

My name is Fr. Fortunatus Rwehikiza, I am the mission appeal speaker from the diocese of Rulenge-Ngara in Tanzania, East Africa. First of all, on behalf of my diocese, I would like to express my sincere thanks to you all for inviting me to share with you our story as one way of evangelizing. Rulenge-Ngara Diocese is located in remote and rural areas in the northwest part of Tanzania close to Lake Victoria. Most of the people in our diocese are small farmers who deal with subsistence agriculture only to feed their families. A great number of these people live a poor life with an income under **\$1 per day**. Most of them have one meal a day. Their main food is cornbread and beans. They eat rice and meat mainly on special occasions like Christmas and Easter. I am here asking for your financial support to help us address some of our diocesan needs.

The struggles of our diocese are:

i) Shortage of funds to train major seminarians: Due to the limited resources, our diocese does not have enough funds to pay the tuition for our major seminarians. Still, our diocese is in dire need of priests. Currently we have **31** major seminarians and the tuition for each seminarian is **\$2,000** per year. We are asking for your financial assistance to obtain **\$62,000** which is needed to pay the tuition for all the major seminarians in 2020/2021. Growing up as an orphan, I am one of the people who got support from the generous people like you to go for my seminary studies and today I am a catholic priest. May God bless those people for their generosity to me.

ii) Shortage of water (clean water): The scarcity of water continues to be a big threat to most of our communities. Most of our people still walk **12** miles (to & fro) to fetch water for home use and still the water is not clean. Previous donations helped us to construct two water wells for some of our communities. We are asking for your financial support to build two additional water wells to help the poor communities which continue to suffer with water problems. We need \$30,000 to accomplish this project.

iii) Construction of maternity waiting home: Most women, especially pregnant ones die in their homes because of failure to pay for treatment costs and poor medical care.

In the midst of all this, our diocese is considering a project of building waiting homes in some of the clinics to enable pregnant women to come to the clinics a few days before giving birth. This makes it easier for nurses and doctors to monitor and provide medical care to these women before, during and after delivery and this will reduce the mortality rate of women and of the newborn babies.

Therefore we ask for your financial support to obtain **\$40,000** to build at least one waiting home.

I really understand the difficult time we are all going through because of this pandemic but I can assure you that your contribution will always make a big difference to the lives of these poor people who really need your help. Please be assured of our prayers.

May God bless you all and keep you safe.

Fr. Fortunatus Rwehikiza, the Mission Appeal Speaker, Diocese of Rulenge-Ngara.