

## **Katsina, Nigeria.**

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

Nigeria has a population of over 210 million and there are 60,000 MU members. Katsina is in the north of Nigeria, near the border with Niger. It has a hot semi-arid climate. The city walls surrounding it are about 13 miles in length. Katsina is a very old city, believed to have been founded around 1100AD. In 1903, the Emir accepted British rule, which continued until Nigerian independence from Britain in 1960.

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.

Nigeria and Katsina state suffer from a huge level of crime. Bandits, armed robbers, cattle rustlers and kidnappers plague the population. In the last year bandits killed more than 6,000 people in Katsina state. In the same period over 1,300 people, including children and students, were kidnapped. Some were later released on payment of a ransom. Although high numbers these figures showed a reduction in crime over the previous year. We pray for the safety of the population and for solutions to be found to the problems causing this level of crime.

Cultural practices, especially against women and girls, also present 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**