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CATHOLIC CHURCH **NEWS**



YOUNG COMMUNICATORS
MOURN POPE FRANCIS

YOUTH FILL UP GOKOMERE GROUNDS

THE RESURRECTION: A SIGN AND AN ASSURANCE

FAMILIES SET TO BE REVIVED

AFRICAN THEOLOGAINS DELIBERATE IN GHANA



More than the expression of ideas

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Editor's desk

Dear Reader,

Warm Easter greetings to you and your loved ones.

I trust that this season of Resurrection has brought new hope into your heart, and that you've been touched afresh by the deep mystery we celebrated—the Passion, Death, and glorious Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. This is the very heartbeat of our faith, the source of our courage, and the light that carries us through even in the darkest valleys.

Let me begin by apologising for the delay in bringing you this April edition of Catholic Church News. Life, as you know, doesn't always follow our timelines. But I truly hope what we have gathered in these pages will still bless and uplift you—perhaps even more so, now that the Easter joy has had time to settle into the ordinary rhythm of our days.

April brought us both celebration and sorrow. Just as we were singing "Alleluia" on Easter Sunday, our hearts were soon heavy with the news of Pope Francis' passing on Easter Monday. The Holy Father, who served the Church so tenderly for over a decade, has returned to the Father. In this issue, we honour his life with a heartfelt obituary, and we share how our young Catholic communicators responded to the loss of a shepherd they admired deeply. But the Resurrection is always stronger than the grave.

From St. Josephs' Parish in Hatfield, Harare, we share a story of couples who've walked the journey of marriage for years—receiving their Papal blessings on Easter Sunday. Their witness reminds us that enduring love is still possible, still beautiful, still worth celebrating.

Our youth also rose up in great numbers—quite literally—during their Jubilee Congress at Gokomere Mission in Masvingo. The energy, joy, and faith they radiated were contagious. If ever you've wondered whether there's hope for the future of the Church in Zimbabwe, just read their story and smile.

As your Church, we continue to walk alongside families and communities. Caritas Zimbabwe held a strategic board meeting to enhance professionalism in its mission, while the Education Commission gathered to expand their Safe Schools Project—ensuring more children learn in safe and nurturing environments.

The Family and Marriage Apostolate launched a powerful initiative through the Faithful House programme, training couples who will go on to strengthen marriages across all dioceses. When the family is healthy, society has a chance. This project brings us one step closer to that vision.

The Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace in Zimbabwe, for its part, continues to raise its prophetic voice as it highlights the threats confronting the SADC region. Our hope is that the relevant authorities will take note—if they haven't already begun addressing these regional concerns.

And in true Easter spirit, the faithful of St. Francis Xavier Parish hosted a luncheon to honour priests in the Archdiocese of Harare. What a simple yet profound gesture of love! Our clergy carry immense responsibilities—often quietly, often alone. Recognising them in this way speaks volumes about the heart of the people they serve.

Finally, to keep your Easter flame burning, we've included a reflection article that speaks of hope even in adversity. May it reach your heart, especially if you're going through a season of difficulty.

Thank you for being a faithful reader of Catholic Church News. Your presence, though unseen, matters deeply to us. May the Risen Lord renew your strength, your faith, and your joy—every day.

With Easter blessings,

Fr. Johnston Z. Mlambo

Editor, Catholic Church News



'Sprinkle your phones with Holy Water every day when you wake up,' says Bishop Paul Horan

By Tricia P Mlambo

The National Youth Jubilee Year 2025 Congress, held from the 24th to the 27th April in Masvingo, brought together over 2,200 young Catholics from across Zimbabwe for a vibrant celebration of faith, fellowship, and youthful zeal.

With a packed programme of talks, liturgical celebrations, and recreational activities, the congress encouraged the young people to become more deeply engaged in the life of the Church and to play an active role in shaping the social and political fabric of



Participants move joyfully to the Shrine



Participants showcase their diverse charisms in unizone during Mass

Zimbabwe.

