

CHURCH OF UGANDA



BISHOP'S CHARGE

BISHOP GODFREY LOUM
8TH BISHOP OF DIOCESE OF NORTHERN UGANDA

SUNDAY, 21ST NOVEMBER, 2021
AT ST. PHILIP'S CATHEDRAL, GULU

Preach the Word
Preach the Word
Preach the Word!

Protocol

- The President of the Republic of Uganda and the First Lady,
- The Vice President of the Republic of Uganda,
- The Speaker of Parliament of Uganda,
- The Chief Justice of Uganda,
- Your Grace, The Most Rev. Stephen Kazimba Mugalu and Mama Margaret Kazimba,
- The Dean of the Province of the Church of Uganda,
- All Bishops,
- The Provincial Secretary and the Provincial Secretariat staff,
- The Provincial Head of Clergy,
- The Provincial Head of Laity,
- The Provincial Chancellor,
- Honourable Ministers,
- Honourable Members of Parliament,
- Resident District Commissioners here present,
- District Local Government Chairpersons,
- Vice Chancellor Uganda Christian University,
- Vice Chancellors of other Universities here present,
- His Royal Highness Ker Kwaro Acholi,
- The Diocesan Chancellor,
- The Diocesan Secretary and staff of the Diocese of Northern Uganda,
- The Chair House of Clergy Diocese of Northern Uganda,
- The Head of Laity Diocese of Northern Uganda,
- All Canons and Clergy
- Lay Readers
- All distinguished guests,



**BISHOP GODFREY LOUM &
MAMA AIDA LOUM**

Dear Brothers and Sisters in the Lord.

Warm greetings to all of you in the very precious Name of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ and welcome to the Diocese of Northern Uganda.

Theme.

I stand before you today inspired by the words the Apostle Paul wrote to the young man Timothy; "***In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I give you this charge: preach the word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage – with great patience and careful instruction.***" (2 Timothy 4:1,2)

Let me begin with a brief history of the journey as a Diocese.

The Diocese of Northern Uganda was formed out of the Upper Nile Diocese in the Province of the Church of Uganda. The Diocese has since given birth to the Dioceses of Madi and West Nile, Lango and Kitgum. There has been further growth with the creation of Nebbi and West Lango Dioceses. There are nine Archdeaconries, forty-one Parishes and over four hundred congregations spread across the districts of Gulu, Amuru, Nwoya, Omoro and Gulu City with an approximate population of 937,696.

God brought the Gospel to Uganda through the Church Missionary Society in 1877 and to Northern Uganda in 1903. Since the formation of the Diocese of Northern Uganda in 1961 there have been seven Bishops. I stand before you, humbled and honoured to be the eighth bishop to be consecrated and enthroned in the Diocese of Northern Uganda. It is awe-inspiring to recall the martyrdom of

Archbishop Janani Luwum from whom I got my own name, and Bishop Allan Gideon Obama's endurance and suffering, through the most difficult of times. We also acknowledge, with affection, Bishop Benoni Ogwal Abwang, Bishop Nelson Onono Onweng and Bishop Johnson Gakumba who have now retired but - as there is no retirement in the Kingdom of God - they continue to serve. For all of them, our hearts are filled with gratitude, and we thank God for their labour and their sacrifices.

Similarly, we thank God for today's faithful clergy working in testing conditions of service and yesterday's honourable clergy, now retired but still busy in the Kingdom, watching for the coming King.

The Context of our Mission:

Northern Uganda is a post-war region and as a result continues to suffer the long-term trauma of insurgencies which occurred as far back as 1980. Today the trauma of the war is being visited upon the generation that did not even live through the war. They have been silent now for over a decade, but the wounds have not yet healed. Many, if not all of you, are acquainted with grief, and you know the pains that fill your hearts and those of your dear ones.

