

READINGS

Genesis 1:11-12

Psalms 67

Matthews 13:31-35

INTRODUCTION

1. May I speak in the Name of God

Father, Son and the Holy Spirit

Amen.

2. Please do be seated.

GREETINGS

3. Greetings to you all from my Diocese of Nampula and Cabo Delgado and from all your partners in Mozambique and Angola.

THE THEME OF THE MUSTARD SEED

The theme for this Alma Sunday 2023 is the mustard seed, and our Bible readings today remind us that

- Seeds are the heart of everything (Genesis 1:11-12)
- Seeds give us a vivid example that all good things start small (Zakariah 4.10).
- Seeds are Biblical signs of **faith, peace and life** that need to be continuously nurtured and cherished.

Let's now have a look at **our maschamba** ... and see how it is growing ...

1. SEEDS OF FAITH

- **In 1998** as the ALMA Covenant was signed there were only 2 Dioceses in Mozambique

- **Today**, on the 25th Anniversary, there are 12! We can see God's gift of growth:
- **Then**, we were part of the Anglican Church of Southern Africa – but the only Portuguese speaking dioceses
- **Now** we are an autonomous Portuguese speaking Province - the 42nd Province of the Anglican Communion
- When Emeritus Bishop Dinis, who many of you know, visited Nampula area for the first time 25 years ago, he celebrated the Eucharist with 20 people, and confirmed 4. **Today** we are 23,000 Anglicans in Nampula and in Cabo Delgado. God Believes in small beginnings
- We are seeing seeds of church growth and we thank God to all our partners in mission who are always with us in times of joy or challenges.

We give thanks for this growth and infrastructure to support the church that you helped with in the 2017 Lent Appeal – now we have a Diocesan Centre in Marrere with a training centre and accommodation and are a regional hub – our other work is possible because of this

2. SEEDS OF PEACE

- In Mozambique we have been planting seeds of faith while seeking to live peacefully with our neighbours from other faiths – and the seed of peace is so vital
- Cabo Delgado is one of the 2 provinces in our diocese. The sporadic violent conflict that began in 2017 means we have over 1 million internal refugees. Many are severely traumatized, and once in temporary accommodation, support is needed.
- We are working with the local Muslim leaders and focusing on Trauma counselling, starting by training 4 trauma counsellors in South Africa who will train 4 more people to support the families. Thank you for your support for this through this year's London Lent Appeal.

- Inspired by peace building legacy of the last 25 year in Mozambique and believing that Faith is the guardian and keeper of the seeds of peace we are strengthening interfaith collaboration through Community peace clubs, a community- based peace building platform that brings together religious leaders, community leaders, women and youth. (Show T shirt?)
- Thank you, Alma and all people of good will, for praying and supporting Cabo Delgado and Mozambique.

3. SEEDS OF LIFE

We have also been planting seeds to care for the environment.

- In the foundational story in Genesis 1:11-12. God reminds us that we have just one home and He utterly reveals that seeds are life- bearing, and life- giving treasures that we all depend on and therefore need to be dearly cared for and fondly kept by all.
- As a farmer and a son of a farming community in a region severely affected by climate change with over three cyclones every year in the north, floods in the centre and droughts in the south that has never happened in time memorial, I know God's warning to be true.
- We have found using the Bible to draw environmental ethics and practices that can be vividly passed on to younger generation very effective.
- Tree planting after baptism and using baptism water to water new trees; Every confirmation and ordination to plant trees and make sure that they grow as people grows in their journey of faith.
- Bishop Sarah, what can we do more together in the coming 25 years and beyond? Will you join us in planting and caring for trees after your next ordinations?

AND A QUESTION FOR US ALL

What Seeds are we planting and growing for generations to come?

PRAYER AND COLLECTIVE COMMITMENT

Let us pray to one another's seeds.

Generous God,
you give us gifts and make them grow:
though our faith is small as mustard seed,
make it grow to your glory and the flourishing of your kingdom;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.