A recurring message throughout the congress was the responsible and faith-driven use of digital tools. The youth were urged to harness their phones and tablets not only for entertainment but also as instruments to deepen their understanding of the Cath-

olic faith and to evangelise through digital platforms. In a humorous moment that drew warm laughter, the President of the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops' Conference (ZCBC), Bishop Paul Horan, advised the youth to "sprinkle Holy Water on your phones each morning"—a light-heart-

ed yet profound reminder to use their gadgets responsibly. In his address, the Apostolic Nuncio to Zimbabwe spoke about the journey of faith, likening young people to pilgrims—always ready to move forward, never alone, but accompanied by God and the community. He invited them

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to reflect deeply on love, asking, "What space does love have in your life?" and challenged them to consider what Jesus sees when He looks at them. "He sees both your fragility and your deep desire to be loved," the Nuncio said. He reminded the youth that love, happiness, and the call to eternal life are central to their Christian journey. Adding to the spiritual reflection, international guest speaker



The Nuncio during the procession

Wolfgang Hering spoke passionately about the sanctity of life, underlining that abortion is a grave sin regardless of intent. He emphasised the importance of loving one another—and not forgetting to love oneself. Following Mass at the shrine, the atmosphere shifted to one of exuberance and celebration with the much-anticipated Sports and Colour Run. It was a day filled with energy and joy. Games such as soccer, basketball, *maflawu*, and traditional circle games brought everyone together in laughter and camaraderie. Whether participating or cheering from the sidelines, the youthful spirit was undeniable. The soccer matches were a highlight, showcasing both passion and sportsmanship. Harare (Cathedral) stood out with two thrilling 1-0 victories—first against Masvingo, then against Western Deanery (Harare). The cheers from the crowd and the competitive spirit on the field made for truly unforgettable moments. As the day wound down, the celebrations rose to a crescendo with a powerful musical performance by ROMAC.



Bishop Rev Mupandasekwa walks into the church

The group delivered an electrifying set that left the crowd on a high—a fitting conclusion to a weekend brimming with faith and festivity. The youth expressed great satisfaction with the Congress. One participant from Masvingo Diocese remarked, "The congress was educative, and the lessons were so insightful." Pamela Mabhiza from Gweru, now based in Bulawayo, said the event was amazing, adding in vernacular, "icongress yay-imnandi."



ROMAC delivers a breathtaking performance



Fr Mhepo conducts The Holy Adoration

attendees—these were handled with grace and efficiency. Managing such a large crowd was occasionally difficult, but the organisers rose to the occasion.

Special thanks go to the dedicated organising team and to the Bishop of Masvingo, Rt. Rev. Raymond Mupandasekwa, for making the Congress a resounding success.

From prayer to play, reflection to rhythm, everything came together beautifully. This was more than just a Congress—it was a jubilee of joy, unity, and unforgettable memories. Simply put, "grateful" doesn't even begin to cover it.

Fatima Madeira from Chinhoyi shared, "The congress was amazing. We thought they were going to increase the number of days here." Another youth from Chinhoyi said, "The congress was very great. We had quite an experience. Meeting different cultures and learning new things was a great experience." Samantha Nyamande, the organising secretary for Chinhoyi, echoed this sentiment: "I think, zvese zvakafamba zvakakanaka. The congress was very good."

Though there were a few logistical challenges—mainly due to the large number of



Participants lift their voices in harmony



Soccer players maneuver across the soccer field



Attendees sway, so lost in rhythm



Attendees rock in vintage outfits



The seven couples show congregants their papal blessing certificates

Faith, love and endurance: seven couples celebrate remarkable wedding anniversaries at Easter

By Fr. Johnston Z. Mlambo

While the Catholic Christians worldwide celebrated Christ's victory over death and the triumph of divine love as they rejoiced in the resurrection of the Lord on Easter Sunday, seven couples from St. Joseph's Parish in Hatfield, Harare, had an additional cause for celebration. They celebrated love that persists through challenges, changes, and even suffering.

These couples were officially presented with Papal Blessings, recognising the strength and longevity of their unions. Among them, two couples celebrated 30 years of marriage: Mr. Francis and Mrs. Patricia Muriva, and Mr. Gilbert Thokozani and Mrs. Abigail Nyarai Mpofu.

Three couples celebrated 45 years of holy matrimony: Mr. Lawrence and Mrs. Susan Muranzi; Mr. Camillus and

Mrs. Philisia Mandeya; and Mr. Cosmas Elias and Mrs. Phildah Murindagomo.

