



Bishop Nick and Catherine Drayson CMS Partners in the Diocese of Northern Argentina

Bishop Nick Drayson has two main areas of responsibility. Firstly amongst the indigenous churches in the very north of Argentina. This is an area of dry scrub known as the Chaco where the communities are concentrated along the rivers or in the towns along the railway, which runs through the centre of the region. Travelling is often along dust tracks through the thorny forest. The forest and rivers provide a livelihood still for many communities, but it is under attack from developers who are clearing it at an alarming rate, to plant commercial crops.

At recent Diocesan Synod three exciting resolutions were passed.

1. Three men were elected to serve as Assistant Bishops. As the Chaco area is larger than Scotland Nick needs help to pastor the pastors and congregations. These three are undergoing a year of induction and training, travelling with Bishop Nick to be introduced to the villages. Other regional representatives were also chosen to hold local gatherings where the main emphasis will be on Bible teaching.
2. Climate Change. 'This Synod commits itself to work towards reducing climate change especially through Christian education on the topic and with a special focus on protecting native forests'. CMS mission partners Andrew and Maria Leake are very much involved in this area and are working with the diocese to define what can be done in concrete terms to put the statement into practice.
3. The Province of South America has long resisted the move to ordain women to the priesthood. At this Synod the decision was made to approve the ordination of women to the priesthood. This is a local option for each diocese under recent provincial canons. In November there will be ordinations in Salta and Tucumán, including Graciela, who will be the first woman priest.

Catherine gives thanks to God for the formation of Amare, a local branch of the Mothers Union which is empowering women across the region to take practical action based on love for God and neighbour. There are testimonies of changed lives and practical ways in which they are serving families, church and community.

Nick also has oversight of a number of churches in the towns and cities of the Northern Argentina. They are different in character, but again long travelling distances are a consideration. We would recognise many of the activities which take place, Bible teaching, leadership training, Alpha courses, Sunday Schools, summer camps, marriage guidance encounters. Most of the local pastors also have a full time job, and this brings added pressures to bear on their ministry.

What can you be praying for? From a recent letter from Bishop Nick

First of all we thank God for His faithfulness and love. We have a busy first part of the year and expect much of the same

Safety in travel – our colleagues David and Shelley had a lucky escape when their vehicle hit a cow in the dark.

Gracious acceptance of change. People are on the whole ready for new leadership so the election of the bishops and committees is a great encouragement, unless you happen to be from a tribal group where no one was elected.....



Further developments of the families and youth work – events to be held in the second half of the year

New initiatives on Creation Care – the development of a diocesan centre, and ongoing protection of the forests. Pray for those working with government agencies to protect the environment in which the indigenous communities have lived for centuries.

We are grateful for continuing good health, and the love and support of many good friends, in what is often a confusing and demanding calling.

Pray for local churches and their leaders that God will pour out His Spirit and give them renewed vision and energy and keep them faithful to His Word.

Pray that many Argentinians will meet with the Living God and know His leading and guiding in their daily walk.

Thank you
Joyce Ilingworth