

18.01.2024

### My Brief Introduction

I am Bishop Filbert Felician Mhasi, from the Catholic diocese of TUNDURU-Masasi, southern part of Tanzania. I was born on 30<sup>th</sup> November, 1973. I studied primary education in the government school, and then joined diocesan junior seminary for secondary education. After the completion of secondary education, I joined senior seminary for philosophy and then major seminary for Theology. I was ordained Priest on 3<sup>rd</sup> July, 2001. After doing my further studies, my Bishop at Mahenge diocese, appointed me to work and teach in the diocesan junior seminary. Then, I was appointed to do pastoral work in the parish as a pastor, and on 8<sup>th</sup> December, 2018, the Holy Father appointed me to be the Bishop of TUNDURU-Masasi. I was consecrated Bishop on 17<sup>th</sup> February, 2019. TUNDURU-Masasi (whereas 86% of the population are Muslims) is not my diocese of origin. My diocese of origin is Mahenge, whereas more than 87% of the population are Catholics! I am the second from the last in the family of Nine children; two sisters and seven brothers. My pastoral work as a Bishop, has not been easy, but with God's graces, we move forward. As short description of my diocese shows, I come to you and humbly ask you to share in my endeavors.

God Bless you!

+ Filbert



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### Short description of my diocese and its situation

The Diocese of TUNDURU-Masasi was named on 3<sup>rd</sup> December 1986 on the memorial day of St. Francis Xavery. It comprises of three governmental districts; Tunduru, Masasi and Nanyumbu. The diocese is in the southern part of Tanzania, East Africa, bordering Mozambique, and its population is estimated to be 1.5 million (1,451,709). It has an area of 22,730 square Kilometers. More than 86% of the population are Muslims. Catholics found in this area, most of them immigrated from nearby villages and towns. Some came as officials working in government offices. Some of them as business people or find area for farming.

The diocese has 21 parishes, 22 priests and 140 outstations! It has one boys' school and one girls' school. It has four kindergarten school and four dispensaries. Despite having various tribes and religious wise Muslims being in a big number, socially we are relating good. The political situation is stable and there are no tribal problems at present.

Generally, the people in the southern part of Tanzania, including my diocese, are comparatively poor. This is due to historical reasons, that the southern part of Tanzania borders with the Northern Mozambique, the area was the Centre for the battle during their civil war. The people in the southern part are just small farmers. This is due to poor agricultural facilities and infrastructure. The only cash crops which brings a bit satisfactory amount of money to these people are cashew nuts which is grown in a very small scale. But their production and prices are not reliable. Worse still they are only seasonal. Thus this situation makes people remain penniless for the most of the period of the year. In view of the above mentioned economic situation, it follows that most of the peasants are incapable to contribute funds to the implementation of the planned development projects in the Diocese. They even contribute very little to support the priests. Thus most of the priests do their pastoral work in a very hard situation.

Most of the natives in my diocese are not aware on the importance of education as a tool that can emancipate them from a terrible situation of poverty. This is due to their old ideology that girls are just to stay at home to cook and get married. Thus the community needs special initiative like what our diocese is doing to sensitize them on the importance of education.

Therefore there is a need as the diocese to do the following;

1. To educate children by sending them to kindergarten school. We need to improve the buildings we have, and as most of these children are from very poor families, we need funds as school fees for buying food, stationaries, uniforms, shoes, and salaries for teachers.
2. To educate boys and girls, regardless of their religion, by sending them to schools and giving them different seminars (on HIV, early pregnancy, sexual transmitted diseases, proper use of current social media networks) so that in the future are self- employed and economically empowered. Among these boys, we will get some to join the seminary and later be priests. They also need to be supported since most of them are from poor families.
3. Girls and boys who do not get chance to proceed for further education after completing primary school due to early pregnancy, poverty, to be sent to technical school and later they become experts in fields like masonry, carpentry, welding and mechanics.
4. To have income generating projects like technical school, bakery, farms (agricultural projects), Social hall, etc, that will help to support the priests.
5. To do integrated evangelistic outreach and grassroots capacity building program. This also needs funds to materialize it.

I humbly come to you and ask some opportunities to do a mission appeal for my diocese to meet some of the above mentioned challenges.

Sincerely yours,

F. Mhasi

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BISHOP OF TUNDURU-Masasi