The region lags behind the rest of the country in socio-economic and cultural development. The government has come up with many attempts to alleviate the losses, but we are yet to see the kind of recovery that makes a real difference for individuals, households, and communities. The region is blessed with lush, fertile, arable land and so has an enviable potential for high-yield agricultural production. But, so far, our people have not been able

to take advantage, partly because of the post-war challenges and the persistent post-war mindset. The huge economic potential beneath our feet, and numerous related business opportunities that could be in our hands, remain unfulfilled. Many people, with the unrealized potential to be productive, are wasting away in alcohol, drugs, or gambling. It is not about finding pleasure but avoiding the pain of trauma. War has tampered with the ability to deal with painful memories. It is easy to judge and condemn those trapped in negative behaviours. But I call upon every one of us to exercise that great patience the Apostle Paul commended to Timothy in our theme, and to use all means within our power to help our people overcome the bondage of anger, bitterness and unforgiveness.

Our people, and the small African people, have their own traditions of informal education to prepare young people to take on community responsibilities. But, in our case, the social fabric of communities in this region has broken down as a result of prolonged forced displacement in concentration camps. Many of our young people did not learn life skills as they grew up. Instead, they learnt dependency on handouts from the United Nations Agencies and other well-wishers. It will require a concerted effort to respond to the post-war challenges and change the mindset. Such effort will include giving many of our young people access to remedial informal life skills, and vocational training, so that they have a fair chance to engage in productive economic activities. If they can realise their full potential, they can meet their own needs and contribute to national development.

The loss of much-needed support mechanisms means that those within our communities, who suffer psychosocial

challenges and post-traumatic-stress-disorders, have to take care of themselves when community support would be as beneficial to them as professional therapies. When no care is forthcoming, the already vulnerable, opt for quick solutions that harm themselves and the community as a whole. The Government and civil partners have prioritized the investment of resources in the development of physical infrastructure. But the people for whom these physical infrastructures are designed have a range of unhealed emotional and psychological problems. The sad evidence of a crying need among members of our communities is seen acutely in the region having the highest national suicide rate. We are heartbroken when we hear of so many of our young men and women taking their own lives because they see no hope ahead of them or our older people taking their own lives because they can't wait any longer for the compensation of their animals that were stolen during the insurgency.

The large number of young people in prisons and reform facilities should be a real cause for concern for all of us. It raises serious social, moral, political and legal questions for all parties connected to the judicial system in Uganda. We call for an urgent national debate. There is a time bomb ticking in our society and we need to defuse it now before it is too late. We urge the Government and key agencies to partner with the church in addressing the realities of the systemic social, economic and political causes. We call on all partners to look at this matter urgently and come up with workable strategies of crime prevention. On our part we will support the resettlement of prisoners and offer positive alternatives and true hope to ex-offenders and their families. We will share the Good News even to our children who are in prison and other detention facilities. Our country Uganda is a young nation. 70% of the

population is below the age of thirty. And about 70% of these young people are unemployed. Each year 400,000 youths are released into the job market to compete for about 9,000 available jobs. 30% of young people with qualifications from reputable institutions are unable to find jobs. It is even worse for those who are semi-skilled or completely unskilled. The migration of unemployed youth from rural to urban areas negatively impacts on the social services sector in urban centres and drains the rural areas of the much-needed labour to till the land and produce food. The income that could transform the economic situation of the rural areas is lost.

Our region has long been infected by the virus of land-grabbing. There are conflicts over land among neighbours, families, clans, institutions and ethnic communities. Most times the disputes are not because the parties do not know what genuinely belongs to them but because the unscrupulous add value to land, not to use, but to sell. Poverty compels the desperate to surrender at giveaway prices the very land that is their last means of production.

Our Mission Focus.

Bible Based Trauma Healing

We come with a message of hope to the people of God in the region. Our destiny is not defined by the experiences of hopelessness we went through during the war but by the promises of God that are 'yes' and 'Amen' in Christ Jesus our Lord and Saviour. We have a message of life in all its fullness which is the reason that Jesus Christ came into the world. May we forgive our past which has made us captives to bitterness, unforgiveness and hate? Let us listen to and obey the voice of Christ in Mathew 11:28-30

"Come to Me, all of you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. All of you, take up My yoke and learn from Me, because I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for yourselves. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."

