

July 6, 2020  
Diocese of Niassa, Mozambique

Grace and peace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

The pandemic has brought devastation in our communities, as the Diocese where 90% of our members depend on subsistence farming. The pandemic has brought huge challenges for our survival. Our finances have worsened. We struggle to pay clergy stipend, the \$50 we have been paying our clergy was reduced into half.

While you might use Zoom to minister to the faithful there, here it's different. Most of our Christians do not have access to smart phones and internet, so we depended on sending text messages oral info to the people of God on daily basis. We send daily readings from the lectionary daily to those we are able to.

We have been encouraging the faithful to keep praying in their homes.

With limited resources we have been struggling to sensitize people to prevent the disease as most people don't have access to TVs and radios to get info. We need people to get into the communities and to train people in their own respective local languages on how to protect themselves. Unfortunately, the info hasn't yet sunk into the hearts of the people in some areas. This is because as you might know Africans are social people, valuing so much community life, it's been very difficult for people to understand. Additionally, the Government relies on media to propagate good prevention practices in the official language, Portuguese, while 60% of people do not understand Portuguese.

Most people get info from churches and mosques and when the church was closed, it was again a challenge. This is, however, not to say that the church was supposed to keep open, but this means that the church plays the role of educating its people in times of emergencies as people come in large numbers to churches, but this pandemic doesn't allow that we do that.

So the pandemic has challenged us to change the way we do things, to change our normal way of living, to learn to adapt ourselves almost in everything.

But again it's been good time to pray with our families, time to bond with families. I have never seen a time where people have prayed like this time, people have prayed and they keep on praying as we are still in lockdown.

We are in lockdown for 4 months since April; there is nothing the Government is doing to support those who relied on small business to feed their families which is so sad.

Another challenge is that, our hospitals only attend to very few people in a day. Many people now died with other diseases that they could be treated. They die in their homes, each and every day there is an Anglican member dying as I am writing there is a member who died. So it's a devastating situation. Not everyone can afford private clinics as they are very expensive. So children and our elders are dying due to lack of treatment. Our maternal women are dying in homes during giving birth. The situation is also bad in rural areas. Although people in rural areas do not die as much from Covid (less number of people dying with Covid so far in rural areas), people are dying because of lack of treatment and hunger. Children are suffering from malnutrition.

What can we be praying for you?

+Vicente

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