**Sheran Harper Address : Zoom MEETING HELD ON JULY 2, 2020 - 2.00pm with Britain and Ireland (B and I) Leadership**

Thank you Adam and thank you B&I for having me join you today on Zoom … this technology is amazing … it may seem as though I am so far away from you but believe me I feel very close to you … because you are all in my heart … I feel as though I am with you delivering groceries on the doorstep of indoor members …. blowing a kiss to them through the window .… I feel as though I am holding one of those beautifully knitted hearts and you are holding the other one, reading the e-book of comfort and sipping a cup of tea with you …. In fact I am right on your doorstep, holding your hand as an MU leader… as a President to a President through all the struggles of COVID-19 and the fears of post COVID-19… reassuring you that by God’s Grace, MU will survive this pandemic and come out stronger on the other side with the capacity to flourish.

I bring you warm and loving greetings from the Worldwide Trustee Board – some of whom are here today; Catherine, June, Jenny, Nikki and Paul – an amazing group of Trustees … Chief Executive Bev is here with us also as well as Adam and the staff of MSH … Thank you to all DPs, PPs and ZTs and anyone else joining us, for giving up your time to be here today … I know you all have such busy busy schedules …

It is a good and joyful thing when God’s people gather together, to spend some time with him as we have just done in worship, to speak about our work and share with each other, to enjoy good fellowship … I always believe when MU meets in such large groups something powerful happens … we never leave through the door the same way as we came in … here I would have to say we would never click off zoom the same way we clicked in … because there is always the expectation that God would speak to us, our hearts … renewing us with inspired vision, wisdom and energy … and all things that seemed like a huge challenge before wither away … and there is the birth of something new in our hearts, something fresh in your branch, something extraordinary in your Diocese and as a province the way becomes clearer…. Because it is God’s will through us that shines forth like a beacon on the hill.

Thank you for all you do for MU, and continue to do, for your faithfulness and your passion. You are the ones that keep us going … you are the ones

that spread the Gospel to the 4 corners of Canterbury, York, Wales, Ireland and Scotland.

Who would have thought that COVID-19 would invade our lives this year and at such notice … causing so many changes – isolation in the lockdown … new ways of working and finding ways of surviving and coping.

Sadly, our Provincial Presidents around the world have reported a massive increase in the struggles with mental health, gender based violence, including sexual violence in homes with women and children being the victims. Many of these stories are still hidden but we are committed in taking a stand, standing together where we need to, our voices must be heard … our actions must speak volumes and end these atrocities … and above all we must pray without ceasing. These are injustices that must be condemned and removed from society … from God’s world.

But as I listen to members speak of the challenges, I also hear them speak of their strong faith and welcoming new opportunities … opportunities that had been lost in their once very busy lives have now been a priority in the lockdown … members have enjoyed strengthening family relationships … spending quality time with their children … something as simple as sharing a meal together or devotion together as a family, is now treasured again …

The lockdown has also impacted MSH greatly as you are aware… the building is still closed so there is no income from our conferencing facilities to meet our operational expenses.

However, it is with a deep sense of gratitude, that I thank you on behalf of the Worldwide Trustee Board and Staff of MSH …. for your kind and generous giving to the Urgent Appeal – the total giving now stands in excess of £720,000 …. Thank you for giving above and beyond all we could ever asked or imagined … thank you for giving MSH hope and a future. Believe me when I say we have prayed as a Board, we have made some tough decisions … and unfortunately we are forced to make some more soon …. And these are not taken lightly at all … we pray for understanding that in an effort to survive the impact of the pandemic, and not only survive but come out stronger and flourishing as we look towards 2021,… we have to be strong. I am confident that our God will supply all our needs with new doors and opportunities opening to us.

It is not only MSH that are looking to survive and flourish, but also every Province and Diocese. But in the midst of it all God will make a way and his grace is sufficient.

But I tell you my friends – have no fear …. for the Lord your God is by your side … MU is his work not ours …. so there is no need for you to worry because he who began the good work of MU will see it through to completion …even to the end of time. I have seen God come through for MU time and time again …

I cannot promise it will be without its challenges - there are always challenges in life … the aim is to never give up … perseverance will be the key, creating new and exciting activities will be the padlock – the way of keeping their interest. Of course it will take a little time … many will be cautious but others will be ready and rearing to go … God’s work cannot die, MU will not die … it will live on from everlasting to everlasting and it is for this reason we exist as MU members.

I would like to stop and hear from you …because your questions will address quite a bit … and I will try my best to answer them now.