

2019 Bishop's Charge.

Sisters and Brothers, our theme for this synod is 'A hopeful church in changing times'. Revelation 2:3; ***You have persevered and have endured hardships for my name, and have not grown weary.***

I greet you in the name of the one whom we serve, Jesus. He is our reason for being and our Saviour and Friend. I honour you for your role and calling to be the 19th Synod of this diocese. I greet you as the parishes/chaplarries/mission districts of our diocese that live, worship and pray within the boundaries of our diocese.

We are to reaffirm our commitment to journey together in a process of positioning well this diocese in this changing world. I welcome and honour your presence as we gather and continue our journey towards *Renewed Hearts, Renewed Spirits and Renewed People.*

I have tried to exercise my episcopacy as one where I listen to the people of the diocese. As I have travelled around the diocese, I have said to congregations that I can make decisions on your behalf, as a leader should. All this is enveloped by love for our Lord Jesus. However, I believe that in each congregation there is both the capacity and the giftedness to make the best decision for the diocese to prosper. In my first charge on the 10th of June 2018, I said that you are the best and largest recourse of this Diocese, and I repeat it one more time, you the greatest resource of this Diocese. Please note that because of your support I am not afraid to make hard decisions on your behalf as a leader should. I will do this after listening and praying.

It is exactly 9 months and 27 days since my enthronement on the 10th of June 2018. The charge I gave that day has not expired, and I do not have a new one. I shall articulate what God has enabled us to achieve within this period of nine months and twenty-seven days, in pursuance of that charge. The theme of our synod is "A Hopeful Church in Changing Times" and the spirit of this theme should surround and infuse our worship, Bible studies and theme presentations, conferences as well as our business sessions.

For what reason do we gather in this cathedral today? We gather to prepare to walk together as the Body of Christ. I say "walk together" for that is the literal translation of the Greek word "synod". I can think of no better description for the Body of Christ moving in the world. Jesus calls, we respond and the first thing we do is move. "Follow me" declares Christ and we are

instantly set in motion, leaving the past behind and following the path laid by Christ toward the future that God has prepared.

INCOME GENERATING INITIATIVES

Three projects are at different stages in the diocese. Remember our theme for this synod is – A hopeful church in changing times.

1. Elution Boiler plant

This project is funded by our 2018 endowment funds. I remain thankful to you all. This project is set to generate income for the diocese before end of June 2019. The process of registration with relevant authorities on the land have been followed and completed. All needed clearance has been sort and obtained. I want to thank all who continue to work on this project by way of prayers, investing their time and skills. The anticipated income can cover our stipend and salaries bill, remaining with some extra money for development. Clergy welfare is important to us and we consider that as priority area. We all agree that we need to look at the possibility of constructing better offices, hence the thrust in income generation.

2. SOLAR PANEL FIELD

This project shall be on our St Patrick's farm, ten hectares land. We are charging rentals for the space occupied by the project. We have held meetings with the Tatanga Company and it is a very exciting project. Our due diligence on the company shows that they a big players in the field of electricity generation in Central and Southern Africa. They have a similar project with Sable Chemical near Kwekwe. It is a project for thirty-five years. This is sustainable income generation. Note that this project will start to yield fruits in December 2020 according to the timeline expressed by Tatanga Ltd Company.

3. DAIRY FARMING

This project is still on the cards. The uncertainty of things in our country has slowed down the pace we anticipated at the start. We continue to engage with our consultants and partners. Those of you who are used to investment proper, you will agree with me that investment is not an overnight event. We need to be patient, I agree with the notion that your greatest blessing comes

after your longest waiting. We are not selling the farm, in case some ill-informed people may mislead you.

4. RESOURCE MOBILISATION

We have challenges in mobilising funds through the assessment collections from our parishes. I understand the challenges in our economy, but we have to continue to living as a church. We have to be creative and be successful while others are waiting for the right time. The right time is now. The endowment for this year is meant to acquire synergical power for our parishes. Investment opportunities have been identified where parishes shall contribute to the capital and share profits pro rata capital. There is an opportunity to meet assessment obligations from the profits and possible development in at your church. Endowment is there this year, to benefit your parish directly. Zero contribution will attract zero returns.

It is exciting to note that some guilds are already ready to participate in this project. Well done. When we unite we will not lack.

5. CLERGY WELFARE

We have established a retirement package with Old Mutual for all our clergy in service and employees. The package is called Diamond Retirement Plan. We are excited with this development and we are up to date with our premiums.

Let me inform this synod that our clergy and their wives have heeded to the call made in my first charge that they engage in professional and academic development. Well done clergy and your wives. Check on page 24 of your synod booklet. As long as leaders continue to lead, they continue to learn.

5. INDUSTRIAL STAND

We have an opportunity to acquire an industrial stand from Gweru City Council after applying for it. We thank God for the favourable response. We shall acquire for future use in further income generation project.

6. OPERATIONAL EFFICENCY

Your office has moved a gear up to promote operational proficiency by establishing manuals of procedures for all operations, and this includes the pastel evolution accounting package.