Mr. Thomas and Mrs. Elnorah Mahasoh marked 50 years together, while the longest-married couple, Mr. Elifas and Mrs. Constance Makombe, celebrated an extraordinary 55 years of marriage.

These anniversaries are particularly noteworthy in light of rising divorce rates.

According to The Herald (10 February 2025), Zimbabwe recorded a sharp increase in divorce cases in 2024, with 3,214 cases filed—up from 2,149 in 2023.

Each couple has a unique story of love, faith, and perseverance.

Mr. and Mrs. Muranzi attribute their 45-year journey to divine guidance.

"We thank God who has enabled us to reach this point," said Mr. Muranzi.

The couple met in St. Mary's, Chitungwiza, in the early 1980s—he was a teacher at Chaminuka Primary School, and she was a nurse at a local clinic.

They were married in August 1980 and are blessed with six children (five daughters and one son) and nine grandchildren.

Most of their children are now based in the diaspora. Offering advice to younger couples, Mr. Muranzi said, "They must have love between them and keep their faith. Surrender everything to God."

Celebrating 45 years of marriage, Mr. and Mrs. Mandeya credit their Catholic faith and strong role models for their lasting union.

"Keeping our Catholic faith is what helped us. We also had some good models around us," said Mr. Mandeya.

Mrs. Mandeya shared their



Fr. Makokowe shows his parishioners a papal blessing certificate

romantic story with nostalgia.

"We met when I was a student nurse at Howard Mission.

"He was working for the railways. One day I was struggling with my luggage, and he offered me a lift. At first, I refused—my mother had warned me against getting into strangers' cars. But he insisted, calling me his 'little sister.' It turned out he knew my brother from work. He drove me to my brother's place, took my address, and soon after, letters started arriving. That's how it all began."

Although they came from different backgrounds—she from Rusape, he from Honde Valley—their union blossomed into a life-long bond.

Mr. and Mrs. Murindagomo, married for 45 years, also point to God as the cornerstone of their union. "God's love has taken us this far," said Mr. Murindagomo. The couple has ten children (three of whom are deceased) and 15 grandchildren.

Mrs. Murindagomo added,

"We urge young couples to remain united with God. If they distance themselves from Him, they won't succeed. God's love protects us. It keeps us from evil because we fear Him."

For Mr. and Mrs. Mpfu, love and communication have been key over their 30 years of marriage. "We met at St. Anthony's in Bulawayo," recalled Mrs. Mpfu.

Although from different denominations—he is Methodist, and she is Catholic—the couple agreed to maintain her Catholic affiliation.

"It's love that has kept us together. Challenges will always come, but finding ways to overcome them strengthens the bond," said Mr. Mpfu. They have two children, aged 30 and 25.

Mrs. Mpfu chimed in, "It's about love and communication. Young couples must take time to truly understand each other. When you do, you can tolerate even what you may not like because you communicate and love each other."

This special Easter celebration at St. Joseph's Parish was a testament to the power of faith, perseverance, and unconditional love. In a world where many marriages struggle to stand the test of time, these couples offer hope and inspiration—proving that with God's grace, commitment, and mutual understanding, love can indeed endure all things.

Easter is the feast of hope. A lasting marriage, especially in today's world, is a powerful sign of hope to the Church and society. It reflects the hope that love, rooted in Christ, is possible and fruitful.



Children walk in a procession carrying the certificate.



Fr. Makokowe congratulates one of the jubilarians.

Pope Francis: The People's Shepherd who transformed the papacy

By Fr. Johnston Z. Mlambo

"At 7:35 this morning, the Bishop of Rome, Francis, returned to the home of the Father. His entire life was dedicated to the service of the Lord and of his Church." These words from Cardinal Kevin Farrell, the Vatican Camerlengo, transformed what had begun as an ordinary Easter Monday, 21 April 2025, into a day of sorrow and mourning.

A dark cloud was thus cast not only over the entire Catholic Church but also the world at large.

Pope Francis had been battling a severe respiratory illness for several weeks.

He was first admitted to Gemelli Hospital in Rome, Italy, on 14 February 2025, after struggling with breathing difficulties.

Though discharged on 24 March after weeks of treatment, his health continued to deteriorate.

