

**LENT 2014** | From the Rev. Sandra McCann in Central Tanganyika

## **REMEMBERING A BISHOP**



**THE RIGHT REVEREND GODFREY MDIMI MHOGOLO  
JUNE 14, 1950-MARCH 27, 2014**

*As for me, I know that my Redeemer lives and that at the last he will stand upon the earth. After my awaking, he will raise me up; and in my body I shall see God. I myself shall see, and my eyes behold him who is my friend and not a stranger.*

The Burial of the Dead, Rite II, BC

It was quite a shock on March 27<sup>th</sup> to hear at Morning Prayer that our bishop, Godfrey Mdimi Mhogolo, was very sick. Some 6 hours later, at a hastily called meeting for Mackay House personnel, we were told he had died. The longer story behind this was that three weeks earlier he had taken sick in Dodoma. After a brief stay at Dodoma Regional Hospital he was flown to Dar Es Salaam for resistant respiratory difficulties. He was treated at hospital there for a few days and was discharged to be followed in Out-Patient Clinic. Within days, he suffered a recurrence of symptoms. He was readmitted and subsequently the decision was made that he be sent to a hospital in Johannesburg, South Africa, for more advanced treatment. About one week later we got the above news that he had died.

The shock for us was not only the loss of a personal friend but also of the enormous loss to the Diocese of Central Tanganyika (DCT.) Mdimi had been the Bishop of the DCT for 25 years. He was extremely intelligent and a visionary leader. He backed these qualities with terrific energy. He was always ready to move a project to the next level. He fostered projects such as The Carpenter's Kids for DCT's most vulnerable children. He moved Msalato Theological College from a Bible School to the degree level, enriched four primary and secondary schools, two hospitals, and the Mackay House Health Clinic where Martin works. DCT has a school for the blind, a deaf project, and several environmental projects.

The funeral took place over a three-day period commencing with the internment on April 5<sup>th</sup>. It was a sad three days. Bishop Neil Alexander (Dean of Sewanee Seminary), a long-term personal friend of Mdimi, along with current Atlanta Bishop Robert Wright, sent a moving letter read by Martin at the service on April 4<sup>th</sup>. Retired N.Y. Bishop Catherine Roskam, who with Mdimi began the idea for the Carpenter's Kids' project over a cup of tea, wrote, "If I had to choose one word about what Bishop Mdimi meant for the Diocese of New York, it would be transformation. Parishes were transformed by knowing they were making a difference in the larger world." Letters from Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby, and Presiding Bishop, Katharine Jefferts Schori of The Episcopal Church were read on the final day. Katharine touchingly wrote, "I grieve the loss of the friend who welcomed me to Tanzania in early 2007, in the face of great fear and anger from others. He brought grace and humor into the lion's den and it blessed all who gathered in Dar es Salaam for that meeting." Mdimi invited all seven American missionaries serving in Tanzania at that time to go to Dar es Salaam to welcome her, and he arranged for a private meeting for all of us with Katharine.

On the day of interment there were an estimated 2,000 attending. These spilled out of the cathedral to fill the churchyard. Those outside were able to watch the service on outdoor television screens. Anglican bishops, Lutheran bishops, Roman Catholic bishops, Pentecostal bishops, Muslim clerics and many missionaries were there. Members of parliament, former ambassadors and prime ministers were represented as well as the current Prime Minister the Honorable Mizengo Pinda.

A nation mourns. A diocese mourns. But especially shattered are his wife Irene; his son Nyemo (wife and 2 grandchildren) of Australia; his daughter Lisa (husband and granddaughter) of the UK; and his son Wendo of Canada.



Sons Wendo and Nyemo say good-bye (photo by Rev. Wm. Parnell of NY)

We remember...

HIS HANDS



in countless ordinations...



in countless confirmations...



in his brilliant teaching...



and in leading us in song and word.

Well done!



The family says farewell: Wendo, Irene, Lisa and Nyemo