

## **Celebrating Centenary of All Saints Cathedral, Khartoum, Sudan, January, 1912- 2012**

### **Introduction:**

Your Grace Archbishop Daniel  
Your Excellencies  
Friends from Abroad  
Sisters and brothers

It pleases me to welcome you to Khartoum and to All Saints Cathedral, in the Diocese of Khartoum of the Episcopal Church of Sudan in this important and historic occasion in which the glory and honor go to our God who was able to keep his faithful people to build the house for His praise which lasted for 100 hundred years. Today we have gathered to thank him and to give honor to him for what he has done for us in the last one hundred years in this building and the old one near to the republican Palace, now being used as museum. Thank you so much for coming to join us in this celebration. Those of you who have come from abroad have shown us that we are not alone but we have friends who walk along side us and that the church is one united throughout the world for the witness of Christ.

In 1999 (13) years ago, ECS celebrated centenary of its establishment. It was when Revd. Llewellyn Gwynne and Dr. F.J. Harpur set their feet in Omdurman, sent by CMS and were able to plant this church that lasted one hundred year in 1999. People gathered together, the youth and people celebrated by singing songs and hymns. The compound of the Diocese of Khartoum in Omdurman was packed with people who came all over the country. Archbishop of Canterbury, Lord George Carey gave a very moving sermon accompanied by the Bishop of Salisbury, David Stancilffe. ECS Centenary brought to Khartoum, the Dean of the Province and Acting Archbishop, Bishop Joseph Marona who was living and caring for God's flock on the other side of the country due to war situation. People gathered throughout Southern Sudan to thank God for what He has done in this church for the last one hundred years. Speeches were given by many people. Songs and hymns were sung and poems were composed in expressions of thanks and gratitude to God the Lord of the Church. Some people met under trees, others under the lights of stars and still others met under the rocks and caves to offer praises to the God who sustained them for a hundred years.

We can rightly call CMS our Grandmother who gave birth to ECS and supported it to this day. ECS is ministering God's people throughout the country and indeed in the new born country, the Republic of South Sudan. During the ECS centenary celebration, Abe Enosa said this:

“By the rivers of the Sudan, Christ will reign forever. The Sudanese will raise their hands in prayer to our God, we will sing forever. In humble spirits like birds of the air. We will celebrate the love of God for us. When God will make us his unparalleled heirs.

Let the rivers flow, the rivers of life too. Heaven and earth will testify that God has taken us into his bosom. The birds, the creatures in nature testify that, up in the heavens God reign supreme. On earth the Sudanese will sing to His praise!

Celebrate, Oh Church of God in the Sudan. Sing praises to the God of love. You are Messengers of peace and love. To our God, let your voices ring in the Sudan. Travel light on boats made of reeds. You may be, in the eyes of men, a simple weed, but you have endured for one hundred years!” (But God is not Defeated, page. 15)

After 13 years since these words were said, today we are celebrating one hundred years of the establishment and foundation of All Saints Cathedral in Khartoum, and it seems to me that these words are so relevant to our time today. We celebrated ECS centenary as one country, today we celebrate this centenary of All Saints when Sudan becomes two countries. Immediately after the independence of South Sudan, Sudan has put Christians as 3 percent of the total population of over 33 million. We may be, in the eyes of many, a simple weed, but we have endured for over one hundred years as ECS and one hundred years as Cathedral Community! Last year for the first time in the history of the Sudan, some of our children could not celebrate Christmas with their families on Christmas Day because they had to be in their schools as there was no public holidays! This is because we, as Christians are considered to be only 3 percent and therefore, do not deserve for a public holidays even on a religious feasts like Christmas! I hope that our government will reconsider this unjust decision so that next Christmas our children will join us for Christmas celebration.

As Christians, we have hope in Jesus. We suffer from the injustice at present but we should have faith rooted and based on the hope of Christ Jesus. Suffering and pain may paralyze us and inhibit our desire to be. Hope tells us that life is somehow worthwhile in the face of evil and suffering irrespective of evidence of the contrary. In hope, says Isaiah Dau, we see the light at the end of the tunnel and that something good will come out of our suffering and there is reason to live. In hope we are saved (Rom. 8.24), hope does not disappoint us (Rom.5.5). as we celebrate this centenary, let us have this hope.

### **Thanks and appreciations:**

We give thanks to God to our forefathers who have gone before us and who have planted the seed of this Cathedral Church that lasted to one hundred years. The CMS, our grandmother has done a great job. Bishop Gwynne and his team have done marvelous job. Our Sudanese fathers and mothers have done a very good job. People like John Malou, Eluzai G. Munda who were on the staff of the Cathedral before Ephraim Natana was made the first Sudanese Provost which

brought an end to expatriate leadership. It is to be noted that Brain de Saram was appointed Provost after Provost Patrick Blair, but was not granted a visa and as a result, Ephraim was appointed. Bishop Butrus Tia Shokai and Bishop Ephraim A. Natana played a great role in getting the new site for the new Cathedral when it was confiscated by the government as well, H.H. Gabriel Geiu who followed up the compensation of the site. We thank President Jaffer Numeiri for decreeing to offer this site and thank God for Abulgasim Mohamed Ibrahim, Minister of Youth and Sports, who agreed to offer this site when the Muslims rejected to have a church near to the Muslim cemetery.

