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My dear Brothers and Sisters, our friends of Masasi Diocese,
Our greetings to you!

It is just six weeks since I wrote to you my Christmas Letter and now I write again with news of devastation in our Diocese through torrential rain over eleven days in the north of our Diocese. Many areas of Tanzania have been experiencing heavy rains already this year but in the Southern Region, Kilwa and Liwale Districts have suffered very severe damage. The rain began on the 18th January and eventually stopped on the 29th January causing severe flooding across the whole area in the north of our Diocese.

The now well documented impacts include destruction of livelihoods, properties and infrastructures that have resulted in food insecurity, homelessness, the loss of human lives and put the affected population at risk of waterborne diseases. Information based on the Regional Commissioner's initial assessment indicates that the flooding has caused the deaths of 21 people (13 in Kilwa, 5 in Ruangwa, 2 in Liwale and 1 in Lindi). A total of 11,483 people are displaced, some of whom are being hosted by friends while most of them are being accommodated temporarily in public buildings mainly schools, mosques and churches.

The Government tell us that 5,096 houses have been swept away; also destroyed are 2,746 toilets, 58 primary school classrooms and much of the livestock of the area. Reports indicate the loss of 1,020 goats and 12,830 chickens in the homesteads. There is also widespread destruction of the physical infrastructure, particularly the roads and bridges. Some have been completely destroyed causing serious difficulties and major problems with communication between neighbouring places both within and outside the affected districts.

Government aid is being sent to the Region. We know that up to yesterday, 80 tents, 50 blankets, 20 litres of cooking oil, 350 drinking cups have been sent to the area. The primary needs now are as follows: 760 tons of flour, 76 tons of beans, 100 sacks of sugar; also the much needed medicines, 5000 gallons of fresh pure drinking water, 90 tents, 10000 corrugated iron roofing sheets, 2000 mattresses, 5000 blankets and sheets. This is the first evaluation which the Government estimates will enable these families somehow to survive.

On Sunday morning I shall be calling all our congregations to prayer and we shall continue to pray until the villages are rebuilt and lives restored. I am asking too for a special and sacrificial collection from all in our Diocese for our Brothers and Sisters.

Next week I hope to travel up to Kilwa visiting the affected region seeking to express our love and care for the people in their suffering, to meet with many people and pray with them, their families and communities. Together with some of the Canons and other priests we shall bring our gifts, our support and Christ's love to the affected areas meeting many of the people who have seen such

disasters. One of the worst affected places is Njinjo, in the parish of Kilwa where the parish priest Fr Cosmas Liveta and his congregations are giving much help and encouragement.

We are praying much for this situation: for the people impacted by these terrible rains and floods, for the relief workers and all concerned for the relief and rebuilding of their broken lives. Please join with us in prayer to Almighty God for His grace, His peace and His blessings on these communities in their distress.

If you wish to join with us in our collection for the people of our Diocese we would be most thankful. If so: please log on to: www.virginmoneygiving and look for Charities, then look for 'Make a donation', enter 'Friends of Masasi and Newala' and scroll down to the charity site; please use the message 'Masasi Disaster Relief' in the message box. All your financial gifts raised in this way will then be forwarded to me by the Treasurer of the Trustees of The Friends of Masasi and Newala (Charity Number 1009963). In Jesus Name: our deep and profound thanks.

Yours in Christ Jesus,

+James

Bishop James Almasi