Friends, Jesus is the Healer who deals with problems at the root, a Redeemer who can break every chain and a Saviour who can set the captives free. In this regard we shall partner with the Bible Society of Uganda through the Bible Based Trauma Healing Ministry. We thank the Bible Society of Uganda for the partnership with all Bible-believing churches to make available the Holy Scriptures in our own language, including Braille in Acholi, but also for equipping church leaders to be able to use the scriptures to speak to the real experiences of the people. Our people need God to heal completely from the trauma of the war. We will partner with other likeminded organizations to restore hope in our people and transform their lives.

Ministry in the prisons:

We will intentionally have church programmes that reach out to vulnerable youth, and we will liaise with partners whose values are the same with ours and are engaged in crime reduction and rehabilitation and reintegration of ex-offenders. Our Lord Jesus Christ Himself says: **'I was sick and in prison and you never visited'**. (Matthew 25:43). Our God cares about those in prison, and we should also care. We are warned not to be like 'the goats', who, Jesus says, will be judged because of their lack of concern for those in prison. We will intentionally mentor young people to restore the years the locust has eaten in the long years of insurgency. A lot of attention has been given disproportionately to the girl-child to the disadvantage of both the boy-child and the girl-child. Both must be

empowered to respect each other and develop a sense of mutual respect, personal worth, justice and fairness.

Ministry to the Children and Youth.

The Bible says, ***"Train children in the right way, and when old, they will not stray."*** (Proverbs 22:6). The children and the youth need 'careful instruction' and training. Parents, the church and community leaders all share a responsibility in providing this instruction and providing good role models to follow. However, while good advice has its valuable place in training up children, **primarily we shall focus on the Good News of our Saviour who said, "Let the children come to me". We want to ask you our dear brothers and sisters, let the children come to the Lord. We shall continue to build on the capacity of our church's workers to deliver age-appropriate programmes in our churches.**

We are committed to educating our youth to follow Christ and helping them to live out holy values for their own good, for the benefit of our communities and for the glory of God. We will also continue to initiate and support church-led schools and educational programmes so that parents are free to choose a Christian education for their children. We believe every child, rural or urban, has the potential to excel wherever they may study. I am a product of a rural school. We believe that today's students can have even a better chance than my age group if all of us will do our part.

We shall promote youth training programmes such as those at St. Janani Luwum Vocational Training Institute and the Mothers Union girls vocational training. We will promote access, provide protection, and deliver quality training for youth employment. For those called to Ordained or

Lay Ministry we will support Archbishop Janani Luwum Theological College in providing theological education, spiritual formation, and leadership training.

Church and state relations:

We thank God that, over the years, the church has enjoyed a growing relationship with the Government. We seek to make it better. Urge the church to encourage our Christians to get involved in those Government programmes that promote the development of their parishes along the lines of the Parish Development Models.

Contrary to some popular beliefs, we believe that proper political engagement belongs firmly within Christian spirituality. It is not *secularisation*. Jesus is Lord of all, or He is not Lord at all. The church is not a private area of individual, communal and national life. The prophet Jeremiah urged the exiles in Babylon to ***seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray for the Lord on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare*** (Jeremiah 29:7). We are committed to the welfare of Ugandans by seeking the Kingdom of God in our nation's politics. The Apostle Paul charges us to ***'pray for kings and those in authority'*** (1 Timothy 2:2). We will.

At a macro level, we shall work with the Government of Uganda, through the Inter Religious Council of Uganda and other non-governmental organizations, to promote good governance. Today it is usually the media that hold politicians to account. But the media has assumed what is properly the church's role. So we shall reorganise church activities and structures and the biblical content of our theological curriculum. At a micro level, we shall mobilize our constituencies in the struggle for social justice.

We offer partnership in plans, programmes and policies that enhance the development of Uganda. We shall support holistic growth and we aim to enhance a culture of independence and self-sustenance through a healthy change of mindset that will break the disabling culture of dependency.

The Church and Politics.

We have witnessed election related violence at every election season, especially at the presidential and parliamentary elections. The culture of violence around election periods are becoming the norm rather than the exception. We believe that every Ugandan has the right and freedom to express themselves and associate with whomever they choose, as long as it does not infringe on the rights and freedoms of others. We appeal to government to exercise restraint when dealing with people or groups of people who hold views that are different from those of the government. In the same vein we appeal to those in opposition to express their rights and freedoms in a responsible manner. No Ugandans should lose their lives while expressing their legitimate rights and similarly no Ugandans should be exposed to excessive confrontations with security agents exercising their duty of keeping order and upholding the rule of law.

