

CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF KITUI



Your Ref:

Our Ref:

30th August 2021

**To the Christians of Kitui Catholic Diocese
Through the Parish Priests.**

My soul glorifies the Lord, my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour (Luke1:46)

Dear Christians of our great Diocese of Kitui and all people of goodwill. My prayers for you all as I thank God for the gift that each one of you is to our church. May your faith grow stronger each new day. May the Good Lord in his immeasurable love protect us from all evil. May he keep us safe especially during these tough times when we confront the COVID-19 pandemic. Let us be extra careful to avoid contracting the disease or transmitting it to others. This pandemic is affecting us all in different ways. May we continue showing love and support to one another. Let us help each other to carry the burdens in our lives and let no one be abandoned to suffer alone. Our help is in the name of God, who made heaven and earth (Psalm 121:1).

It is one year since I was consecrated Bishop of Kitui. I thank you all for your support and look forward to further collaboration as we move forward. Despite the hard times we are facing, we as a diocese have achieved a lot within a year. Our solidarity is our strength. With joy and hope, we await greater blessings. With the Lord on our side, nothing is impossible (cf. Matthew 19:26).

Our Diocesan Pastoral Strategic Plan (2016-2021) has been our compass in shaping the life of our diocese. As we look forward to the future, we thank God for the achievements made. I thank you all for your selfless dedication so as to build our diocese. I thank our many friends and partners who continue to journey with us. Special thanks to His Grace Archbishop Anthony Muheria who led this diocese for 12 years since August 2008. We evaluate and discern how we met our goals and where we faced setbacks and challenges so as to plan for a better future in a new Diocesan Strategic Plan (2022-2026).

Coincidentally, the Holy Father, His Holiness Pope Francis, has invited us all to join hands and work together to build our church through collaboration and consultation. He has asked the whole church to work towards a **synod on synodality** (a walking together in the life of the Church by involving all people in order to foster growth). He will launch the Synod on 9th to 10th October 2021 and then each bishop to launch it in his diocese on 17th October 2021. This shall be followed by a period of discernment and extensive consultations guided by the Holy Spirit. He calls for a church for all by all in a spirit of **Communion, Participation and Mission**. Each member of the church matters and their views matter in the life of the church. Led by the Holy Spirit, each christian is to discern and identify how best each member may be involved in the life of the church. We have to work as a team (**communion**), each one has to be involved (**participation**), and we have to reach out to others because we are baptised and sent to proclaim the Good News to all ends of the earth(**mission**).

I invite each baptised member of our church to actively participate in the growth of our diocese. We grow by walking together. We have for long depended on missionaries and foreign aid to run our diocese. In the recent past, we identified self reliance and interdependence as a way forward in our diocese. The number of baptised and practicing Catholics keeps increasing. We have an ever increasing number of priests, seminarians, religious men and women in our diocese. There is vibrancy in the sacramental life of the church. The involvement of the laity in the life of our church is bearing great fruits. Our CMA, CWA and the youth play a key role in our church. The future looks bright. We have reasons to rejoice in the Lord.

I have sought to involve all people in the affairs of our diocese. I learn a lot from each one of you and invite you to offer yourself more for the life of our church. In my visits to the different parishes and institutions of our diocese, I have been impressed by how much communion and solidarity there is among us. I thank the priests, the Religious Men and Women, the parish leaders and other stakeholders who drive the life in our parishes and institutions. I thank all our Christians for your cooperation in building the Kingdom of God here in our diocese. Let us discern the areas where we need to improve. As Saint John Henry Newman tells us, "To live is to change and to be perfect is to have changed often." May we be ready to allow God to use us as his instruments by opening our hearts and welcoming his Holy Spirit to dwell within us. May He put in us a new heart and a new spirit (cf. Ezekiel 26:36).

As we move forward, let us all stand to be counted. Let no one be left behind. There is usually a tendency by many people to sit and watch as some people drive the diocese forward. There are certain people who have always been leaders while others are always happy to be led. Some actually refuse to lead when proposed or elected to lead. Interestingly, there are a few who do not want to let others lead. Let us wholeheartedly support our leaders. There are those who always contribute

generously for the running of the church while others believe they have little and therefore opt to not give or give very little. Some wrongly believe that the church does not need their support. Others see no reason for supporting the church. Remember we are all given different talents, each according to their capabilities (cf. Matthew 25:15). Let us all be excited about practicing our faith. We are called not just to be hearers of the word but to be doers of the word too (cf. James 1:22-25). With time, I would like to see each parish become self-reliant due to the commitment and participation of each member, from the youngest to the oldest, from the richest to the poorest. Let each one say, "As for me and my house, we shall serve the Lord." (Joshua 24:15). Do not wait to be asked to support the church. Cheerfully serve the church.

As we celebrate the year of St. Joseph, let us dream big dreams. Let us welcome God into our lives by listening to him keenly in our hearts. After dreaming, Joseph woke up and did as he was directed by the angel of God. He is now the patron of the Universal Church because he accepted to do the will of God. Our greatness is in doing ordinary things in an extraordinary way. Let each one of us participate joyfully in the life of the Church. Gradually learn to offer your very best in self-sacrifice. We are the Church. I have a dream for this our diocese. Upon completion of Museve, we need to come up with a self-reliance project in which each one of us is to be actively involved. What is your dream for the church? As Jesus told his disciples, "Rise, let us get going" (John 14:31). As I celebrate my first anniversary as a bishop, I also look forward to celebrate my silver jubilee (25 years) as a priest on 7th September 2021. I would like to offer these celebrations as my gift to the church. As a diocese we shall therefore celebrate these events on our Family Day on 30th October 2021 and all proceeds shall go towards our diocesan self-reliance initiatives.

As St. John Paul II tells us, "Let us all remember the past with gratitude, live the present with enthusiasm and look forward to the future with confidence." I am convinced beyond doubt that if we join hands and work together, our lives shall be better. With prayers and determination, may it be easy to live our lives happily and grow in holiness.

St. Joseph, pray for us.

Yours sincerely in Christ,



✠ **Joseph Mwangela**
Bishop of Kitui