Speaking at a recently held bishops' plenary, Bishop Raphael Ncube noted that Pope Francis was already visibly unwell when they attended the second session of the XVI Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, held from 2 to 27 October 2024.

Pope Francis leaves behind a profound and enduring legacy.

His 12-year papacy was not only marked by simplicity and humility but also by a radical reorientation of the Catholic Church toward the margins of society, where the poor, the excluded, and the forgotten dwell.

Heralded globally as "The



People's Pope", Pope Francis challenged long-standing traditions, opened the Church to dialogue, and consistently placed compassion at the heart of Catholic witness.

From the beginning of his pontificate in March 2013, Jorge Mario Bergoglio – the first Pope from Latin America and the first Jesuit to ascend to the Chair of Peter – signaled a new tone.

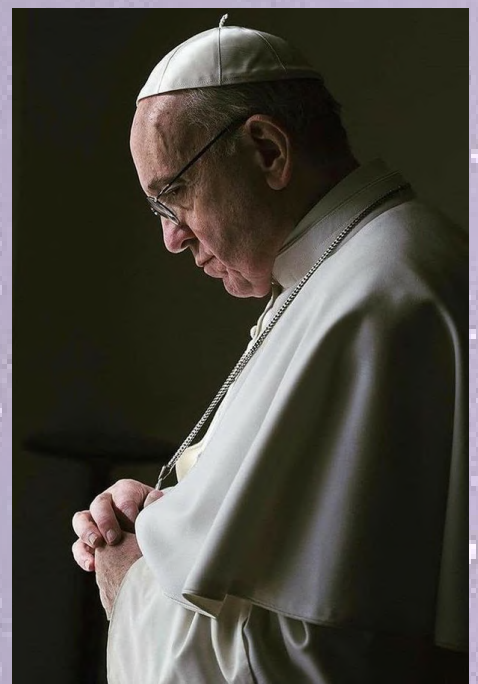
He chose the name Francis after St. Francis of Assisi, the patron of the poor, peace, and ecology.

True to that choice, he opted to reside in the modest Casa Santa Marta rather than the Apostolic Palace, and paid his own hotel bill the morning after his election.

These gestures foreshadowed a papacy committed to authenticity and closeness to the people.

As noted by Euronews, OSV News, and other international media outlets, Pope Francis will be remembered for five iconic moments of humility and moral courage:

1. Washing the Feet of Female



and Muslim Inmates (2013)

During Holy Thursday of his first year as pope, Francis washed the feet of 12 inmates at the Casal del Marmo youth detention centre, including two young women and two Muslims. This act broke centuries of papal tradition and drew criticism from some Church traditionalists, yet it vividly expressed Jesus' radical hospitality and humility. The Vatican said the decision aimed to "communicate a message of love to all."

2. Kissing the Feet of South Su-

danese Leaders (2019)

In an unprecedented moment, Pope Francis knelt and kissed the feet of South Sudanese leaders during a Vatican retreat, pleading with them to uphold peace in their war-torn nation. South Sudanese President Salva Kiir later described it as transformative. Francis reinforced this message during his visit to the country in 2023.

3. Giving Away a Lamborghini (2017)

When gifted a custom Lamborghini Huracán, Pope Francis chose to auction it, raising over €800,000 for charity — including rebuilding Christian communities in Iraq and housing projects for the marginalized. He preferred modest vehicles and openly criticized clerical luxury.

4. Appointing the First Woman to Lead a Vatican Office (2024)

Pope Francis appointed Sister Simona Brambilla as prefect of the Dicastery for Institutes of Consecrated Life — a historic first. He had already opened lay ecclesial ministries to women in 2021. Though he upheld male-only priesthood, he consistently advocated for broader roles for women in Church leadership.

5. Welcoming Refugees from Lesbos (2016)

After visiting the refugee camp on the Greek island of Lesbos, Pope Francis returned to Rome with 12 Syrian refugees. He called the gesture “a drop in the ocean, but the ocean will never be the same,” challenging European migration policies and demonstrating solidarity with the displaced.

Church historian Massimo Faggioli noted that Pope Francis brought a distinct, pastoral approach to global Catholicism.

As a Latin American Jesuit, he emphasised accompaniment and cultural diversity, reimagining evangelisation as encounter rather than conquest.