In this regard, we shall join hands with other faith groups under the umbrellas of the Uganda Joint Christian Council and the Inter Religious Council of Uganda and other Civil Society Organisations, both within and outside the country, to ensure adequate civic and voter education and to offer independent and credible election observation so that all the people of Uganda may fully participate in every election and have faith in the election results at all levels.

In the values of the Kingdom of God, and in the distinct call of the people of God to live out their personal faith in public, and not in private, we have a unique gift to offer those with heavy responsibilities. We seek openings to communicate to policy makers from the party in government and also from those in opposition, both local and national, our loving motivation, our biblical principles, and the political imperative of the Gospel. We will preach the Word.

Ministry to Families.

Today's family faces the most vicious of attacks from the enemy of the children of God both from within and without. Nowhere is a partnership between Church and Government more urgent than in the recovery of the family. The attack on the family is as old as mankind. The Bible paints a brutal picture of how families have been going wrong since creation. We see dysfunctional families everywhere. We read of murder (Cain kills his brother Abel); incest (Noph and his daughters); attempted patricide (Absalom tries to kill David); adultery (David and Bathsheba) and favouritism (Joseph and his siblings) to name a sorry few! Whatever issues modern families are struggling with, the Bible is a relevant and realistic resource. We recognize marriage as a gift from God, created by him for the welfare of men and women (Genesis 2:18), the care and nurture of children (Genesis 1:28) and the context for sexual expression (Genesis 2:24; Matthew 19:5). We believe that faithful monogamous marriage between a man and a woman is God's design for marriage. We therefore remain committed to the protection and the promotion of the biblical view of marriage—the permanent union of one man and one woman. When outside agencies attempt to tie their gifts to our revision of sexuality, we will preach the Word.

Gender based violence

Our tradition has over the years allowed gender disparity to thrive at the expense of women. This means that women and girls have been treated like beasts of burden in the family in our communities. It is reported that during the lockdown, from March to July, in 2020, two hundred and sixty cases of defilement were reported to police. Child marriage increased. Recent surveys found that one in every five teenage girls aged 15-19 was married. But the pandemic has only amplified a pre-existing scourge on our national and community identities. Before the pandemic, 46% of women experienced physical violence and reported living in fear of their current or recent partner. Women are being trapped with abusive partners without a support network nor access to legal protection or health services. The shameful catalogue of sexual violence includes marital rape, sexual harassment, sexual abuse, defilement, denial of the right to use contraception, forced abortion and forced sex work according to the reports by the Uganda Police.

Jesus showed us unusual and unmistakable compassion towards women. We will follow his example. We believe in every member ministry. We will promote effective 'faith literacy' programmes among all ministry groups within the church with special emphasis on women and girls. We shall equip the family to 'build a family altar', so that in every home the reading of Scripture, the saying of prayers and the worship of God are the norm with or without covid. We will be actualising the prophetic words of the Apostle Peter, ***"As you come to him, the living Stone—rejected by humans but chosen by God and precious to him—you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ."*** (1 Peter 2: 4,5).

Salt and light:

Jesus expects personal belief to be shown in public behaviour. In probably his most famous message, known as 'The Sermon on the Mount,' **Jesus tells His followers who they are and what is their vocation in the world: "You are the salt of the earth.... You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house... let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven."** (Matthew 5:13-16).

Jesus was calling both men and women to be the salt and the light of the world. Salt was used as a preservative. The salt cannot blame the meat for going bad. Our vocation as salt is to prevent decay within our communities, and as light to bring truth. We shall be men and women of courage and justice and mercy, and with love and compassion for both men and women. **And we do these things for the glory of God.** Like the Apostle Paul who spoke boldly against false philosophy, **we will preach the word in a way that both challenges and makes sense to the injustices in our communities.**

Welfare of the Clergy and Lay Readers.

