

CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF KITUI



FROM THE BISHOP'S DESK

My dear Christians of Kitui,
My dear daughters and sons in Christ,

May our Blessed Saviour, Jesus Christ be praised, now and forever.

“Now when the angels had gone from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, ‘Let us go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened which the Lord has made known to us.’ So they hurried away and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in the manger.” (Luke 2:15-18)

My heart is full of joy as I write you, as has now become a custom, as we celebrate the birth of Our Lord Jesus in Bethlehem. The Christmas liturgy invites us to join the Shepherds: ‘Let us go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened which the Lord has made known to us.’ Our whole Christian life can be expressed by these simple words: Let us go to see the King lying in a Manger; let us go to look at Christ, to look at God, to talk to God, to Adore God and to offer him our entire lives. The mystery of the birth of the Son of God is a sign of how God loves us and invites us to go and show him our love. The angels invite the shepherds to rejoice, and to go and discover the gift of God to mankind.

We have walked together, as your shepherd for these ten years, trying to build on the foundations of the missionaries, of the bishops, priests and religious who have worked in this diocese. As we come towards a transition period to another stage of the diocese, we appreciate all these missionaries who gave their life in order to bring Christ to us; we appreciate Bishop William Dunne and Bishop Boniface Lele who did so much to set the foundations of our diocese. Our calling, as people of God, is to always walk towards the mystery of Bethlehem, the mystery of God who becomes man, of God who becomes a baby, and humbles himself so that we can become his Children. That is why, today and always, our life as a diocese must continue with still more energy towards Jesus Christ, who awaits us, and who we must proclaim!

My dear Christians, we thank God for the faith that came to us through the first missionaries almost 90 years ago. You will also recall that two years ago we celebrated our golden jubilee as a diocese. We have seen the faith taking root in our grandfathers and grandmothers, our parents, even when they were uneducated. God has been so good with us and given us so many treasures.

Now it is up to us to renew this faith, and make these treasures of holiness shine, by ourselves deciding to let God use us. And that means all of us, lay women and men, youth and children, religious men and women, priests and bishop, must carry Jesus in our hearts and life, without fear! Like the poor shepherds who were sleeping in the open, the Lord

wants to use us to bring the good news in the world. That is why we are happy to see the dream of Our Lady of Protection Shrine Museve, that is a true sign of the mature faith of the Kitui people, slowly becoming a reality,

In that dark night, where Christ had been denied a place in all houses, the glory of God was heard in a choir of angels singing “Gloria in excelsis Deo”, “ Glory to God in the highest”. Maybe many homes in Kitui have still closed their doors to Christ, but we are asked to take him to them, to invite them to come with us to Bethlehem, to Christ in the Word of God and in the Sacraments. Then the words of the prophet will become true:

“The people that walked in darkness has seen a great light; on those who live in a land of deep shadow a light has shone...” (Isaiah 9:1-2)

But first we ourselves must look for Christ, find him and commit ourselves to him. We must open our homes to Him. We are therefore called to make this journey to discover Christ again, after our baptism and confirmation. We are invited to look at his face, and see how he looks at us, so as to discover his merciful face, that demands us to act as Christians even when they close us out of doors. We are called to be courageous to accept rejection of men, but never the rejection of God; To understand that to become a Christian means accepting difficulty and suffering, “taking up our cross and following him” and it is not easy. But we are also called to experience the joy of being with God, receiving him, adoring him.

This journey to Bethlehem is a journey of daily prayer, where Jesus comes to show his face. Above all it is the journey to the Sacraments, and especially to our Holy Mass, and Eucharistic communion. My daughters and sons, if only we would love the Mass more, as our grandmothers and grandfathers, who walked up to 30 kilometers for Sunday mass. If only we would make similar sacrifices, like the Three Wise men, who walked kilometers and kilometers to come and kneel before the child Jesus. Let our first decision this Christmas be to never make excuses not to go for Sunday Mass, and even try to attend weekday mass when it is celebrated near us. This is the faith of our ancestors!!

