by hopelessness.

The Mothers' Union in the Diocese responded to COVID 19 by mobilizing their resources and through their outreach committee gave food hampers, blankets and face masks to deserving cases in the Mission District of Holy Apostles on 10 June 2020. The MU also circulated information about COVID 19 and Gender Based Violence on social media as a way of bringing awareness to the people.

We, in the Diocese of Masvingo are extremely grateful to the budget support we got from Southwark Cathedral on 14 May 2020. Had it not been of this support, I do not know how we were going to pay for Diocesan monthly financial obligations. Your continued support and prayers are very much appreciated. Thank you so much for your care and concern. May the good Lord continue to bless you abundantly. You are also in our thoughts and prayers as you face COVID 19 challenges in that part of the world.

The Diocese formed Savings Groups in two Archdeaconries namely Shearly Cripps and Daramombe. Membership is volunteer-based. The aim is to empower the group members to sustain themselves through savings they make out of their own contributions. There are four domains of change focusing on the Spiritual, Social, Material and Personal for the Savings Groups. Each time the members meet they sing hymns, study Scripture and discuss together. They manage their own savings. Hope International provides operational support and technical expertise. Our Development Officer Matthias Thompson Maduba oversees this programme in the Diocese.

In June 2020 the Diocese with the support from Hope International responded to COVID 19 by purchasing and distributing sanitizers face masks, bars of soap, sugar and rice to savings group members and the elderly in the Archdeaconries of Shearly Cripps and Daramombe. Daramombe Clinic did not receive any Personal Protective Equipment from the government. The Diocese managed to give hand sanitizers, surgical gloves, caps and aprons. Dried fish, dried beans, soya mince and cooking oil were also donated to the Daramombe maternity home since there was no food for the mothers who came to give birth.

Sisters of the Community of Holy Transfiguration in Shurugwi are facing hardships due to COVID 19. They also benefited from the Diocesan COVID 19 response by receiving food stuffs, hand sanitizers, aprons and face masks. Face masks were also made available to Clergy in the Diocese. Washing of hands with water and soap is of importance in fighting COVID 19.

We are very grateful to Bishop Christopher for sending funds on 17 September 2019 in order for the St. Michael's Primary School to have a clean source of water. As you are aware a borehole that is solar powered is functional at the school. The teachers and students now have piped water. The school is now able to teach technical and vocational subjects like agriculture to the benefit of students who are equipped with skills to take up farming after high school. The school is now able to establish a nutritional garden to the benefit of students and teachers. More importantly during this

time of COVID 19 students and teachers will be able to frequently wash their hands to avoid catching or spreading COVID 19. Because of clean source of water there is sanitation and hygiene at St. Michael's Primary School.

In June 2020 the Diocese of Masvingo in partnership with the Germany Embassy managed to sink a solar-powered borehole at St Boniface Primary School in Shurugwi. The school has an enrolment of 800 students. The borehole is now functional and has put an end to water challenges at the school. Water borne diseases and other diseases related to non-hygienic practices such as diarrhoea and COVID 19 have been overcome.

Before the end of July 2020, the Diocese in partnership with USPG will be sinking a solar powered borehole at St Francis Primary School in Shurugwi. The borehole at the school that was using a bush pump has dried up. A geo-physical survey was done to establish a site that will give a better water yield. A 5000 litre water tank will be installed and plumbing done to have water taps at several points. By embarking on this project, chances of the spread of COVID 19 at the school will be reduced since both teachers and students will continuously wash their hands.

There has been a crisis of school furniture at St. Mary's Primary School in Shurugwi. In most classrooms students were sitting crowded on the floor during lessons. In order to contain COVID 19 at the school, the Diocese repaired the school furniture. Through availability of the furniture, social distancing will be practised by students during lessons or when they write examinations.

Supplementary feeding will resume as schools open on 28 July. Due to the drought in the country most families find it very difficult to place food on the table. We appreciate very much the support rendered by Southwark Cathedral to enable us to embark on this programme.

Due to lockdown, operations at Transfiguration Skills Centre Chidzikwe were suspended. De-stocking of pigs was done; chicken and egg production was also suspended. Since the relaxation of COVID19 regulations, activities have just started. Production of pigs is already underway. Planting of vegetables in the garden has started. Chicken rearing and egg production will be resumed this month of July. Plumbing was done at the centre and water tapes were fixed at various points. Two water tanks each with a capacity of 5,000 litres were installed at the centre. There is now enough water to embark on the projects at the centre. There are plans to enroll youth from the nearby community to get trained in market gardening, chicken rearing, egg production, piggery project and crop production. The duration of training is three months. On completion the youth will be given starter packs to start their own projects. This will promote improved livelihoods amongst the youth and build a sense of self-reliance and hope.

On 16 June 2020 the Bishop and the Zimbabwe Council of Churches General Secretary had meetings with Masvingo Resident Minister and representatives of the Zimbabwe Republic Police. The Minister was briefed about what churches are doing in Masvingo province in response to COVID 19. Christian Care representatives who were part of the delegation also presented a report on other programmes being undertaken by Churches in communities.

Representatives of the Zimbabwe Republic Police appreciated the work being done by Churches and promised to give clergy support especially during these difficult times of pandemic by giving them [clergy] documents that grant them right of passage as they carry out their responsibilities.

