**President’s remarks to Council 16. 04. 2021**

Mary Sumner, in her personal prayer, asked that she might ‘touch as many lives as possible for God’. During the pandemic, it has been heartening to see so many members doing just that. At a time when so many were under enormous stress – particularly women confined in homes where Domestic Abuse was an everyday experience – we have reached out, through AFIA holidays, and through gifts to help families settle into hostels. Do read again my Annual Report for 2020, and the latest Newsletter, as well as Linda Benneworth’s A&O report - for a flavour of the huge and imaginative range of support that we have been able to give – for instance

* to abused families, to prisoners, to the NHS, to fishermen, to bereaved families, and to the homeless, on Shoe Box Day
* also to each other, as Branch Leaders have faithfully kept in touch with members, to support those who were lonely, or who needed shopping, for instance, to meet in online ‘coffee mornings’ – and to spread the word about Mothers’ Union activities. Huge thanks to all of you for your love and care.
* It has also been heartening to see this happening all over the World, and just last week we should all have received our copy of Connected through the post, knitting us together in prayer and service with members all over the world. Copies are available from Jackie Moore for any member who has not received one through the post.

**Elections** And now we come to the time for Triennial elections. This is an important moment for members of Council, because you are the ones charged with nominating and electing the new Trustees to start work in 2022.

Six years ago, when I was elected President, we had only just moved into Newcastle Diocese, so I was unfamiliar with the area and the people, and did not know what lay ahead. I have been truly blessed by the love and support of two wonderful Vice-Presidents, a hardworking Trustee team, as well as our Secretary, Sandra, our Treasurer, Dorothy, and Chaplain Sarah, and Journal editor Lesley – we have worked together as a team, taking Mothers’ Union forward, especially during this challenging time. Now many of these Trustees are coming to the end of their second 3-year term, so cannot be re-elected to the same role – although they could stand for another position for 2022.

Do encourage and support one another in identifying those with the enthusiasm and commitment to take on a new role. Our Worldwide President, Sheran, urges us to approach elections prayerfully, guided by the Holy Spirit.

**‘God doesn’t call the equipped – He equips those he calls’**

and you can be assured of the love and support of others in the team, as I have found.

On the back of your Agenda paper you will see the list of those posts needing to be filled, to start in 2022. These are just the Diocesan Trustee roles, and Sandra will shortly send out nomination forms and role descriptions for each role, starting with Diocesan President. Deanery leaders and Branch Leaders will be elected within the Deaneries, later in the year. If you care about the life and outreach of Mothers’ Union, please consider taking a leadership role, or a role in supporting one of our projects.

Meanwhile we look forward to the opportunity to meet in person within our Branches, but I hope we will not loose the new ways of communication that we have learned this last year.