To every one of us here gathered, we want you to know that these servant-hearted men and women labour without a salary. There is not even a retirement scheme to sustain them in their advanced years, when they have served the church and the nation with faithfulness. Our prayer is that, during our term in office, together with you, we will be able to improve the working conditions of the clergy and create a retirement scheme for the lifelong welfare of our retired clergy and Lay Readers. We will focus

on initiating such an appropriate and financially secure scheme, using a self-help model where the staff and the parish contribute regularly into a pot that will provide a lumpsum on retirement.

The Apostle Paul says, "**The worker deserves his wages**" (1 Timothy 5:18). Many of our clergy and Lay Readers do not have a suitable means of transport and this limits their effectiveness in ministry. It is a serious challenge for those who are serving in very large parishes. Brothers and sisters, I charge you to remove the obstacles to mission and to support your clergy and lay readers that they might serve you better.

Many of our clergy lack decent accommodation to house them and their families. This negatively impacts their families and their capacity to serve. We have seen that it is indeed perfectly possible for members of the congregation to put up a reasonably decent house for the pastor who serve them. Looking after your Pastors is one of your friends. It is another way where the church gives a more expression to faith. It is the responsibility of the church leaders to preach the Good News. There is forgiveness of sins in Jesus Christ, not only to save us **from** sin's penalty but to release us **for** active service in the Kingdom of God. The church, it has often been said, is that strange society that exists for the benefit of its non-members. It is the calling of those who serve to make disciples and provide pastoral care to people of all faiths or none. They are to equip the saints for the work of ministry. This means you!

Use of Information Communication Technology.

I charge you my colleagues, the clergy: we are entrusted with the unchanging Gospel in a changing world. We do not change the message. We change the way we deliver it. Mission in the twenty-first century compels us to be skilled in information communication technology. We will not neglect the Internet age. We commend all those with imaginative and creative ways to communicate the Good News of the Kingdom of God - even with mobile phones. Brothers and sisters, give your leaders tools to do the work of today! Free them to preach the Word.

Not forgetting the admonition of the Apostle Paul that **"People will not put up with sound doctrine"** we are not unaware of the dangers posed by the Internet. While the Internet is a neutral thing, it can be good or bad according to the way we use it. We can put it to positive use in preaching the Word, but it has the same potential to corrupt our minds too. The impact of social media upon our communities is there for all to see. Mass communication allows each individual to become a definer of truth. When anyone is entitled to express what is good and what is bad, what is right and what is wrong, the capacity to hear criticism is removed. Algorithms direct the social media user into an echo chamber of extreme views. Individuals and institutions, including the church, have been victims of the pressure and power of contemporary media. A story that goes viral can build or wreck, but we will use the Internet to preach the word in season and out of season.

The media, music, arts and cultural expression, can similarly be employed to display the beauty of God's creation or they can debase and spoil. They are key drivers of our present age. Used positively they are tools

in our quest to mobilize our churches and promote social change, transformation and spiritual experience. They allow freedom to express the telling of life stories, with a spiritual message. They are all about communicating – and communicating fits all that the Church is about – whether it is the Word of God (the Gospel), or our lives, as the only Gospel some people will read, lived to demonstrate God's best.

In the perilous environment of modern media, we will embrace all means of communication and become more adept in connecting with contemporary culture but will do so with integrity. We shall support the potential of our musicians to be ambassadors for Christ and entrepreneurs in the Gospel performance sector. We bless their pursuit of high visibility in the media and as a positive alternative to negative worldly influences. We will provide mentors to our youth to enable them to reach the world in every way.

International relations

We live in a global village. Yet 4 billion people are still living in poverty and 1% of the world's population owns 50% of the world resources. The wealthiest 1% of the world's inhabitants were responsible for the emission of more than twice as much carbon dioxide as the poorer 50% of the world's population from 1990 to 2015. We are no longer shielded from suffering inflicted elsewhere through war, natural disasters, climate crisis, obscene consumption or economic migration. We believe all people are created equally in the image of God, with inherent dignity and infinite worth. The Department of Finance, Planning and Investment will formulate programmes to match the challenges and opportunities.

