



A MINISTRY OF BISHOP TODD & REVEREND PATSY MCGREGOR

COVID 19 IN MADAGASCAR

Many of our supporters have been asking us what it has been like for us to live in Madagascar right now with the COVID 19 pandemic. We decided to send out an email specifically dedicated to informing our supporters what our current situation is like. We want to thank those who have Madagascar in their thoughts despite dealing with difficult situations in your own countries.

We currently have 121 COVID 19 cases in Madagascar with 3 cases in Toliara. No reported deaths so far. Like many other countries, Madagascar is taking this pandemic seriously. However due to the lack of infrastructure and education, prevention of the disease spread is challenging and testing is limited. On March 20th, Public Health Emergency was declared in Madagascar when the first three COVID 19 cases were identified. Stay at home measures were put into place. Curfew was in place between 8 pm and 5 am. All public gatherings and cultural events were cancelled. Schools and universities were closed. All public transportation, including international flights, were suspended. Health check points were set up around large cities for screening of symptomatic individuals. All symptomatic individuals were quarantined together in designated locations (for Toliara it is the local morgue). Only one person per household was able to do the shopping. Stores (only selling basic goods like grocery stores and markets) were open from 6 am to 12 pm. People were required to wear masks out in public in the major cities.

Earlier this week, President Andry Rajoelina, announced that the country had found an unproven cure for the COVID 19. Many people are excited about this possibility, however it could be forming a false sense of hope and security in the country. The WHO states this herbal remedy is unproven to actually cure or even prevent the disease. CDC states it could actually be unsafe to consume.

After the declaration of this cure, prevention restrictions for the country have been lifted. Schools and stores are opening. People are leaving their homes and social distancing is now something of the past. As you can expect this is very concerning for us as we fear this removal of the restrictions could be premature and result in worsening the pandemic spread.



DIOCESAN PREVENTIONATIVE MEASURES

The Diocese has put into place specific measures to protect our Diocesan family. The yearly Diocesan meetings were cut short so people could return to their local villages before the pandemic started. The Office, Women's Center and all churches are closed and have been since March 20th.

Essential items such as rice, beans, and soap will be available to purchase at the Cathedral Complex for the staff if supplies are cut off from the capital.

This will also prevent people from traveling into the city to get local supplies as needed. A COVID 19 task force has formed and is giving educational trainings to the community about the pandemic and prevention measures.

Community members who have had possible exposure to the virus have been in isolation for 14 days (We do not have any positive cases in our community). Bishop Todd and Rev Patsy are wearing hand made masks when out in local areas or interacting with individuals. Church members are being encouraged to meet as families in their own homes for worship services as the early Christians did. Despite its limitations, the Diocese is doing what it can to prevent the spread of the coronavirus.



PRAYER REQUESTS:

- Health of the Diocese
- Safety and protection for the leaders
- Health education
- Todd and Patsy as they isolate at home

DAILY LIFE STORIES



"IT'S ONLY TYPHOID FEVER"

A short while ago, I had a conversation with a student evangelist who was too sick to get himself to the doctors. Even with the outbreak of COVID 19, Bishop Samitiana took him on the back of his motorbike to the clinic. The next morning the student was much better and from a great distance (me on the balcony and the student across the yard) I asked, "How are you feeling?" Relieved, the student answered with a smile, "I'm fine! It's only typhoid fever!"



MAY GOD PROTECT YOU

Unfortunately death is frequently seen in Madagascar. Thus, COVID 19, a disease that kills, has brought a lot of fear to the Malagasy people.

In late March, the Diocese held their yearly Diocesan meetings. During this time the first case of COVID 19 presented in Madagascar. Bishop Todd, decided to cancel the rest of the meetings and send all the clergy back home to their local villages. Saying goodbye, the gardener exclaimed as they walked out the gate, "May God protect you from death!"



JUST A BOX OF SOAP

The student evangelists were sent home, armed with a box of soap to disperse to their communities and teach about hygiene. For many of these students this is the ONLY soap they own. Proper hygiene became part of their training in order to retrain their communities. By the end of the day everyone was washing their hands while saying the Lord's Prayer (to make sure to wash for 20 seconds).



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Engaging Partners in Evangelism,
Education & Economic Development

FINAL THOUGHTS

The long-term effects of this virus for Madagascar are going to be devastating. Even without a pandemic, the Diocese of Toliara struggles with poverty, illness, drought, and famine. We can't imagine how bad things will get once the pandemic spreads. Many can't even purchase soap; much less have access to water to wash their hands. Many don't have enough money to go to the local markets and buy a month's worth of essential supplies so they can quarantine at home. And even if they could afford it, most don't have electricity or a refrigerator to keep the food fresh. Many don't have a hospital or doctor to visit if they do get sick. All this is to say, it is a very stressful time, and we are coping!

Truly, the only thing we can do right now is completely rely on God. In a world of so much uncertainty, we are so thankful that He can provide all our needs. We are so appreciative that He is our daily bread. And we are so grateful that He is the greatest physician. Today, tomorrow, and in the future, we will stand firm trusting that our God is bigger than any pandemic and the effects it will have on our lives, Madagascar, and the world. We thank you all for your love and prayers during this time. May God keep you safe and secure, knowing we are all held in the palm of God's hand and God's presence is with us always.

Serving Christ Together, +Todd and Patsy+

HOW TO DONATE:

ONLINE VIA CREDIT CARD OR ELECTRONIC TRANSFER:

visit <http://www.peoplereaching.org/how-can-i-help/donate/>

MAIL CHECKS TO SAMS-USA:

Attn: Denise Cox or Julie Kirik, PO BOX 399, Ambridge, PA 15003

MEMO: McGregor Ministry or Diocese of Toliara or Toliara Endowment

MAIL CHEQUES TO CHURCH MISSION SOCIETY (P.MG001):

Address: Church Mission Society, Watlington Road, Oxford, OXF 6BZ