His landmark encyclicals *Laudato Si'* (2015) and *Laudate Deum* (2023) placed environmental justice firmly at the heart of Catholic social teaching.

His apostolic exhortation *Amoris Laetitia* (2016) proposed a more merciful approach to family life, and his consistent calls for peace — including his courageous yet balanced response to the Israel-Hamas conflict — echoed the Church's prophetic role in a broken world. Veteran Vatican journalist John Thavis ob-

served that Francis “broke the mold of the papacy,” bypassing traditional curial protocols to speak directly to the people.

His lonely *Urbi et Orbi* blessing during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic in an empty, rain-soaked St. Peter's Square remains a powerful symbol of spiritual solidarity.

Kim Daniels, director of the Initiative on Catholic Social Thought at Georgetown University, said Pope Francis embodied a “poor Church for the poor,” living out his exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* — a blueprint for missionary discipleship in a suffering world.

While many praised Pope Francis for his pastoral vision and symbolic gestures, some critics pointed to limitations in governance.

His push for synodality — a more participatory and listening Church — was not always matched by institutional reform.

Faggioli noted a paradox: Pope Francis championed collective discernment but often governed in a highly personalistic style.

How his successor navigates that tension remains an open question.

More than anything, Pope Francis reoriented the papacy from power to service.

His personal gestures — embracing the disabled, dining with the homeless, and listening to the broken — lived out the Gospel visibly.

He urged the Church to accompany rather than judge, to console rather than condemn.

Yet his tenure was not without controversy.

His openness in *Amoris Laetitia*, which allowed sacramental access for some divorced and remarried Catholics, and the 2023 declaration *Fiducia Supplicans*, which permitted the blessing of same-sex couples (though not same-sex unions), triggered significant theological debate. Critics, particularly traditionalists, saw such moves as doctrinal ambiguity or undue accommodation to secular values.

Pope Francis' firm affirmation of the male-only priesthood, alongside his encouragement of women in leadership roles, left some feeling uncertain about the future of ecclesial structure.

Traditionalists feared erosion of apostolic continuity; progressives felt his reforms had not gone far enough.

Indeed, Pope Francis often looked to Africa as the “continent of hope,” praising its strong communal values, youthful population, and deep spiritual vitality.



Pope Francis Kisses the Feet of Prisoners

Yet, the Catholic Church in Africa finds itself caught in the crosswinds of broader Church polarizations — especially on family life, same-sex relations, the role of women, and local autonomy.

As noted in a recent analysis (The Conversation, May 4, 2025), African Catholicism is increasingly challenged to navigate its identity between embracing reform and defending tradition.

One of the long-standing pastoral questions in Africa that remains unresolved is the issue of polygamy.

This culturally and pastorally complex matter was raised during the second session of the XVI Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops in October 2024 and was left specifically for the Church in Africa to reflect on further.

Pope Francis' synodal vision — emphasizing listening, accompaniment, and discernment — offers an opportunity for African bishops and theologians to revisit such challenges within their proper cultural and spiritual contexts.

Despite its explosive growth, African Catholicism still suffers from structural dependence on Rome and Western institutions. Often treated as "mission territory," many African dioceses remain reliant on external funding and theology.

This dependence, critics argue, constrains the contextualization of pastoral priorities.

There is growing momentum for a more

self-reliant African Church — one that reflects its rich cultural heritage and spiritual vitality, independent of Eurocentric norms.

As the Church enters a new chapter under the leadership of a new pope, it stands at a crucial fork in the road.

Will it deepen Pope Francis' vision of a Church that walks with the wounded? Or will it revert to a model of stricter boundaries and centralised control?

Whatever the path ahead, the new pontificate must reckon with the demographic reality: the future of Catholicism lies in the Global South, especially in Africa.

The Church must learn to listen more deeply to these voices — not as peripheral echoes, but as central harmonies in the song of global faith.

Pope Francis' enduring legacy lies in his emphasis on compassion over condemnation, on dialogue over division, and on mission over maintenance.

He reminded the Church that its true strength lies not in power, but in love; not in control, but in mercy.

As we mourn his passing, we celebrate the seeds he planted — seeds that continue to challenge the Church, especially in Africa, to rise, reform, and reimagine itself in the light of Christ.