God is sovereign over history and the destiny of nations. Within the grand narrative of Scripture, we encounter wars, conflicts, and disputes. And there are visions of peace, of swords beaten into ploughshares, spears into pruning hooks, international trade, and commerce. The prophet Micah has a vision when ***"Everyone will sit under their own vine and under their own fig tree, and no one will make them afraid"*** (Micah 4:4). We will pray and work for a just, peaceful, and prosperous world order, where nations respect the rule of law and no nation need be afraid of any other.

We subscribe to the commonly held understanding of development as 'improvement' - i.e. development is about 'making things better' and sustaining the recovery. Invariably this comes through healthy partnerships. We join hands with the Uganda Protestant Council, the All-Africa Council of Churches, and the World Council of Churches. We will partner with all faith groups under the Acholi Religious Leaders' Peace Initiative and the Inter-religious Council of Uganda and other inter-religious bodies. Where there is suffering and injustice we are called to pray for and promote **God's Kingdom on earth as it is in heaven**. We shall not enter partnerships indiscriminately. All partners will respect the church and nation's spiritual sovereignty, our moral foundations, our cultural values, and our ethics. We believe the strengthening of these bonds will enhance the DNU's place in Uganda and the entire world, as well as its contribution to global good governance, righteous conduct, and effective accountability. It takes a global village to raise the poor from poverty. Compassion extends our concern beyond our immediate borders. We will stand in solidarity with our poor and dispossessed neighbours irrespective of creed, gender or race. We will welcome the refugee because we know God cares for them as much as He cares for us.

Critical values:

As I draw to a close may I highlight a few of our values which you may already have discerned? During our time of office the Diocese will remain obedient and faithful, personally and corporately, to the authority of Scripture in all matters of faith and order in the Church of God. We will reject any misinterpretations of Scripture. As careful stewards of the church's land and property we shall neither misappropriate them nor allow thieves to encroach upon them. The Lord spoke to the prophet Ezekiel and said, "**Yet I will make them responsible for the duties of the temple — for all its work and everything done in it**" (Ezekiel 44:14). We believe that each disciple has been gifted differently to make a unique contribution in the Kingdom of God. We will release each one, irrespective of gender or other considerations, to face the numerous challenges have been compounded by the COVID-19 virus pandemic. We will conduct ministry in ways that minimizes risk and protects the health of our communities. We will continue to explore relevant and practical COVID-appropriate alternatives to traditional approaches to mission.

Appreciation.

I thank God above everyone else for His grace that has made this day come to pass. To Him alone belongs all the glory and honour.

I thank the President and the government of Uganda for always supporting the Church generally and particularly for lending a hand to the committee for this function. May the Lord God who has given you the responsibility of governing this country give you the grace and wisdom to do always what is right before the one who called you to

that office.

I thank the Archbishop of the Church of Uganda, His Grace Steven Kazimba Mugalu and Mama for presiding over our consecration and enthronement as the eighth Bishop of the Diocese of Northern Uganda. I am very humbled that God considered me to serve Him and His people in this capacity and for you and all the Bishops of the church of Uganda for accepting me to join you in the House of Bishops. Thank you all the Bishops present for coming to witness this occasion and to receive me as one of you. May the Lord richly bless all of you in your callings.

I thank Bishop Luke Henry Orombi, Archbishop Emeritus, and Mama Phoebe for accepting to be our retreat leader. I have always admired your way of leadership. While I was a student at Uganda Christian University, I wished that you would be my Bishop and mentor. Now I did I know that God heard my prayers. Thank you, Bishop Henry. It is not yet over; I have reached a place where I may now disturb you more frequently but all to the glory of God.

I thank the Rt. Honourable Speaker of Parliament my brother Jacob Oulanya for his generous support to the committee and for accepting to be the Chair of the Central Organizing Committee amidst his very busy schedule. Thank you my brother and I pray that the Lord may always watch over you and keep you safe from any attacks of the enemy.

I thank my brother His Lordship Owiny Dollo Chigamoi, the Chief Justice of Uganda for the generous financial contributions to the Central Organising Committee and for accepting to be the Co-Chair of the Central Organizing Committee for this function even when you are one of the busiest Ugandans because of the responsibilities entrusted

to you. Thank you my brother for the sacrifice you made and the wisdom with which you handled all the issues that were brought to you including even by those who were hostile to the arrangement you were leading. May the Lord give you more wisdom to serve the people of God and keep you safe always.

