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1st November 2024

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

I wish to commend to you the InterCare Advent Appeal that is being made throughout our diocese. InterCare is celebrating this year its 50th anniversary, and we are being invited to help them raise £50,000. As you may know, I have been a Patron of InterCare for about eight years. InterCare is a small charity, based in Syston, Leicestershire, which collects surplus healthcare goods and medicines in the UK and sends regular consignments to mainly rural health units in sub-Saharan Africa. It supports somewhere around 100 health units across Sierra Leone, Ghana, Malawi and Tanzania. There's only a small team of five paid staff, but the charity is well supported by a team of Trustees and many volunteers and medical advisors. InterCare began its work in 1974 when two local doctors visited Africa and saw the desperate need for medical support. With no free health care service, like the NHS, the poorest people were not receiving the treatment that could save lives and restore better health.

I was very blessed in October 2022 to join two InterCare Trustees on their visit to ten health units in northern Tanzania, in the Catholic Diocese of Moshi. It gave me the opportunity to see for myself the transformational work of InterCare, which I had long applauded and supported. The government hospitals and dispensaries struggle to provide the health care that is needed for the growing population of Tanzania. The reality seemed to be, wherever we travelled throughout our visit, that a very large number of people, particularly in the more rural areas where there isn't much in the way of employment, cannot afford to pay even a small amount towards the costs of the medicines and medical support they desperately need. While the medical health units supported by InterCare do need to ask people to pay a little towards the cost of their medicines, nobody is refused medicines or treatment if they are unable to make even a small contribution. Indeed we came across sick and homeless people who had nowhere to go who were being housed for a time in some of the hospitals long after their treatment had come to an end.

I have seen for myself that the targeted and effective work of InterCare transforms the lives of so many of the poorest and most vulnerable children and adults in Sub-Saharan Africa. For example, I visited Kibosho Hospital, which is featured in the InterCare Advent Newsletter, and I saw for myself the basic conditions mentioned. I also saw the difference that the crucial medical resources provided by InterCare made to the orphans. Please help InterCare to continue their excellent work by supporting financially their Advent Appeal: to raise £50,000 for their funds in celebration of their 50th Anniversary.

With gratitude for anything you can give,

Rt Rev Patrick McKinney
Bishop of Nottingham