



Easter 2024

He is not here for He is risen ... as He said ... Hallelujah!

My Dear Friends,

You may be wondering what's up with this photograph and why am I dressed in this fashion! Well, the answer is simple as I too was pleasantly surprised when this happened. After I delivered the Address at St. Aidan's Nongoma, Diocese of Zululand, two Zulu Queens transformed me into a Zulu Queen in front of the entire congregation. It was their way of showing gratitude for my visit, respect for my role as WWP, and acceptance by the whole community. As you can imagine this was an honour for MU and very humbling for me.

Approximately 250 MU leaders, members, and Clergy from 4 cluster Dioceses gathered at St Aidan's and we worshipped, shared stories of MU joys and challenges, and encouraged each other to find much needed solutions. Members of all ages were engaged and passionate about their call to serve in MU, with strong commitment to taking care of the vulnerable and marginalized in their communities. I was heartened by the enthusiasm of the young women and their willingness to work hand in hand with the more experienced women.

I was also impressed by the way in which all organisations in the Church consult with MU on a regular basis and act together to achieve their goals of transforming the lives of individuals and families in the Archdeaconries. Their goals based on the MU priorities of ending violence, injustice, and poverty. I felt very excited to see MU leading the way in many areas including -

- Support for the Clergy and the Anglican Nuns and vice versa, with Convents providing safe spaces for MU to use.
- Care for lone members, the elderly, and widows, by involving them in income-generating projects e.g. making various pieces of craft items, household furnishings, and clothing for sale. Many of them said, "We feel good because we can help MU and make our contribution."
- The funding and building of the Kwanzimela MU Hall and Pastoral Centre, a well-equipped modern facility that accommodates in excess of 4,000 people for Diocesan Events. It is a wonderful project that brings communities together in fellowship, and it is widely used by the Church.

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- Sustaining the “Right to Life” Albinism MU project which started in 2017 provides safe spaces for children and teenagers to reach their full potential and make meaningful contributions to society.
 - Having a strong drive to stand together in huge numbers and move forward with the necessary programmes to increase awareness and end all forms of violence and injustice.
 - Assisting with boreholes which provides a consistent and reliable source of water for families and communities.
 - Making and producing soap and fabric softener to generate funds for members and families.
 - Rearing poultry for income and providing a ready source of protein for the communities.

And so much more ...

I believe that in addition to their faith, the exceptional support and appreciation for MU in the Diocese of Zululand by the Clergy and wider community is the incentive for a passionate, engaged and purpose driven membership. A membership with no hidden agendas just pure hearts for making the love of Jesus Christ visible and known to the four corners of God’s land.

This story reminds me so much of the reason for Easter with its profound message of renewal and hope. It also speaks of the confidence we have right across the globe in the transformational work of MU, the work we have been given by God to do, a holy ministry to which we have all been called and chosen.

Today as we celebrate the Risen Christ with our unique expressions of faith and love; let us renew our commitment as we journey forward on the path that God has ordained for us as members and Christians. Jehovah Nissi our Banner goes before us, and we have hope in the Risen Christ.

May the miracle of Easter fill you and your families with joy and happiness to last a lifetime, even to eternity.

May the divine love of the Risen Christ descend into your hearts, homes and communities making it a heavenly and peaceful dwelling!

May the Spirit of Hope that Easter brings help you find contentment in little things of life and restore your faith in the Lord above, who first loved us!



Our Easter Thank you Prayer ...

For your humble birth in Bethlehem

For revealing the presence of God in your humanity

For your obedience to the divine will of your Father

For the simplicity of your teaching

For your loving compassion

For the forgiveness of our sins

For your suffering on the cross

For the triumph of the resurrection.

And the promise of new life in the Spirit

Thank you. Lord Jesus. Amen.

(Written by Rev Dr John Davey, Nottingham City Branch Mothers' Union, UK)

The Worldwide Board of Trustees and Staff at Mary Sumner House join me in thanking you for your generous love and prayers that mean so much to us. We wish you, your family, and friends a very Happy and Blessed Easter ... *For He is risen, He is risen indeed! Alleluia!*

With my love and prayers as always,

Sheran

Sheran Harper, A.A.
Mothers' Union Worldwide President