I thank the members of Acholi Parliamentary group under the chairmanship of Hon. Anthony Akol. In a special way I want to recognize the contributions of Hon. Wokorach Simon Peter and Hon. Peace Judith Achan for representing the APG on the ground all the time. Thankyou my brother and sister. May the Lord reward you and fight all your battles. In the same vein I want to thank Hon. Ojara Martin Mapenduzi and everyone else that worked with him to sort out some elements with evil intentions.

I would like to thank Bishop Gakumba and Mama Christine Gakumba in a very special way. From the time I got to know you up to now, I have purposed to watch you carefully because something about you was very unusual. I discovered a very faithful and prayerful person, a disciplinarian, a good talker and above all a very committed leader in the Church of God. While others focused on one or two aspects of your personality, I looked at the whole package. I made up my mind to quietly learn from you without asking for your permission. If you found working with me easy, it was because I was already a willing learner under your mentorship. I thank God for you and please remember to pray for us now that you know you have been my mentor all along. You know what is waiting for us better than we do. May the Lord reward you as He promised in the Book of Life. You have not left but you have just made a stopover to rest a little while and change tyres. The journey ahead is still far and

to go that far, we need the support of everyone labouring in the vineyard guided by the Holy Spirit and under the leadership of Christ Jesus to the glory of God the Father.

I thank the leadership of Gulu City and all the neighbouring districts for your contributions towards this event. We are with you and wish you well in the responsibilities God has placed in your hands. We pray that the Lord blesses you as you serve His people with integrity.

I thank all the Clergy and Lay Readers for being comrades in arms and for accepting me to be your shepherd at such a time as this. The Lord who has called us to this ministry tells me that you are my friends. May He so bless this friendship among us that we will always stand together in season and out of season faithfully preaching the Word.

Finally, I thank the people of God coming from Bungatira and Adilang for blessing me in the way of the Lord. Thank you members of Christ Church Parish for giving me the opportunity to have even a taste of being a servant of God. Thank you all the Christians from the Diocese of Northern Uganda, the neighbouring Dioceses of Kitgum, Lango, West Lango, Nebbi, Madi and West Nile and beyond. Thank you for coming and for being part of this God glorifying time together. May the Lord who brought you here take you back safely.

Our partners

Government of Uganda, The Province of the Church of Uganda, Acholi Kampala Fellowship, Acholi London Fellowship, Anglican Church of Sweden, Anglican Relief and Development Fund, Bristol West Deanery – Bristol, England UK, Christian Engineers in Development,

Compassion International, CARE International in Uganda, Catholic Relief Services, Christ Church Overland Park, KS USA, Bible Society, Community Livestock Integrated Consultancy, Danish Ugandan Fellowship Association (DUFA), Dr. Katie Rhoades - Uganda Sudan Medical Missions, Evangelical Lutheran Church of Germany Gossner Mission, Germany, Fields of Life, Global Orphan Africa - USA, ICC Trust Fund, World Renew, Women's Int. League for Peace & Freedom, St. Francis Chapel Mekerere, World Vision - Gulu Cluster, ZOA - Acholi Sub-Region, Irene Latigo Odida Mennonite Central Committee N. Uganda Health Integration for Enhanced Services New Zealand Church Missionary Society Newlands Church, Newland Valley UK Planting Faith Ministries - Horace Tipton Rev. Canon Dr. Alison Barfoot Seokcheon Jeil Presbyterian Church, S. Korea St. Johns Church, Jamaica, St. James Church, Charleston, SC USA, St. Peter's Church, Braithwaite UK Christian Reformation World Committee Ruth Lilly Foundation USAID, US AID, World of Hope Ministries Wanstead Parish, WPMB, Bride of Finance, UK Dr. Mary McDonald and all others who lent a hand to take the Diocese forward. Thank you for supporting Diocese of Northern Uganda. We look forward to grow these partnerships to greater heights to the glory of God who put us on this journey together. The Lord bless you all. In conclusion there are three necessary things I wish to leave with you to remember:

1. **Preach the Word**
2. **Preach the Word**
3. **Preach the Word!**

+ Godfrey Loum
21 November 2021