In his letter to the Ephesians, Paul's joy flows through the whole of this epistle for this beloved people upon whom God has lavished the riches of grace, so are we. People who are united in love do not lack. Three times in the letter, Paul declares: "For this reason". For this reason, he has not stopped giving thanks for them, remembering them in his prayers. The Book of Revelation lists the church of Ephesus first in the message to the seven churches, noting that they endured hardships, persevered and not grown weary. We have a sanitised view of patience in our day and age. In our everyday life we are having instant coffee, instant whatsapp etc. But God has not changed his methods; we still have mothers carrying a baby for nine months, all natural things taking the full cycle as dictated by God. We need to be patient enough for our investment initiatives shall bear fruits at the appointed time by God. You do not plant a fruit tree and harvest fruits tomorrow. You wait for due season, so are to wait for the due season in our investment drive. I agree to the notion that your greatest blessings come after your longest waiting.

I invite you to come to this synod with a good heart, a gentle spirit and a kind voice and I ask that together we reflect a people able to live well together with our differences. As we gather as a diocesan family, may we exhibit each of these in our speech, interaction and disposition. We gather as children made in the image of God. We honour one another, remembering that when we gather we seek the mind of Christ as we listen to one another in conversation and the Spirit's guidance in our decision-making.

I believe that the vision God has gifted us with is a contextual vision for us living in this diocese. I also believe that living out of this vision will be a witness to the communities in which we live and to the whole faith community. Living out the vision is our participation in God's mission to the world. I understand that folk in some of our parishes are struggling to keep the lights on. I understand that it is sometimes difficult to think about "the diocese" when life in the local context is overwhelming. The vision we have begins in the parish, in the local context. If we do not have vital congregations we will all suffer. We are a hopeful church in a changing world. **Why generating all this money?**

RDSSA

Our relevance as a church is determined by the service to offer to the community in which we live. The service arm of the church shall be taken as our primary purpose of existing. Check the five marks of mission of the Anglican Communion and see how compliant we are. We have restructured our service arm so that we are registration compliant according to the laws of the land. The structures are functional with clear manuals of procedures.

The focus of *transforming our future* is not a venture for the faint-hearted. We need to come to terms with our budget and look to a future without deficits, never mind the economic challenges facing us as a nation. It is true that in the past we have taken some wrong turns and gone down some dead ends. The most important thing is the lesson we got out of it. However, we together have been able to financially support our diocese. We together have been able to ensure coverage when clergy needed support medically. We together have been there for each other when conflicts arise even in our country. We together have created, implemented and maintained a renowned program for cyclone victim's support. All of this we together have accomplished.

Our budget cannot show up a dying institution. It must fund a vision that supports healthy Anglican congregations across the diocese. Our standing committee has worked hard in preparation for this synod. It is the desire of this committee to come to synod as prepared as possible to help us move into God's future.

THE HOSPITAL

Details are provided in the synod book.

A Season of Discipleship

One of the greatest challenges the churches have to meet, in this century, is how the modern person, who cannot live the monastic life, can yet experience community life, because we have seen, it is more and more acknowledged that life together is the very essence of authentic Christian existence.” The life we desire is the life with a rhythm. This rhythm calls us to **pray**, to **study**, to **worship** and to **give**. It is a rhythm every Christian is invited to live daily. I encourage you to take this invitation back into your parishes. As lay leaders of this diocese invite others to live into this rhythm of life, alongside you. There will be those in your parishes who already live this way. Have them tell their story, encourage them to be witnesses. There will be others who need to be reminded of this invitation or to have it extended to them for the first time. We have to be spiritually oiled a diocesan family.

Remember that there is no place in scripture where the laity is referred to as a lesser order or more ignorant than the clergy. The laity is always referred to as

‘The People of God’—"You are my people and I am your God. I am calling upon us all as a diocese to build up the ministry of the laity. Begin by gathering three to twelve people in each parish to study and pray together consistently. If you can gather more people that would be wonderful! Regard Sunday gathering as the basic minimum. Our guilds must be purposeful and life transforming. Let us all support our young people in every possible way. They are young and in need of guidance, do not give up on them. I desire to see them more vibrant in our Sunday services, not mere spectators.

I am asking our very capable clergy to provide resources, arrange gatherings, and let the laity take the lead in how these gatherings take shape. The purpose is not to create a program or a plan, but to simply gather on a regular basis, putting the gospel in the centre of our circle. Through prayer and study, we will grow in relationship to one another and closer to God. The gospel will become central in all we do. When you meet as parish council, committees and teams in your parish, give time to prayer and study using *the bible*. We will add to the materials as we move through the year.

It is my prayer as we gather and move step by step into God’s future that the decisions we make at this synod will shape and help us as a diocesan family to grow and become a *renewed people with renewed hearts and spirits*. We need to leave this synod aware that we are stronger together and that we need each other to fulfil the contextual vision God has set before us. Come my brothers and sisters, with hearts ready to hear and respond to the Spirit. I am looking forward to seeing what God will do through us, in us and in spite of us! Walk gently with one another. Walk gently in this diocese. Walk gently with the Creator.

Yours in Christ,

+Ignatius