

Official Anglican Communion Press Release

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Anglican Communion confirms inauguration of the Episcopal / Anglican Province of Alexandria

The international secretariat of the Anglican Communion – the global family of churches linked to the Archbishop of Canterbury – has confirmed the inauguration of its newest member: The Episcopal / Anglican Province of Alexandria. The new Province, rooted in Egypt and serving 10 countries across North Africa and the Horn of Africa – becomes the Anglican Communion’s 41st Province. It was formed from the former Diocese of Egypt with North Africa and the Horn of Africa, within the Episcopal / Anglican Province of Jerusalem and the Middle East.

The announcement was made today by the Secretary General of the Anglican Communion, Archbishop Josiah Idowu-Fearon; and welcomed by the Archbishop of Canterbury, Archbishop Justin Welby.

Named after the ancient city in the north of Egypt – seat of one of the most historic roots of the Christian church – the new Episcopal / Anglican Province of Alexandria will be the official Anglican Communion presence in Egypt, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, Chad, Mauritania, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Djibouti and Somalia.

The new Anglican Province will have four dioceses: Egypt, North Africa, the Horn of Africa, and Gambella. In addition to its spiritual ministry, the new province will continue the work of the former diocese in community development, healthcare and education. It will also continue to play a leading role in ecumenical and interfaith dialogue within the Anglican Communion.

The first Primate of the new Province will be Archbishop Mouneer Anis, who continues in this role and his existing role as the Anglican Bishop of Egypt until his retirement next year.

In making the announcement, the Secretary General of the Anglican Communion, Archbishop Josiah Idowu-Fearon, said: “In recent years we have seen enormous growth in what was the Diocese of Egypt with North Africa and the Horn of Africa, particularly – but not only – in the Gambella region of Ethiopia. It was one of the largest and most diverse dioceses in the Anglican Communion and also one of the fastest growing regions.

“It is great credit to Archbishop Mouneer and the clergy and people of the diocese that this growth occurred in spite of the great cultural diversity and complex political situations in the region it serves.

“The transition from an Anglican diocese in the Province of the Episcopal Church of Jerusalem and the Middle East to four dioceses in a new Episcopal / Anglican Province of Alexandria will provide a great foundation for further growth and stability for Anglican Christians in the region; and I warmly congratulate the new Province on its transition.

“I look forward to the time when I and other Anglican leaders across the world can travel to Egypt to celebrate the inauguration of this, the 41st Province of the Anglican Communion.”

The Archbishop of Canterbury, the Most Reverend and Right Honourable Justin Welby, said that he was “absolutely delighted” to welcome the inauguration of the new Episcopal / Anglican Province of Alexandria as the 41st Province of the Anglican Communion, saying: “Of course it has been part of the Anglican Communion for very many years, going right back into the past. It has been part of the Episcopal Province of Jerusalem and the Middle East but now with growth and development and the planting of churches in the Horn of Africa and elsewhere; with its service to its community regardless of ethnicity or of religion, it has grown to the point where it is now becoming an independent Province.

“Circumstances mean that I have not been able to go and join them as I would have liked to have done; but that makes no difference, for God is with them. In Jesus Christ they are full of life and hope; by the power of the Spirit they are continuing to serve and love amidst challenges that every church faces.

“Although I will not be there physically, I will be there to pray for them Spiritually, alongside them, rejoicing with them. And I ask the whole Anglican Communion to join in thanks, in joy, in celebration and in intercession, for this new 41st Province, for Archbishop Mouneer, for all its clergy and people, for the whole range of this Province of Alexandria – such a historic name in such a historic area. May it draw on the history of the saints and their inspiration; and may it proclaim the Gospel afresh in this generation. Amen!”

The new Primate, Archbishop Mouneer Anis, said: “All my colleagues and I thank God for His goodness. He fulfilled our dreams. We are also grateful for all the support we receive from Archbishop Justin Welby, the Archbishop of Canterbury; Archbishop Josiah Idowu-Fearon, Secretary General of the Anglican Communion; all the Primates of the Anglican Communion, the Anglican Consultative Council (ACC) and our colleagues at the Anglican Communion Office and Lambeth Palace for their hard work.

“We are aware that many brothers and sisters, who served before us, have sown many seeds and now we are harvesting. May the Lord keep us faithful to Him and to the Gospel of Jesus Christ”.

He added: “the early church in Alexandria has shaped the Christian thought of the whole world during the first millennium. It is our prayers that the new Province of Alexandria would do the same during the third millennium.

“As a new member of the worldwide Anglican Communion, the Province of Alexandria, commit ourselves afresh to our Triune God and His mission. We also pray so that the Lord may use us to bring peace and reconciliation in our region”.

Archbishop Michael Lewis, Primate of the Episcopal Church of Jerusalem and the Middle East and the Bishop of Cyprus and the Gulf, said: “On behalf of all of us in the Anglican Province of Jerusalem and the Middle East I send heartfelt prayers and good wishes to our brothers and sisters in the existing Diocese of Egypt with North Africa and the Horn of Africa.