As we thank God for what he has done in both Cathedrals old and new through his faithful people, we are particularly grateful for those who contributed money to build the old Cathedral which has become the centre of Christian faith in Khartoum and teaching. Now, Sudan is not the same as we knew it one hundred years ago due to the split, I am aware that there are going to be many tough challenges ahead in the next one hundred years, but I am also aware that our God is bigger than the challenges that lie ahead of us. The same God that sustained the Church for the last 100 years, will sustain it for the next 100 years. Many people say, the Church has gone to the South with Southerners, but I say, the Church has been here in the Sudan before even it went to the South! The Sudanese eunuch in Acts 8: 26 to the end, bears witness to this fact. In this celebration I would like to say that our forefathers were here, we are here and our children and grand children will be here for the next 100 years to come and beyond.

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate all the pastors in this Diocese, particularly the Archdeacons for their faithful service and contributions they have made to impart the spirit of love and unity among the people. My heart and appreciation goes to the pastors from South Sudan whom after the independence found themselves in a very difficult circumstance, yet they continue to bear witness to this day. Some of them have left to be in the new country, I say may God bless you richly and increase in you his fire to impart on his people. Those of you who have come to celebrate with us, thank you.

The youth have played a significant role in all the churches, particularly in the Capital. The inspiring songs and activities have been appreciated by many people including Muslim brothers and sisters. I cannot forget the work of women who form the majority in all the churches of the Diocese and I think it is true throughout the Episcopal Church of the Sudan. Some of the churches today are being run by the women because many have moved to the Republic of south Sudan and the rest are working.

In this Cathedral centenary celebration I would like to say, we strongly reject the notion that the remaining of the Sudan there is but only one religion, there is but one language, there is but one culture. Sudan will continue to be multi-religious, multi-langue and multi-cultural. I am aware that some of us may fall on the way as some of our forefathers during the past years, but some

will reach the final destination of faith. We should have courage and face the future with the hope of Christ who is the author and the finisher of our faith.

### **Award:**

In this celebration we will be giving small awards to some individuals as a symbol of our appreciation and gratitude for the sacrifices they have made during their life of service in either old or new Cathedral. Some of these individuals were able to serve in both Cathedrals. The most important persons to be honored are the planter of this Church, Episcopal Church of the Sudan, Bishop Llewellyn Gwynne, the architect of the Old and New Cathedrals, Mr. Robert Weir Schultz and Mr. Abdin Mehaisi . As we do this and offer this simple award, we would like to say that their contributions are and will continue to inspire us to continue in their steps to the end of our life as they did.

### **Reasons to Celebrate:**

- Give thanks and praises to God for what He has done for the last one hundred years.
- Primary aim of this celebration is to encourage God's people to follow footsteps of those who served God faithfully until some of them died in his service.
- To unite the Church of Christ to work together as a body of Christ particularly this new era of Sudan after the independence of South Sudan. It is to make a very Big Noise that, we, as Christians are here and we intend to be here for God's purpose until he comes to take us home.
- To mobilize intercessors all over to strengthen prayer in every Church to continue to pray for the future of the two countries to have good and strong relations for the service of the people of Sudan and South Sudan.
- To continue offering social services and humanitarian assistance to all people.

### **Future Plans:**

- I would like to launch a Bible study known as Bishop's Bible Certificate (BBC) for those who would like to have a deep knowledge of the Bible where by each attendant will be offered a certificate in Bible knowledge. Please pray for this new

project in the Diocese to attract many for the good and expansion of God's work in this part of the country.

- We would like to see this Cathedral completed in having its tower in the next 15 years so that the next centenary celebration, the shape will look different than it is today.
- Complete the Bishop's house within the Cathedral premises.
  
- To complete the community Centre which was only built as Youth Hall and the rest is to be completed and we do ask good wishers to come to our aid.
  
- Develop the two sites of Amarat street one and Burri site which were part of government compensation with the Cathedral site.

**Prayer Request:**

1. Church in the Sudan after independence of the Republic of South Sudan to continue her mission without any hindrances and restrictions
  
2. Situation in South Kordofan and Blue Nile. Many people have been killed in these two areas and are still dying. We want to see war stops and that the warring parties get to the negotiating table, that forgiveness and reconciliation happens which I believe will bring durable and lasting peace in the region
  
3. Darfur, we appreciate the Duha peace efforts, but the conflict remains on the ground which needs permanent solution. It is my prayer and hope that the other functions will join the peace talks so that the problem comes to an end.

**Conclusion:**

I would like to thank God for the preparatory Committee under the Leadership and Chairmanship of Dean Sylvester Thomas Kambaya and his Deputy Revd. Musa Elgadi, Principal of SBTI and all the members without which this function could not have taken place. I thank all those who have contributed to the budget in order to have this occasion. May the Lord bless you richly for His service.

May the God who brought us that far keep us for His service. May he guide our shaky feet and our faith strong to do His will in the Sudan for His glory and praise. To God be the Glory for all the things He has Done.

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**Ezekiel Kondo, Bishop of Khartoum**  
**Khartoum January 2012**