

# ANGLICAN CHURCH OF BURUNDI

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## THOUSANDS GATHER FOR CONSECRATIONS OF NEW BISHOPS AND THE INAUGURATION OF NEW DIOCESES

“The Lord doesn't call those who are strong but strengthens those He calls”, sang the choir from St Mark's Ngagara, Bujumbura in Rutana on the occasion of the inauguration of the new diocese of Rutana and the consecration of its first bishop, Rt Rev. Pontien Ribakare.

This ceremony was the first of three that saw the consecration of four new bishops to the Province of the Anglican Church of Burundi and the creation of the two new dioceses of Rutana and Buhiga.



In Rutana the sermon was preached by the Most Rev. Martin Blaise Nyaboho who explored leadership from the life and example of Moses. He stressed the importance of accepting advice from others and urged the new Bishop to be a servant-leader of others as Jesus was. He must rely not on his own strength but trust in God who turns weaknesses into strengths.



The Rt Rev Paul Butler, Bishop of Durham, UK, preached at Matana about the importance of being a people who keep their eyes fixed on Jesus fulfilling their holy and God-given call to serve Him day by day wherever He calls. “As people of God we must be rooted in the Scriptures, living in the power of the Holy Spirit, knowing the Good News, and living as free people of God with Jesus at the centre,” he said. He addressed some of the challenges of being a Bishop and commended the example of the retiring Bishop, the Most Rev. Bernard Ntahoturi.

At Buhiga the Most Rev. Bernard Ntahoturi preached from John 21, the conversation between Jesus and Peter. He encouraged the Bishop to be an enabler of the Church, to do the work God wants, to share God's love and to care for people. He commended the Bishop of Gitega, the Rt. Rev. John Nduwayo for the work he did in preparing for the creation of the diocese of Buhiga. He referred to the importance of Buhiga as one of the first mission stations in the history of the Anglican Church in Burundi, established by missionaries in 1935.

The newly installed Bishops, the Rt Rev. Pontien Ribakare, Bishop of Rutana, the Rt. Rev. Seth Ndayirukiye, Bishop of Matana and the Rt. Rev. Evariste Nijimbere, Bishop of Buhiga outlined their visions for their dioceses. Among their priorities were the preaching of the Gospel and the extension of the Kingdom of God, training leaders, literacy especially among adults,

encouraging youth especially the unemployed, education and improving health structures, the fight against HIV and GBV, encouraging and developing relationships with the Anglican Communion, with other Churches, between dioceses, and with the Government especially regarding community development and the environment.

Each of the new Bishops acknowledged the need for prayers and support for their dioceses.



The Rt. Rev. Aimé Joseph Kimararungu was consecrated as Coadjutor Bishop of Gitega and will be installed next year following the retirement of the Rt. Rev. John Nduwayo.

The Most Rev. Bernard Ntahoturi retired from the diocese of Matana after being bishop there for 19 years.

He expressed his thanks to all who had supported him during his time as Bishop including those in Matana, partners in other denominations and those from other parts of the world, and the Government of Burundi especially the President.

He referred with gratitude to God for the expansion of the Province of the Anglican Church of Burundi and to the many answers to prayers prayed by God's faithful people in Matana through the years.

Many people wished him well for his move to live in Rome where he will be the Director of the Anglican Centre and the Archbishop of Canterbury's envoy to the Vatican.

On each occasion representatives from the Government brought greetings, congratulations and support to the ongoing work of the Church. Partners, clergy and bishops from the region and from around the world joined the celebrations and brought congratulations and gifts to the new bishops. In particular the Rt. Rev Paul Butler brought greetings and the assurance of prayers from the Archbishop of Canterbury.

The formalities took place in the context of the celebration of Holy Communion with a great sense of celebration and thanksgiving.

