**MISSION APPEAL 2020**

**Diocese of Machakos, Kenya**

Greetings and best wishes from the Catholic Diocese of Machakos in Kenya, Africa. My name is Rev. Boniface Nduva, priest in-charge of Mission Cooperative Program in our Diocese.

**18TH SUNDAY IN THE ORDINARY TIME (1ST & 2ND AUGUST, 2020)**

***1ST Reading:*** Is. 55:1-3

***2ND Reading:*** Rom. 8:35.37-39

***Gospel:*** Mt. 14:13-21

THEME: **Christ Satisfies our Hunger.**

While at exile, Isaiah prophesied to the Israelites a fall of the Babylonian empire, liberation, a return to Jerusalem and a birth of a new kingdom. This will be a period of happiness and just as we read in Isaiah 25:6 ff, a banquet will be prepared for them; with all types of food and drinks.

In Africa, people will think you are crazy when you tell them they can have water or food for free. Very few people can access wine or milk. Everyday hundreds of children all over the world die of hunger. For many families here in Kenya, the struggle for daily bread is the only thing they can think of all day. They can’t enjoy life and that is why those who enjoy life should thank God for that.

In such times what does it mean for us Catholics to gather round the table for the sacred meal of Holy Communion? What does it mean for us to open the Bible and read about the miracle Christ performed when He fed thousands of hungry people in the desert?

St. Paul in the 2nd reading gives us the perfect answer, “nothing should separate us from the love of Christ. We should know that our gathering this Sunday is a sign of hope and a reminder of our task; that Jesus wants to use the little we have to do a miracle for a needy person.

The Machakos Diocese is one of the largest Dioceses in Kenya. It has 83 parishes and 1200 mission churches. The total population is 2.8 million of which 1.2 million are baptized Catholics. Our Diocese lies in a semi-arid area where annual rainfall is low and unreliable. The weather this year has brought unpredictably heavy floods which destroyed all the crops in the farms. Prior to the floods we had an invasion of locusts in most parts of the country.

Drought, famine and poverty are always the major challenges faced by much of the population since we depend on agriculture for our livelihood.

Having no clear policies on health issues from the government of Kenya, the effects of malnutrition, HIV/AIDS and now Covid-19 plus other diseases common in third world countries are the major causes of death for many especially the young children. Due to these, the Catholic Church in Kenya has a unique role in the lives of the Kenyan citizens. Improving lives of people is usually accomplished through the efforts of the church rather than the government.

The Catholic Diocese of Machakos; our Bishop, Machakos Diocese representative in States and myself wish to thank the Archdiocese of Chicago and the Catholics of the United States for your continued prayers and support over the past years. Through your support, the Catholic Church in Machakos is growing and making a positive change in the lives of many people.

At these moments of Covid-19 Pandemic, life has become very difficult for us all in the world. However, we are touched by the generosity, kindness and love from Archdiocese of Chicago for giving us an opportunity to request for your assistance even at these difficult times.

For each of the past several years, I visited the United States on behalf of my Diocese to make Mission Appeals. I was warmly welcomed at each parish I visited and am disappointed that am unable to personally greet and talk with you this year. Due to the effects of this pandemic, many Dioceses have been forced to cancel their Mission Appeals. We therefore, humbly make this appeal to you in your generosity to help us do the following for the people of God in the Machakos Diocese:-

I. Continue with construction of a Primary (Elementary) school and a High school (Uganda Martyrs) with boarding facilities for orphans and needy children for education is the best gift you can offer to an African child. In educating them we are empowering and helping them to transform themselves, their poor families, the society and prepare them for leadership.

II. Education in Kenya is not free. Through your support we will be able to pay tuition fee for the needy children from poor families.

III. Maintain four orphanages for children orphaned by HIV/AIDS.

IV. Due to the prolonged droughts, many people walk long distances to get water. The water is not clean or healthy for consumption. Through your help, the Diocese will continue drilling wells to provide clean water for our people.

V. The Diocese runs one major hospital (Bishop Kioko Hospital) and maintains 21 Group Homes for disabled children. Through your help, we will continue putting a smile to these physically challenged kids.

VI. The Diocese provides rehabilitation programmes for street children. With Covid-19 Pandemic, this is becoming a great challenge as we continue to reach out to the most in need among us in the Diocese and that’s why we are reaching out for your help.

On behalf of the Bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Machakos Rt. Rev. Norman King’oo Wambua and all of our faithful people, I once again express our gratitude to the Archdiocese of Chicago for your generosity. May the good Lord shower His blessings upon you and the entire Church in the United States of America. “Asante sana”… Meaning ‘thank you very much’ in our language.

Yours’ faithfully,

Rev. Boniface Nduva,

Priest In-charge,

MCP Machakos Diocese.