

## **“The Dawn is Here at Last” a personal reflection from Bishop Bismark Avokaya of Mundri diocese**

Thank you very much indeed for your prayers. We are enormously grateful to God for his gracious gift of freedom and liberty at last. When the old flag of Khartoum of oppression and all forms of sectarianism, racial discrimination, injustice etc was being lowered down and the new flag of independence, freedom and liberty was being lifted high!!! It became so emotional and most of us shed tears of joy in the process!



The previous day or on Friday, in our Cathedral we had organized especial prayers for the dedication of the new Nation to God and we called on all our people to take part including the County Commissioner and the heads of the departments. Many turned up for the service. And we interceded for the orphans, widows and widowers, war victims including the amputees, those internally displaced into Khartoum and are in need of returning to South but are stranded at Kosti, the exiled etc. Also we prayed for the Government leaders, the Church etc. But we also prayed for the conflict areas of Abyei, South Kordofan, Nuba Mountains in general and the Blue Nile. Because we firmly believe unless these areas are free as well, we shall never really be free.

And then I officiated at the special prayers for our land and river waters. So we literally brought some soil and river water into the service. Because we know we had lost a lot of innocent people over the years on this land whose blood are certainly crying out to God like the blood of Abel which may bring curse instead of blessing on the land!! Hence we cried to God in prayer for God's forgiveness. And finally I led the prayers of dedication of the nation to God in which I dedicated the copy of the local land act, the copy of the National Constitution, the new flag, and the State flag to God in prayer. Believing unless the Lord builds, the work of the builders are in vain and unless the Lord guards the city, those who stand guard are in vain as the Psalmist says in (Ps. 127:1f). We emphasized that let this new flag remind us of God's grace every time we see it, because if it were not God, we won't have this gift of freedom...

And we ended the service with the celebration of the Holy Communion for yet another great reminder that although we celebrate this political freedom, we should never forget that the greatest freedom offered to us by Jesus supersedes this temporal freedom. Moreover we should forget that he will soon or later return to take us to his glory... It was such an emotional and heart searching service and was much appreciated.

Presumably this prompted the Commissioner to ask the Bishop of Mundri at the event of actual lifting of the flag at the County Head Office the following day to offer the prayers of the dedication for the new flag again.

Therefore, we thank you very much for your prayers and thoughts about us in this new dispensation.