

SERMON PREACHED AT ALMA SERVICE 9TH JULY 2017 AT ST. PAUL'S CATHEDRAL, LONDON, UK.

"And the one who was seated on the throne said. 'See, I am making all things new'. Also said, 'Write this, for these words are trustworthy and true.' And He said to me, 'It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give water as gift from the spring of the water of life.'" Rev. 21.5-6

LET US COME TOGETHER AND JOURNEY WITH GOD IN HIS MISSION OF MAKING ALL THINGS NEW.

Spirit Renewal and the renewal of human relations, of hope and of God's creation is our theme. God the creator and sustainer also renews his creation so that He will bring everything to perfection before Himself. Let us journey together with God and with one another on the road of Renewal.

Brothers and sisters in Christ we greet you in the most precious name of Our Lord Jesus Christ. Let us start by greeting one another (***Please shake hands with your brother or sister sitting with you side by side. Say how are you to one another, say we are family together***). Yes! We have come to this place just because we all belong to God and to one another. We are family together in the house of our God, joining together to ask from Him the Grace and Blessing of a renewed and spirit filled ALMA FAMILY.

Those of us who have come from Mozambique, do bring you the love and prayers from the ALMA FAMILY members in the Diocese of Lebombo, Niassa and Angola. They all send you their love and greetings. (***pilgrims to wave hands***).

We have come to celebrate ALMA SUNDAY with you, this time, in special manner because we have as pilgrims seeking God's kingdom through our encounter with you and with history of the Anglican Church. We have visited historic places of our Anglican Communion such as The Canterbury Cathedral, the Lambeth Palace and St. Paul's Cathedral, where 3 of the 10 former bishops of Lebombo were consecrated and sent out to us.

In these last 6 days we have gone through wonderful experiences of meeting with several people at various churches and places. Both visits and meetings have touched our hearts in the most extraordinary ways. Our faith in God has been enriched so much and we are grateful and proud of being members of the Anglican Communion, and of course for belonging to ALMA FAMILY. We are thankful to God, to you all and especially to our former Bishops Richard and Dinis and all those who have made the dream building this link come true. May God be glorified!

We gather this evening to celebrate the ALMA Sunday here in London. This is one of the many other similar services that have taken place today in different congregations in Lebombo, Niassa and Angola.

As we do this, the call is to look at God who makes all things come new so that we can get the strength to renew our commitment and ministry through ALMA. The Scripture teaches us to look at God who creates and recreates our lives. "Behold, I am making all things new" because "I am the Beginning and End." God is our beginning and our end.

From very ordinary things we see God busy in renewing and improving His work in the most extraordinary ways. Although He has made everything to be good from the beginning (according to Genesis), surprisingly and generously He has also left space for human being to engage with God in making new things in a transformative way. Everything is in a journey towards Him because he is the Alpha and Omega.

1. So, since we have been made in the spiritual likeness of God, if we are to reach the fullness of our being, we are to make the journey of spiritual renewal. Because of His great love God's spirit can move inside us to renew our inner being as long as we submit, pray, worship and follow his Word of life. Our relationship with God and with one another plays a big role in bringing us closer and closer to God.

2. The renewal of our lives, our faith and our hope is one step of God's gifts. The second step is the connection between our personal renewal and that of the other people around us and that of nature. God continues his mission of renewing His presence and His divine purposes in people through our loving and sacrificial actions expressed through care, protection, solidarity, support and enabling. Jesus summed up by saying 'Love your neighbor as you love yourself.' 'Do to other people what you would like them to do to you.' We can simply say that we can only build a renewed world, a renewed community and renewed church when we have done our to others what is good to them and us as well.

3. As ALMA FAMILY, we called to the renewal of our relationships and commitments. First by sharing prayer and news. This requires communication and listening, sharing of joys and pains we come across in our communities. We are called to explore ways of supporting one another as we struggle to bear our burdens. As a family we are called to be happy Ambassadors of ALMA everywhere.

Think about the importance of joining our hearts and our strengths to build the Portuguese Language Theological Seminary where priest, and various leaders, men and women, from Portuguese Speaking Dioceses of Angola, Lebombo and Niassa can get the best training for their leadership roles in the church and society.

Think about how important is to help bring preschools and primary schools to children who otherwise would never go to school in some of the most rural areas of Angola and Mozambique through supporting church initiatives; Think about the spiritual benefit of anyone member of ALMA in the U.K. can have simply by sharing in the way we celebrate our liturgy in Mozambique

or by seeing how a small contribution do transform and renew lives of children through the pre schools. The church in our ALMA dioceses is already doing great things among and for the people of God so that we will stand one day and look and say 'BEHOLD, in Jesus, God really is MAKING ALL THINGS NEW'. Be an Ambassador of the work we do in ALMA and be the hands God who creates and renews to our happiness and His glory.

4. Before I end I want thank you all for your prayers and support to Mozambique as a nation. The population of Mozambique is about 27 million people. 48% of this population is made up of children and youth under 18 years of age. We have a huge task of providing good education, mentoring, training and opportunities to the young people.

The nation also needs peace and stability and the building up of a just economy. Our goal is growing to become a truly democratic country where inclusion and participation become a way of life.

We thank God that the military conflict has stopped and much efforts are being made to bring lasting peace to Mozambique and we can hope that there is genuine interest of restoring peace from the part of the State President and also from the leadership of Renamo. As from January the fighting stopped and we now travel safely to places where we carry out our duties without fear. The Anglican Church as is with other churches including other Christian churches and Muslims, Hindus, etc are jointly supportive of the process of peace and reconciliation. We work together at various levels of peace making. Please pray for Mozambique and help in our efforts to build a peaceful and just society.

CONCLUSION

Looking back into our Revelation text we close by saying:

- a) All of us we should let God be present among His people-"Now the dwelling of God is with men..."
- b) Let us make people free from suffering, pain and poverty - " There will be no more dying, mourning or crying or pain, for the order of things has passed away."
- c) Let us all renew the church and the community, and our world.

In all this, we cannot do ourselves, but God's spirit and Grace will make us prosper in our duties. Let the Holy Spirit renew everyone of us deep down in our hearts and minds. Let us all renew our ALMA FAMILY and build vibrant links to the glory of THE FATHER, AND THE SON, AND THE HOLY SPIRIT.

At St. Paul's Cathedral, London
9 July, 2017

The Rt. Revd. Carlos Simão Matsinhe
11th Bishop of Lebombo