“They have for many years been an integral and valued part of our Province. Now we bless them on their way towards being inaugurated as the new Province of Alexandria. As in the past, so in the future, they will live out the unchanging worldwide Anglican calling of faithful worship, loving service, and welcome to all.

“A new phase in the life of Anglican presence and engagement in north-east Africa is beginning. From Algeria through Egypt to Ethiopia and in all neighbouring nations they will by God's grace be a blessing to their communities and peoples.”

Other Anglican leaders also welcomed the new Province. The Primate of the Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hui, Archbishop Paul Kwong, is Chair of the Anglican Consultative Council, one of the Anglican Communion's Instruments of Unity.

He offered his congratulations to Archbishop Mouneer “with great pleasure” and described the territory of the new Province as being “lands full of rich, diverse and historic civilisations, cultures, religions and socio-politics.”

“The Province named after Alexandria, the famous ancient home to a lighthouse ranking among the seven wonders of the world, a storied library and a seat of learning, will have a lot to offer equally and significantly to the Anglican Communion today”, he said. “I am convinced that the new Province will play a much larger role in Inter-faith dialogue and involve more actively in health care ministry than the former diocese once committed.

“I look forward to serving with Archbishop Mouneer in the Communion.”

The Episcopal / Anglican Province of Alexandria will be a member of the Council of Anglican Provinces in Africa (CAPA). Its Chair, the Primate of Central Africa and Bishop of Northern Zambia, Archbishop Albert Chama, said: “We as CAPA on the continent of Africa welcome the formation of the Episcopal / Anglican Province of Egypt.

“Egypt has been a very important and strategic diocese for the Church in North and the Horn of Africa. The formation of the new Province of Egypt certainly will open a new chapter in the life of the Anglican Communion on the continent of Africa, and also this will stimulate the growth of the Anglican Church in North and the Horn of Africa itself.

“The former diocese of Egypt has played a vital role in inter-faith dialogue given the environment in which the Church operates. The new Province will certainly be a big player in fostering peace and reconciliation in the region. Already the former diocese has been helping the refugees from South Sudan and other countries along its borders.

“Therefore, the new Episcopal / Anglican Province of Alexandria will create more opportunities to expand her ministries beyond the North and Horn of Africa. The diocese of Egypt has been championing the ministry of healthcare, not only for people inside Egypt but even for people who came from other neighbouring states.

“The new Province is very strategic for the growth of Church. The critical role she is expected to play is that of inter-faith dialogue, as a means of encouraging people of different faiths to live together as they have done before, though this chapter will provide them with more influence as they act as one of the Provinces in the Anglican Communion worldwide.”

“CAPA wishes the new Province God’s blessings and pray it will be prosperous in her mission and ministries in the global family of the Anglican Communion.”

The General Secretary of CAPA, the Venerable J W Kofi deGraft-Johnson, added his congratulations, saying: “We are delighted to read of the birthing of the new Province of Alexandria to consolidate the long history of Anglicanism and the work of Anglicans in Egypt, North Africa and the Horn of Africa.

“Alexandria, could not have been a better name considering its place in Church history and as a seat of knowledge both for the Church and ancient civilisation.

“The birthing of the Province of Alexandria therefore provides greater opportunity for the Anglican Communion in Africa for fuller continental expression. This will enhance the role of the former Diocese of Egypt in building on the social transformation and inter-faith ministries within the North Africa region, across the continent and within the wider Anglican Communion in general.

“It is indeed a most welcome news to the Anglican Communion in Africa and a celebration of the contribution of the former Diocese of Egypt to the ongoing work of the Council of Anglican Provinces of Africa (CAPA).”

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NOTES

1. To become a province of the Anglican Communion, the proposal must be endorsed by the Standing Committee of the Anglican Consultative Council and approved by two-thirds of the Primates – the senior bishop, archbishop or Moderator of each province. The proposal to affirm the Episcopal / Anglican Province of Alexandria was endorsed by the Standing Committee in January 2020; and it received the unanimous support of the Primates gathered for their meeting in Jordan later in January.
2. The new bishops and dioceses are:

Province of Alexandria – Archbishop of Alexandria (Primate) – The Most Revd Dr Mouneer Anis

Diocese of Egypt – Bishop of Egypt – The Most Revd Dr Mouneer Anis

Diocese of Egypt – Coadjutor Bishop of Egypt – The Right Revd Dr Samy Fawzy

Diocese of North Africa – Area Bishop The Right Revd Dr Samy Fawzy

Diocese of the Horn of Africa – Area Bishop – The Right Revd Kuan Kim Seng

Diocese of Gambella – Bishop of Gambella – Vacant

During the transitional five years period, appointments will be made in due course for the bishoprics of North Africa and Gambella.

3. The new Episcopal / Anglican Province of Alexandria has been allocated Sunday 2 August in the Anglican Cycle of Prayer for 2020 – on this day Anglicans around the world will join together in prayer for the new Province.
4. A celebratory service will be held at All Saints Cathedral in Cairo on a date to be fixed once the global Covid-19 pandemic movement and travel restrictions have been lifted. Anglican leaders from around the world are expected to attend to mark the inauguration of the 41st Province of the Anglican Communion.

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