

It is never easy to look forward and adapt to new experiences, especially at perhaps the most difficult time this world has seen in 100 years. The three global crises – the Covid-19 pandemic, climate change and war – allowed little time for deep reflection and preparation, making us feel disoriented and uncomfortable.

In a changing world, it is necessary for us to be willing to be open-minded and adaptive in order to survive and flourish. The changes made in our own lives have taught us to embrace new and immediate ways of coping, and the stories resulting from our timely response to challenges in our dioceses and provinces indicate that our work has been taken to a new level, ensuring we remain relevant to life's opportunities as they are now, and for what they will be in the future.

Claudia's story

Claudia is a committed member in the Diocese of Trinidad and Tobago. She shared her story with me of how she adapted to allow God to use her to transform the lives of others.

Claudia lost her husband and, years later, her son. Both were dark and painful times in her life and, in the aftermath of it all, she

could have allowed herself to be held captive in her own negative thoughts. Instead, in the midst of her grief, Claudia reached forward and grasped the great future that lay ahead of her by holding tight to God's promise in Jeremiah 29:11: "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."

Claudia asked God to make her life in Mothers' Union meaningful so that, through him, she could serve others. She began ministering in a male prison, where she found it fulfilling to listen and pray for penitent fathers. The men were eager to participate in the rehabilitative programmes offered, including the Mothers' Union parenting programme and worship sessions.

Claudia then realised that God was calling her to minister to the boys and teenagers in her parish and community, who were victims of unstable homes and communities. As part of her work at the Youth Training and Rehabilitation Centre (YTRC), she wrote a programme on Attitudinal Skills Training for young men in detention under the age of 18. 'As the boys go through the programme and I talk with them, I could just feel the anger melting away from them as they start to listen,'

explains Claudia. 'If I change the heart of even one of these boys, I know God is working his purpose out.'

Claudia is also involved with the 'Boys to Men' programme in her diocese, helping boys emotionally, physically and spiritually to cope with past traumatic experiences and preparing them for the work environment and family life in the future. An MU Parenting Facilitator, she also engages with young teenage mothers, encouraging them to attend parenting sessions so they can enhance their skills.

I saw Claudia recently. She was peaceful and so thankful that her nurturing and guidance continue to transform the lives of young men and women.

Acts of love

Like Claudia, members around the world have been called to adapt their ways of working and thinking to make contributions to a variety of difficult situations. These little acts of love all around the world makes the work of Mothers' Union purposeful. Together with the willing, open-minded and adaptive hearts of members, Mothers' Union is able to offer new and transformative ways of coping in times of difficulty.

In all things, the beauty of our members lies in their unwavering faith to always find a way where there seems to be no way; a solution to extreme situations; and hope where it has long been forgotten. When faced with difficult situations, our members take comfort in knowing that God's promise is not to rescue us from suffering, but rather to create the kind of change needed to prosper us and give us hope, so we can move forward to that place that God has destined for his people.

It is my fervent prayer that, during this season of transformation, we emerge from the cocoon as bright and flourishing butterflies, adaptive in an ever-changing world and filled with a spirit of open-mindedness, ensuring the same agility we found during the pandemic is not lost. Strengthened by our togetherness, we must seize every opportunity to use the blessings presented to us as part of our personal growth and for the future of our beloved Mothers' Union. This will not always be easy; it will take every ounce of our faith to push us forward to take risks and step out of our comfort zones. The results will be above and beyond all we can ask or imagine – for with God nothing shall be impossible.



Sheran Harper encourages us that we can adjust and thrive in a turbulent world

CHANGING HEARTS IN CHANGING TIMES

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