



Greetings from Mzuzu.

A few days ago I received an e-mail from the priest who types up my newsletter for the U.K. telling me that it was time to write the next issue. I was surprised at just how quickly this task comes around but also hoped that I could do justice to my experiences.

Whenever I sit down to write I hardly know where to begin – all that is going on around me is so different from everything that most of the people who read this are used to that I hardly know where to start. Not only do I have to put across all that is here in a way that means something to people with different experiences in various parts of the world, but I wonder also how to share with you something of the breadth and depth of all these experiences with accuracy and lightness of touch so it doesn't feel overwhelming or simply a catalogue of being busy.

My time here really has been so very different from life in the U.K. but I thank God for the many ways in which he has enabled me to follow my calling to service here, through my friends in other countries and those with whom I work here in Malawi.

Yours in Christ's service,

*+ Christopher*

I continue to be blessed with many visitors from various countries, and it has been good to hear that these newsletters have been well received. Some of my visitors have asked questions about the diocese and its life. Perhaps the newsletter would be an appropriate place to respond to some questions. If you would like to pose a question, please send it to [Malawi@allss.freeserve.co.uk](mailto:Malawi@allss.freeserve.co.uk). (I have asked someone in the U.K. to collate them for me.)



*Preparing for a service at St. Mark's, Mzuzu*

*All gifts to the Diocese of Northern Malawi go directly to Bishop Boyle for hunger relief and other programs. There is no deduction for administrative costs. Please make checks payable to the Episcopal Diocese of Fort Worth, with "Northern Malawi" in the memo line.*

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## Early 2003 Newsletter



**The Rt. Rev. Christopher Boyle**  
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with the  
**World Mission Committee**  
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*St. Peter's Cathedral on Likoma Island*

I often say that every day here is an adventure, and it truly is. Although the situation with hunger and HIV/AIDS is extremely important, there are other aspects of life, which create difficulties for many people.

In January while I was spending 10 days on Likoma Island, we had a hugely challenging time. I was visiting the Cathedral with a team of two priests and the diocesan youth officer in order to take an in-depth look at the life and ministry of the Cathedral. It was a good opportunity to spend time with people in their villages and to hear of their concerns and needs. I visited every village and every institution served by the Cathedral. It was non-stop the whole time, but it was also something that was good for me to do as Bishop.

During our visit there, Maria, the young wife of one of our clergy, a woman well-known and liked in the diocese, was taken ill. There had been a death in the family, and she had traveled to Likoma Island to console her mother. Maria's mother then fell ill, and Maria also fell ill. They both died within a few days of each other.

It was a terribly sad and difficult time, but one which is by no means rare, especially because many people here have weakened defenses against infection. The sadness and difficulty of the situation was compounded by the fact that two of her children were taken seriously ill on the day after her funeral, and in the end I was so concerned for them that I arranged for them to be transferred to Mzuzu hospital by air. (They have been stabilized and are now back at home.)

Maria's funeral took place the day after she died, but over 40 of the mourners didn't make it on time because of a serious problem with their boat. They had to be given bed and board, and then we had to find the resources to get them back to the mainland.



*Maria's husband, Canon Leslie Mtekatete, their sons Josiah (standing) and Franklin, and an orphaned niece, in a photo taken last year*

The challenges here were huge, with so many people needing assistance, from Maria herself, to her husband and children and those who came mourning. Many resources were needed: pastoral, spiritual, physical and financial, but by God's grace we rose to the challenge. This ability to cope is truly amazing, and people here show much faith, courage, and stoicism in the face of enormous difficulties.

Prayer was important for all of the people in this situation at the time and remains so

for those who must still cope with its consequences.

Although I can relate these events because I was there, people show similar fortitude in the face of many challenges – the continuing food crisis, flood, and sickness. I see much of this as I travel, and I am also aware of much more. I am so glad that many people give their support in so many ways, not least in prayer.

Amongst all the support given is the help fighting hunger. I have described previously the response of the diocese but our maize deliveries are in full swing, and we are sending three truckloads a week. It is a massive operation. To keep track of funds, deliveries, personnel, and all the little things is sometimes mind-boggling, but we are managing well.



*Food distribution continues*

A recent visit to Mfula for baptism and confirmation was particularly moving. It was a three-and-a-half-hour drive south, the last hour spent on bumpy roads past fields newly planted with tobacco as they await the rains. People ran towards the church to welcome our early arrival. The church was too small for the numbers of eager to be part of it all. The candidates were serious and reverent. There were 17 adult baptisms and over 60 confirmations.



*A warm greeting as the bishop arrives for a visit*

I have also been to Kabuwa, Nkhosame, Chiteko, Mchenga Mine, Mze Chilumba and Karonga.

The vitality and vibrancy of the Church in Malawi is marvelous, as I saw November at St. Joseph's, Chinthe where we had a diocesan youth event. Over 200 young people came together for a solemn pontifical mass – all with drumming, dancing, and alleluias to the right and the left. I think it's great, but especially because they relish the worship, have a sense of holiness, and joyfully struggle to live the Gospel.

The next day I left at 6 a.m. for a baptism and confirmation mass in one of the remotest villages. It required a four-hour drive, much of it through the bush. What I call brain scrambling and wrenching, but seeing the people's faces when you arrive is all the reward you need. In this one station, which is not a parish but only part of a parish (parishes are the size of deaneries), I performed 12 adult baptisms and 62 confirmations. On leaving, they presented me with a gift and a chicken. We all arrived safely here around 7 p.m.