See attached photos

Church of the Province of Central Africa Anglican Diocese of Masvingo



A message from Mothers' Union
St Agnes St. Veronica. St Benedict
AFU, Youth and Sunday School

COVID 19 prevention measures
encourage staying at home
with family in love and harmony,
not to abuse each other.
Let your home be a safe
haven to everyone in the
family!

TOGETHER
♀ ♀
WE CAN

**STOP
VIOLENCE**



IEC MATERIAL ON COVID-19 AND GBV DESIGNED AND DISTRIBUTED BY THE MOTHERS' UNION



FOOD HUMBERS ISSUED TO BENEFICIARIES OF THE MOTHERS' UNION OUTREACH AT HOLY APOSTLES MUTEMACHANI



THE MOTHERS' UNION PRESIDENT AND HOLY APOSTLES RECTOR ISSUING FOOD HUMBERS AND BLANKETS TO THE LESS ADVANTAGED PEOPLE DURING THE MOTHERS' UNION OUTREACH.



DARAMOMBE MISSION CLINIC STAFF BEING ISSUED SOAP, SANITIZERS AND FACE MASKS BY DIOCESAN COVID RESPONSE TEAM



ISSUING OF COVID 19 RELIEF RESPONSE ITEMS TO CFS FOR DISTRIBUTION AT ST. CYRIL CHIVHU



HOLY CROSS & ALL SAINTS MANYENE AND ALSO ST. MARK'S ZIMHONDI CFs SHOWCASING THEIR COVID RELIEF RESPONSE ITEMS



HANDING OVER PPE TO NURSE IN CHARGE AT DARAMOMBE MISSION CLINIC



DARAMOMBE MISSION CLINIC NURSES POSE FOR A PHOTO AFTER GETTING NEW PPE



DIOCESAN COVID 19 RELIEF RESPONSE TEAM AND CLINIC STAFF GATHER AROUND A MOTHER WITH A NEWLY BORN BABY AT DARAMOMBE MATERNITY HOME



SISTERS OF THE HOLY TRANSFIGURATION BENEFITTED FROM THE COVID 19 RELIEF RESPONSE



SOME FOOD ITEMS SHARED BY SOME GROUP MEMBERS AT ST. CYRIL CHIVHU DURING END OF CYCLE SHAREOUTS



WATER TANKS MOUNTED ON THEIR STANDS AT ST. BONIFACE MISSION (SHURUGWI)



ELECTRICIAN FITTING SOLAR PANELS FOR PUMPING WATER INTO WATER TANKS AT ST. BONIFACE MISSION.



THE BISHOP CHECKING THE FURNITURE IN THE CATHEDRAL HALL BEFORE ITS DELIVERY TO ST. MARY'S PRIMARY SCHOOL (SHURUGWI)



DIOCESAN TRUCK LOADED WITH INITIAL LOAD OF SCHOOL FURNITURE FOR ST. MARY'S PRIMARY SCHOOL.



FIRST OFF-LOADED LOAD OF FURNITURE FOR ST. MARY'S PRIMARY SCHOOL.



THE PREPARED ARABLE LAND FOR TRANSGURATION CHIDZIKWE MARKET GARDENING



THE 2x5000 LITRES WATER TANKS FOR TRANSFIGURATION CHIDZIKWE YOUTH SKILLS TRAINING CENTRE



THE BISHOP CHECKING PART OF THE CATTLE HERD AT TRANSFIGURATION



GOATS AND SHEEP AT TRANSFIGURATION YOUTH SKILLS TRAINING CENTRE



THE BISHOP WASHING HIS HANDS WITH RUNNING WATER FROM THE TAP



CHECKING SOME OF THE DOWNSIZED OR PIG POPULATION AT TRANSFIGURATION



STAFF PLANTING AND WATERING GIANT RAPE SEEDLINGS AT TRANSFIGURATION



THE BISHOP ASSISTING WITH WATERING THE PLANTED GIANT RAPE SEEDLINGS



THE BISHOP (*WITH A PECTORAL CROSS*), WITH THE REFORMED CHURCH IN ZIMBABWE GENERAL SECRETARY REVEREND MASIMBA (*FIRST FROM LEFT*), THE MASVINGO RESIDENT MINISTER/GOVERNOR EZRA CHADZAMIRA (*IN CHEQUERED JACKET*), ZIMBABWE COUNCIL OF CHURCHES SECRETARY GENERAL REVEREND DR. KENNETH MUTATA (*HOLDING A BLUE NOTEBOOK*), MASVINGO PROVINCIAL ADMINISTRATOR MR FUNGAI MBETSA (*IN BROWN SHOES*) AND MRS DENDERE (*MASVINGO CHRISTIAN CARE REGIONAL MANAGER*) POSE FOR A PHOTO AFTER A CONSULTATIVE MEETING IN JUNE ON THE CHURCHES' RESPONSE TO COVID 19.



THE BISHOP, RCZ GENERAL SECRETARY, ZIMBABWE COUNCIL OF CHURCHES GENERAL SECRETARY AND TWO MASVINGO PROVINCIAL CHAPLAINS AFTER A MEETING ON ASSITING CLERGY WITH LETTERS TO CARRY OUT THEIR PASTORAL DUTIES DURING THIS LOCKDOWN PERIOD.