**Katsina, Nigeria.**

We pray for the Diocesan President and all Mothers’ Union members in Katsina.

Katsina is in the north of Nigeria, near the [Niger](http://www.britannica.com/place/Niger) border and has a hot semi-arid climate. The city walls surrounding it are about 13 miles in length. Katsina is believed to have been founded around 1100AD. In 1903, the Emir accepted British rule, which continued until Nigerian independence from Britain in 1960.

The city's history of western-style education dates back to the early 1950s, when the first middle school in all of northern Nigeria was established. There are now several institutions of higher learning, including two universities. You may recall the kidnapping of over 300 schoolboys from a boarding school in Katsina on 17th December. This was later claimed to have been carried out by the Islamist group Boko Haram, which name loosely translates as “western education is forbidden”.

Nigeria is a mainly Muslim country and the relationship between Christian and Muslims in mainly Muslim areas is very important. There is also a divide between the urban areas and remote rural areas. Mothers’ Union members ensure that the benefits and support they provide reach right out to the most remote areas.

Cultural practices, especially against women and girls, also presents a major challenge to the Mothers’ Union all over Nigeria. Many of these practices are considered normal or are hidden within communities, such as marriage at a very young age, no or limited access to education, and lack of rights for widows.

Mothers’ Union members are at the heart of local churches, supporting couples as they get married, upholding the couple in prayer and providing pre-marital support and counselling. This moves through the generations as members continue to support and celebrate the marriages of their children and, in turn, their grandchildren.

Members are very active and always willing to be part of all activities, serving both inside and outside the church. Their work in terms of community development is innovative and driven by a passion for those they serve.

We pray for the members in Katsina and the work they carry out in very challenging and difficult circumstances. We also pray for their safety and for the safety of all Christians there.

**Amen**