

# Greetings from Lake Tanganyika Theological College

Dear All Saints people,

Bwana Asifiwe and warm greetings from Lake Tanganyika Seminary. It is well with me, my family, and the seminary. As a friend and a member of All Saints, I thought I should say hello to my church. Memories of All Saints and about All Saints are still in my head and in my heart. I miss my church and I miss each one of you.

Please allow me to share few things with you.

First, it's from the bottom of my heart that I want to say **THANK YOU SO MUCH**. This year marks more than a decade since my first visit with you in Lent of 2005. From that time on, my relationship and friendship with All Saints has been growing. Spending nine months at All Saints when I was studying at Columbia seminary is an important step in this relationship. You cared for me. You assisted me with my studies. You fed me. You gave me your money. You took me out to see the wonders of Atlanta and America. You visited me at school. So many great things. Thank you and God bless you.

Second, I am excited to share with you that I have been appointed dean of the seminary. This is a great opportunity for me as working at the seminary has been in my thoughts. My understanding is that, the best way of utilizing my good education from America is by being at an academic institution. I have been trained. I need to train others. Also, I feel my connection with All Saints is through the seminary. The prayers you offer for the seminary on Sundays mean a lot and encourage me. The seminary will also be praying for All Saints. Our new academic years starts on July 31, 2017.

Third, I ask for your prayers and support for my ministry at the seminary. We have visions for the seminary which will undoubtedly provide challenges as well.

**i. Women seminarians.** My vision is to enroll and admit more women to the seminary. There is imbalance between men and women attending seminary. For example, the total number of students this academic year is 87: 85 males and only 2 females. I need to take action to begin rectifying this situation; and I my first step is to enroll 3 to 5 female seminarians in each academic year. There are many able and intelligent women who want to study at the seminary; but most churches will not give them the opportunity. One of the ways that the churches use to hold back women from coming to the seminary is by withholding financing for them. While it's true that many churches can't afford to pay school fees (even for male students), the situation is even harder for women. When possible, I would like to have a scholarship fund for women, so that more can participate in seminary study. An annual fee for a student is \$700

**ii. Women's dormitory.** The seminary has two residential buildings which were built to fit male students only. These halls were constructed between 1998 and 1999. We don't have any place for female students. The two current female students are staying in the home of a seminary matron. To have women each year, I will need dormitory accommodations for them. According to our culture, students of different sexes may not reside in the same rooms or houses. Luckily enough, the school has a big plot of land for construction of housing and other projects. A ten-room hall would be good enough to house women. When I am talking of the rooms, don't think of American rooms in which you have furniture, a kitchen, a bathroom, a refrigerator etc. Our rooms are only for sleeping and usually one to four students share a room.

As a supporter, advocate, and a pro- ordination of women, I feel a responsibility to elevate the status of women. I believe the seminary is the best place to lay the groundwork. Although we have not started ordaining women, there are indications that it won't be long before we do so. We have formed a committee of five priests

who will be visiting churches to educate members regarding the need for and importance of women priests. I will be one of these people. It's necessary for the seminary to train women now so that they are ready for ordination . It is imperative that I start working on this as soon as possible.

**iii. Advancing academic standards.** In the near future (five years' time from now), I hope to have the seminary start offering undergraduate degrees. In preparing for this vision, I will be teaching Hebrew effectively from this academic year. This is the first time for the Semitic to be taught since the founding of the seminary in 1996. (As some of you may recall that I won Hebrew prize at Sewanee. In addition, I took a Hebrew class at Columbia seminary in which we translated the Psalms in Hebrew.) Offering Hebrew classes will impress more students from other dioceses to come here. Also, we now have a good number of seminarians who speak English.

Finally, I am excited that All Saint's has called a new rector, Rev Simon Mainwaring. I am confident that Fr Simon will find All Saints a wonderful parish to lead and serve. It's my pleasure to join All Saint's family in welcoming Fr. Simon and his family to Atlanta.

With love, peace, and blessing

**Emmanuel C. Bwatta**

**DEAN**