May the soul of Pope Francis rest in eternal peace.

Serving the servants, a luncheon of appreciation

By Gift Gara



Priests being served lunch

With a heart sunk in faith, he wakes up each morning to serve. He celebrates the holy Mass, sharing the Word of God with his parishioners. As a shepherd, he tends to his flock, listen, and offer counsel. He visits the sick, bringing comfort and hope to those in need. His collar is a symbol of his commitment to serve and love. He is a teacher, a mentor, and a friend, guiding others on their spiritual journey. In times of joy and sorrow, he is there to offer support and guidance. His life is one of service, sacrifice, and love, following in the footsteps of Christ. As a priest, he is humbled and honored to serve the Lord and His people. Who can deny that priests are the unsung heroes of our communities, selflessly spreading love, kindness, and compassion on a daily basis? With such weight of his sacred duties upon his shoulders, he carries the burdens of his flock each day; surely, he deserves a moment of rest and solace.

It is without any doubt that giving the shepherds of souls, the clergy, an annual sabbatical break, is of paramount importance. As this would allow the priests to step away from their daily responsibilities and spend time together to celebrate their vocation, service, and dedication as college priests.

For the past decade, it has become an annual tradition for priests from across the Archdiocese of Harare to gather for a social luncheon. This year, on April 24, 2025, the event marked a significant milestone of 10 years since its inception in 2015.

When the social luncheon was first introduced, Rock Wood Spiritual Center served as the initial venue, hosting priests for the first two years. However, Archbishop R.C. Ndlovu of Harare, recognizing the need for a change of scenery, suggested relocating the event to a more remote location. This move aimed to provide priests with a sense of detachment from their usual spiritual sur-

roundings, allowing them to relax and socialize in a more casual setting.

Mukuvisi Woodlands subsequently emerged as the perfect alternative, offering a serene and tranquil atmosphere. For the past five years, this idyllic setting has remained the preferred venue for the priest's social luncheon, providing an ideal space for relaxation and camaraderie.

The mastermind behind the luncheon, who wished to remain anonymous, shared the inspiration behind the event. "I received a gentle whisper urging me to 'feed the shepherds.' After seeking guidance from Fr. Landsberg, I understood that the Lord's intention was to host a luncheon for priests, offering a much-needed break from their daily responsibilities. And so, this luncheon was born," they explained.

Initially, the support group, Friends of Priests, consisted of parishioners from Breaside. However, over time, it has expanded to include faithful members from St. Gerard's Greystone Park and even some from the Diaspora community.

He continued, "This special day allows priests to participate in various social activities they rarely have time for, such as playing volleyball, darts, and snooker. Additionally, they receive valuable health tips to help manage their physical and mental well-being, a crucial aspect often neglected due to their demanding schedules," he said.

The event was graced by the esteemed presence of His

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Grace, the Archbishop of the Archdiocese of Harare, RC Ndlovu, as the distinguished guest of honour. Other notable attendees included the Vicar General, the very Reverend Fr Muguti and the Secretary to the Archbishop, Fr Murwira. A total of 50 priests converged for this special occasion, making it a truly memorable gathering.

The event kicked off on a high note with the concelebration of the Holy Mass, recognizing the Eucharist as the very heartbeat of the Church. Fr Victor Bushu served as the main celebrant, and Fr Kephass Shambare, gave a homily.

This year's luncheon was bittersweet, marked by both celebration and mourning. While it honored the remarkable life and legacy of His Holiness Pope Francis, it also somberly acknowledged his passing on April 21st, with the priests gathering to mourn the loss of the beloved Pope.

In an interview, Fr. Shambare reflected on this year's event, noting that while it was distinct, it would never lose its joyful spirit. "His Holiness Pope Francis was a beacon of faith, "Even as we mourn his passing, we also celebrate his extraordinary life, honoring the profound impact he had on our lives as priests and the world," he said.

The Mass began with a small group of priests, as many others were occupied with preparations for the Requiem Mass for Pope Francis, which took place later that evening. Despite the absence of musical instruments, the Mass was a vibrant and joyful celebration, disproving the common misconception that music and drumming are necessary for



A nurse checks the priests health

a lively and engaging worship experience.

