

## Important Information Challenges and Bishop's Appeal

My brothers and sisters in Christ, the poor life and harsh situation of our people live in the Eparchy required the community of the Eparchy and I to ask your generous donations and your prayers. Your donations will assist the Eparchy's community to fulfill its need in order to continue its spiritual work in catechesis, to support the Catholic schools, and to sustain the Social causes including to assist with HIV/AIDS patients and health clinics. Furthermore, your generous donations help to build a much needed new seminary for our secondary school students. In fact, continuity of our faith depends on educating tomorrow's priests.

My brothers and sisters, we share the same faith, celebrate the same Eucharist, and worship the same Father. It is with this conviction that I am kindly requesting for your generous monetary assistance and your prayers. Your donation, made in secret, will be rewarded in public by Jesus Himself when He said: "Come, you blessed, take your heritage in the Kingdom prepared for you since the foundation of the World. For I was hungry and you gave me food. For I was thirsty and you gave me drink, Naked and you clothed me, I tell you solemnly, in so far you did this to the least of these brothers of mine you did it for me." *Matthew 25:34*



### Bishop's Mission Appeal for the Birth and Growth of the Eparchy of Segheneity, Eritrea



### Catholic Eparchy of Segheneity

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## Background Information

Eritrea is located on the horn of Africa along the coast of the Red Sea; it is the youngest country in Africa. Due to its geographical location on the Red Sea, Eritrea has seen several wars and occupations throughout its history: by the Greeks, Ottomans Turks, Arabs, Italians, and the British; and finally, by the Ethiopians. This resulted in a 30 plus years of ruthless and vicious war, until its independence was won in 1991.

The new Eparchy (Diocese) of Segheneity erected by the apostolic constitution on the 24th of February 2012. This new Eparchy of Segheneity is built in a territory which include the ancient harbor of Adulis, a Bethlehem of Christian civilization for both Eritrea and Ethiopia. Its territory consists of 29,499 square kilometer with the total population of 900,000 of whom 36,000 are Catholics.

In the new Eparchy of Segheneity there are 51 parishes and chapels, 14 Catholic schools, 9 health centers, and 2 hospitals. Furthermore, there are 5 male religious orders (Capuchin Friars, Cistercians Monks, Comboni Father, Vincentians named in the local language Lazaristy, and Salisian St. John of Don Bosco) and 9 female Orders (The Good Shepard, the Good Samaritan, Sisters of Capuchin, Clarisse Sisters, Sisters of Daughter of Charity, Sisters of St Ann, Orsoline Sisters, Philipin Sisters of St. Lucia, and Comboni Sisters).

Despite its minority status in number, the Catholic Church in Eritrea is a living witness of the gospel and by far, the most respected in the country. As our people struggle with a multitude of serious difficulties that hamper development, the Catholic Church provides pastoral work, supports orphans, assists with HIV/AIDS patients, runs schools and health clinics, counsels war trauma victims, and promotes peace and reconciliation of this region. “Living the Gospel in Faith, Hope and Charity” serves as a reminder to this call.

## History of Our Faith

One of the earliest converts to Christianity is mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles (Acts 8: 26 – 39). Philip baptized an Ethiopian eunuch of the Queen of Ethiopia.

When Saint Frumentius arrived in Axum (345) as a bishop he represented a continuation of apostolic succession since he had been consecrated by Saint Athanasius, who died as a martyr for his fidelity to the faith received from the Apostles and as expressed at the Council of Nicaea (325).

In 1788, an Orthodox monk, Tobia Giorgis Gebregziabhier, went to Rome and was converted to the catholic faith. This monk studied at Urban College and was consecrated Bishop and Apostolic Vicar of Adulis. He later evangelized in part of Eritrea (Shumezana area) and in part of Ethiopia (Tigray) for eight years.

March 10, 1839 St Justin de Jacobis was sent by the Holy See, Pope Gregory XVI to Evangelize in Abyssinia which included Eritrea and northern Ethiopia. Saint Justin De Jacobis declared his purpose in coming to Abyssinia when he said: “I have come to tell you that the Christians of Rome wish to be united with the Christians of Abyssinia...so that together we may preach one faith, one church, one love...” St. Justin de Jacobis suffered several persecutions by the local land lords of Southern Eritrea and Northern Ethiopia. He eventually traveled to Hebo where his cemetery is now found and to Akkur where himself. Akkur was the center of administration until 1920. When Segheneity become a regional center of civil administration, it was initially thought Segheneity would become the center of Catholic administration. But in 1913 before the transfer of residency from Akkur to Segheneity, St. Micheal School was built which played a key role in the formation of civil and religious leaders in Eritrea and Ethiopia. In 1868, the people of Segheneity were converted to Catholic faith by father Del Monte, the Superior of the Vincentians.