

Homily preached at St. Saviour's Kotto 12th June

Introductions and greetings

God has called these women into the AWF. We rejoice that God has raised them up. AWF is another example of the universal and catholic character of the Anglican church. The Anglican Church of Cameroon is a full member of this global family.

PRAISE GOD. That God calls us and raises us up. He establishes us with a new dignity. In baptism we are given a new honour as human beings. The 2nd letter of Peter says that we are a royal priesthood, a chosen nation. So in baptism we receive a royal dignity.

We become like princes and princesses of the royal household of God. Our great High Priest is Jesus Christ. He replaces all high priests who had served in the temple in Jerusalem. He is Christ the King. He replaces all the Kings of Israel who had gone before him. He is our universal king, and we are co-workers with him in his Kingdom.

This Kingdom is a kingdom not of warriors, but of messengers of peace; his kingdom is not of power that keeps the people like slaves, but a kingdom in which all are raised up; all are restored; all are called to follow; his kingdom is a kingdom of love, joy, peace, and justice.

God has called you and me into this holy life. He has called you to be faithful to his word, to his Christ, and to be willing members of his church. His church flourishes when there are no divisions among us. If we disagree we must disagree in love and respect. His church flourishes when we have a vision of where we want to travel. The Book of Joel speaks of the young men having visions and the old men dreaming dreams. We must all have vision. We must all dream dreams.

The Anglican Church in Cameroon is growing in faith and in numbers, just like the church we read about in the Acts of the Apostles. PRAISE GOD. There is vision even although you face many challenges. There is good leadership. Your Bishop is a man strong in the Lord. I pray for him every day back in England. Mother is a strong woman in the Lord. She supports the episcopal ministry of Bp Dibo 100%. But she is also strong in her own ministry in her leadership of the women, and especially in her work with the MU.

I want us to pray for them both now.

God has raised them up and strengthens them he has raised up all of us, as he has done faithfully through every generation. GOD IS GOOD... He raised up great men such as Father Abraham, Father of Many nations; he raised up Isaac, and Jacob, and Joseph and Moses, the great Patriarchs, prophets, judges and kings. God is great.

He raised up great women. He raised up Ruth and Rebecca, and Naomi and many more faithful women not mentioned in the bible. And he raised up Mary, the mother of Christ.

What a remarkable woman the Blessed Virgin Mary is. Still a young woman she responded to the call of God. Uncertain what the future would present, she said yes to God's purposes being completed. Unmarried she would have created a scandal. People would talk behind her back. People would point their finger of judgement at her. She would have been cast aside socially. Yet she is the vessel of God's grace; the clay jar in which the Son of God is being carried. GOD IS GOOD.

He is good because he calls ordinary people like you and me into his royal kingdom. Treat each other with deep respect. When you look at someone else, look at them with the eyes of Christ. When you speak to someone else think of the words of Christ - words of compassion and love. When you do business think of the justice and fairness that Christ showed to others. In the bible God says to us that we judge by human standards, but he judges us justly. We are not raised up to be people of judgement. We are raised up to be people of grace, people who confess that Jesus is the Way, the Truth and the Life. He comes that we may have life, and have it ABUNDANTLY.

Jesus met a woman at well in Samaria. She had come to the well to draw water. Jesus explains to her that he is greater than the well; if we quench our thirst through him we will Never be thirsty again. Each of us must be like a cup that is full to the brim, and running over. As we share Jesus with others we must be like fountains of God's love. Jesus came that we might have life and have it ABUNDANTLY.

Song - Running over

These candidates for Confirmation should know what it is like to drink from the well of Christ. From their own hearts and from their own lips, they are turning to Christ. God has raised them up and this will be only the first step in what God has in store for them. All of you are called into ministry when you are confirmed, but some of you will be called to be PCCmembers, church Wardens, Catechists, Evangelists. And some of you may be called to be deacons, or priests, or even a bishop. Only God knows this. But just possibly from among this group of confirmation candidates a bishop will be raised up in years ahead of us.

My Lord Bishop, we wish you a long and healthy life - but you understand what I mean. We do not know God's purposes, only that he alone is God, and he will anoint whom he chooses, even if it is not the most likely person. This is what happened in the choice of the first king of Israel. Of all the sons of Jesse it was the shepherd boy David that God chose to be anointed King. As the Bishop anoints each of you with the holy oil we do not know fully what God intends for you. Whatever it is he will continue to anoint and bless each and every one of us.

God raises up each of us. ALLELUIA. But how can he raise us up if we do not listen for his voice. He speaks to us in the quiet hours of the night. He calls us in times of praise. He calls us as we receive the bread of life and cup of salvation. He calls us as we read and study the scriptures. But he can only call us if our hearts are open. He can only call us if our minds are open. There can be no email received if there is no internet connection. There is no Facebook available if the connection is down. So the same is true if we do not allow ourselves to hear God's call to us.

My prayer is that each of us here will renew and refresh our listening. That with a new commitment we will each pray about how we can help God's work to be completed in this Anglican Church of Cameroon. God will raise us up, because he is faithful. He is waiting for you to respond to his call. He is ready to wrap his arms around you just like the Father of the son who squanders his life but returns penitent. God is ready, God is faithful, God is great. Amen.