Following the Mass, priests engaged in leisure activities, savoring breathtaking wildlife views, participating in lively games, and socializing. This respite fostered relationships, community, and relaxation, recharging them after spiritual duties. Enjoyable activities promoted overall well-being and happiness. Ultimately, this leisure time strengthened bonds, unity, and shared purpose among clergy.

This experience echoes the wise words of Pope Francis, who astutely observed, "The priest who does not dedicate sufficient time to relaxation and leisure risks becoming a mediocre minister," highlighting the crucial importance of balance and self-care in the life of clergy.

Medical practitioners from St. Anne's like every year graced the event, sharing with priests series of health care tips and check-ups, emphasizing the importance of physical and mental well-being in carrying out their sacred duties. This thoughtful gesture acknowledged that priests, despite their selfless devotion, are human beings too, deserving of self-care and prioritization of their overall health.

As priests play a vital role in their communities, and their physical and mental well-be-

ing is crucial to effective ministry. A healthy priest is better equipped to serve their congregation with energy and focus. By prioritizing self-care, priests set an example for their flock, demonstrating the importance of overall well-being.

Self-care also helps priests manage stress, reducing burnout and compassion fatigue. Prioritizing mental health enables them to cope with emotional demands, reducing the risk of depression and anxiety. Regular self-care and healthy habits enhance physical resilience, foster spiritual renewal, and promote longevity and sustainability in their ministry. By prioritizing their health, priests can continue to serve their community with vitality and purpose.

"A priest's health is not just a personal matter, but also a matter of pastoral concern, as it affects his ability to serve his flock." Cardinal Donald Wuerl.

Delicious meals were provided for priests, offering a welcome break from their daily duties. Such a gesture demonstrated appreciation for the priests' selfless service, acknowledging their hard work and dedication.

Indeed, it was serving the servant.

The day drew to a close with a heartwarming group photo, capturing the joy and camaraderie shared among the priests.

The priest's social luncheon came to a blessed close, with hearts full of gratitude, bellies full of delicious food, and spirits lifted by the joy of camaraderie and shared ministry.

Reclaiming the Family: Catholic couples equipped to strengthen marriages cross Zimbabwe

By SOCCOM Reporter



A cross-section of the couples during the training.

Harare – In a bold step to fortify the institution of marriage and family life in Zimbabwe, the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops' Conference (ZCBC), through its Family and Marriage Apostolate, successfully conducted a five-day Training of Trainers (ToT) workshop under the Faithful House programme. Held from Tuesday, 29 April to Friday, 2 May 2025, the national workshop brought together married couples from across the country for an intensive and transformative experience.

Hosted at Kentucky Hotel—the Zimbabwe Council of Churches (ZCC) venue in Harare—the workshop followed two earlier introductory sessions held in Harare and Bulawayo in November 2024. Having lived the principles of the Faithful House for five months, participating couples returned for advanced training with renewed passion to serve as facilitators in their dioceses, deaneries, and parishes.

At the heart of the Faithful House programme lies a simple yet powerful truth: the family is the bedrock of society. It is within this sacred unit that values such as love, mutual respect, forgiveness, and collaboration are first nurtured. Yet in today's society—marked by increasing rates of divorce, financial strain, and spiritual apathy—these values are under siege.

Statistics from The Herald (10 February 2025) revealed a sobering reality: Zimbabwe recorded 3,214 divorce cases in 2024, up from 2,149 the previous year. Experts now estimate that one in every five registered marriages may ultimately fail. It is within this context that the Church's pastoral intervention through the Faithful House becomes not only timely but necessary.

Throughout the week, participants engaged in practical learning, group work, and powerful peer presentations. Thursday and Friday were dedicated to evaluating how well participants had internalised the programme material. Couples were invited to make presentations on key topics, with fellow attendees offering constructive feedback.

The result was a vibrant display of innovation and creativity. "I am delighted," said Mr Henry Kaweesi, one of the Ugandan facilitators. "All the presenters clearly demonstrated that they have grasped the concept of the Faithful House programme."

The facilitators—two experienced Ugandan couples, Mr Gonzaga and Mrs Paskazia Lubega, and Mr Henry and Mrs Veronica Kaweesi, from Blessed Sacrament Parish in the Diocese of Masaka—guided the sessions



One of the participating couples follows the proceedings.

with skill and pastoral sensitivity. Their international perspective lent added richness to the dialogue.