My dear daughters and sons, our grandparents in faith were truly generous. They gave from the heart! Like the three Wise men who brought Gold, Frankincense and Myrrh, we must also become generous. Kitui Diocese has given birth to many priests and religious. We must continue this generosity to God, especially with our time. Let us give him our time for prayer, for Eucharistic adoration, and also let us also give him our children to serve him!!

Jesus does not mind the poverty of our hearts, the poverty of our homes and even the misery of our sins. All he asks is that we many time come to him to ask him for forgiveness in Confession and for his help to go ahead in this journey. He asks that we do not give up.

He asks us to honour him in our hearts, in our lives, in our homes, in our places of work, in our churches, in the meetings of people and in our country. We must give him proper honour, not a fake one like Herod. We cannot say we want to see the King and in our heart plan to kill him. We can't seek to pray or attend mass and still plan to sin. Let us see Christ honoured and glorified in our schools, in our offices, and in our politics.

The three kings also make the long journey to Bethlehem. But they had to humble themselves in order to see the Messiah and Saviour. They must fell on their knees... They asked for help... This is what Christ is asking of us!

“... but the angel said, ‘Do not be afraid. Listen, I bring you news of great joy, a joy to be shared by the whole people. Today in the town of David a Saviour has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. And here is a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger.’”

Like the star we must guide our brothers and sisters, those still far from him, to the place where the Child is sleeping. That star that leads the Wise men and the people who seem confused to Christ, is every catholic in the diocese; That star is the young people; That star are our families. If our Christian life shines, if our way of life shines with Christ's Love, then we will lead all people to the Manger.

This year has been a wonderful year for the youth in our diocese. As we celebrated the year of the youth, they came out to show the extent and commitment of their faith. In all the walks, the rallies, the gatherings even of the boda boda, the youth have shown their desire to keep their "faith on fire". I was especially proud of them, when they came in big numbers to welcome the other youth for the National Youth convention held in Machakos Stadium on 25th November 2017. It was a display of faith with almost 30,000 young people from all over the country come to recommit themselves to keep their "Faith on Fire". Thank you young people! I am proud of you! We must now continue with this momentum without fear!

My dear Christians, I pray that the Holy Spirit that comes to us in this moment of this new stage in our diocese may renew our hearts and give us the energy we need to celebrate and take seriously this wonderful gift of our faith. This coming year we shall focus on the family. We will be have for our diocese, a "Year of the Family", but especially looking at how we are assisting, mentoring and accompanying our children and young people; The family as the first school of Love of God.

Our Blessed Mother, Our Lady of Museve, always accompanies us. She will show us the Child in Bethlehem. She will help us carry him without fear everywhere, and come to adore and give ourselves to him. She will lead us to experience heaven on earth, and finally lead us to our heavenly home.

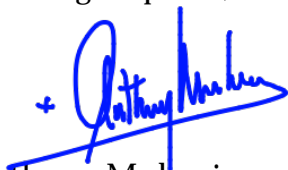
"And suddenly with the angels there was a great throng of the heavenly host, praising God and singing: 'Glory to God in the highest heaven, and peace to men who enjoy his favour.'"

Let us receive Christ who is coming this Christmas with joy. Let us prepare our hearts by removing any dirt of our sins from our souls. Let us open our hearts and families to him... Do not be afraid to let Christ in. Let us not be afraid to witness to him even when it is demanding in today's world.

May the Baby Jesus bless you all, with your families and your children. May he bless all our plans and projects for the coming year. May he especially bless the little babies and your children in our families!

On my part, I send you Christmas blessings, the blessings of Christ in the Manger, and many best wishes for the new year.

Your loving shepherd,



✠ Anthony Muheria
Apostolic Administrator of Kitui Diocese

Vigil of the Nativity of Our Lord, Christmas day.