

The answers to the questions some of you asked me to find out about while on my Mission in the Diocese of Toliara.

Medical facilities-Some communities have clinics people can visit. St Luke's in Toliara town runs a clinic/hospital but the main hospital is in Antanarivo.

Pharmacies have limited medical equipment often from India and China and can be bought over the counter without a prescription.

The Diocese staff, have health insurance, plus children under the child sponsorship scheme. The parents pay and are then reimbursed by the Diocese.

There are no similar schemes in the outreach villages, however a medical Dr and her family have just arrived from Australia, to join the Diocese and they hope to start peripatetic clinics, once her documents are made official by the Madagascar government.

People have to pay for their Leprosy treatment.

The Centre for Medical Control has a ship visiting Madagascar from Feb-Dec 2024. It was currently in the Port of Tomasina on the East coast.

Gospel support-There is a paper leaflet called 'Rooted in Jesus'. Adults learn Bible verses. If they pass a test they can teach the course at their churches. Some have Sunday school at their church buildings or under trees, singing hymns, dancing and children pick up the words of the hymns which are sung from memory.

There are no Braille Bibles or taped readings - very few books in schools. The people receive Bibles at their confirmation and can buy prayer books which contain hymns in the Cathedral Compound .

Priests from the Cathedral compound visit the sick and have a little service, sing and say prayers. Deacons, Priests, Evangelists and Catachists visit those known to them in the villages, who aren't well.

Export of crafts-Victor's wife Nolavy, who's contact details I have, is the person to contact for possible exporting the necklaces, shell earrings, angels and decorated eggs made of paper and little bags with zips. They are available at the Cathedral Women's

Centre but some sort of quality control would be imperative?

The Women's Centre in Mangily are looking for places like local beach hotels to sell their crafts.

Farming and Agriculture-The farming methods are antiquated and there is resistance to change. Crops depends on the amount of water available. Flood areas are OK, when they are not flooded, and fairly productive.

Crops include rice, sugar cane, sweet potatoes, peppers, cucumbers, casava, lettuces, tomatoes, leeks, garlic, an assortment of peas and beans, artichokes and redbeet. As regards fruits there are mangoes, pineapples, oranges, pawpaws, bananas, guava, passionfruit, soursop, baobab, coconut, avocado, custard apple, Malay apples, tamarind, breadfruit, rambutan, persimons and jackfruit.

Animals - Zebu cattle for pulling carts, ploughing and for meat, plus goats, chickens, ducks, geese and some turkeys.

The villagers around St Augustin, where Deacon Tomboasy lives, fish in the river mouth and have enough to sell. The church in Fenoarivo village is 17kms away.

The Cathedral Complex and Links with the local community. The buildings in the complex include, the Bishop's house with offices on the ground floor. There is a theological college, library, though in English, so not used much. Computers for students, who come from all over the island. There are kitchens and bathrooms, so some sleeping accommodation. A house for the Archdeacon Rev Noel and family, 4 flats for teachers and accommodation in Cheryl's House, which has rooms for 2 doctors upstairs but no-one is using the downstairs rooms at present. There is also another house block for 2 families.

There is a 'Walk it and Pray' Labyrinth, made of little white stones and a children's playground. Paths are outlined in little white stones. The Women's Centre has a kitchen with a store cupboard, an office, a one roomed apartment with a bathroom and a big room for the local women to come in and make the crafts, for which they get payment and the crafts are later sold. It is also used for celebratory meals which the women cook. We had a big meal there after four deacons were ordained as Reverends and when John Griffin was made a lay Canon. John, with his financial management skills, also helps run the Child Sponsorship Scheme which is based at the Cathedral.

The country has civil marriages and people can have blessings in their churches. People are buried very quickly and can have funerals in churches on request as well as baptisms for

adults and children. There are a range of different Christian organisations in Madagacar.
The Muslim population attend their local Mosques.

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