Testimonies from participants bore witness to deep personal transformation. Mr Sylvester Musiyiwa from the Archdiocese of Harare shared, "I used to be arrogant and dismissive of my wife's opinions. Now, even our children see a change in how I treat her." Another couple from Masvingo, Mr Babylon and Mrs Praise Makore, testified that the programme had completely altered how they handled conflict. "Now we resolve issues peacefully and see each other as true partners in Christ," said Mr Makore.

Others spoke of financial renewal. Mr Peter Mhere from Masvingo noted, "Since the last workshop, we've managed our finances better—and we even bought a car."

However, the path was not without its challenges. A young couple, Mr and Mrs Nyere, described how their commitment to faithfulness in marriage had been met with ridicule in their community. "People mocked me for being faithful," said Mr Nyere. "But this programme affirmed that being faithful is not just okay—it's honourable."

Participants also reflected on the tension between work commitments and spiritual priorities. "We're taught to put God first," said Mrs Fadzai Chirume, "but I have a job that doesn't allow for weekends. I feel like I'm putting work first, and God and family second. It's something I'm still wrestling with."

The workshop drew representation from all eight Catholic dioceses of Zimbabwe, including diocesan Family and Marriage Coordinators and the National Spiritual Director of the National Catholic Couples Association, Fr. Mar-

tin Gambiza.

Sr. Anuarite Manyahi, National Coordinator for the Family and Marriage Apostolate, expressed immense satisfaction with both the attendance and outcomes. "Almost all the couples we invited came," she said. "What has stood out to me is the excitement. People were already asking when they could begin facilitating others—even before this training began!"

She added, "This has been the most well-received programme we've ever implemented. The couples have experienced the change themselves, and now they want to pass it on."

Friday, the final day, concluded with Holy Mass and the awarding of certificates. The atmosphere was electric with joy and anticipation. For many, the certificate was more than a symbol of completion—it was a commissioning to mission. Couples could not hide their joy as they received their certificates, often embracing with visible pride and hope.

The goals of the Faithful House programme include forming facilitator couples to support marriage formation at parish, diocesan, and national levels; creating implementation structures to sustain the programme; and empowering parish-level lead couples to assist clergy in preparing couples for marriage.

As part of broader efforts to celebrate and strengthen families, the Catholic Couples Association is set to hold its National Congress this August in the Archdiocese of Bulawayo.

In this Jubilee Year themed Pilgrims of Hope, the Church in Zimbabwe continues to champion strong, faith-filled families—the domestic Church. The Faithful House programme stands as a response to Pope Francis's call for renewed pastoral accompaniment, offering couples the tools to build homes rooted in love, faith, and enduring hope.



One participant writes down one of the listed responsibilities

“Let us separate holiness and professionalism,” says Archbishop Alex Thomas

By Fr. Johnston Mlambo



Caritas Zimbabwe Board of Directors during the meeting

Harare – The Caritas Zimbabwe Board of Directors convened its first meeting of the year in Harare on the 24th of April 2025 to evaluate progress and address challenges in implementing the organisation's strategic plan. Caritas Zimbabwe, the development and humanitarian arm of the Catholic Church in Zimbabwe, is currently operating under a five-year strategic framework launched in 2024.

One of the key issues raised during the meeting was the slow pace in implementing the strategic plan, largely attributed to misunderstandings between some diocesan offices and the national office regarding their respective roles. Board members noted that such misconceptions were hindering effective coordination and execution.

Among the recommendations made was the need for improved financial accountability.

Board members expressed concern that financial statements had not been consistently submitted by the ZCBC Finance Department, making oversight difficult.

It was proposed that Caritas financial reports be submitted to the board on a quarterly basis, with quarterly board meetings held to review them.

Regarding budgetary responsibilities, it was

noted that Caritas was the only commission not contributing a subscription to the national office, despite having budget lines allocated for board-related expenses.

The board stressed the importance of operational uniformity across diocesan Caritas offices and reiterated its mandate to approve auditors for financial review.

Concerns were also raised about professionalism at the diocesan level, with reports indicating that some coordinators lacked the requisite administrative discipline.

While spiritual devotion remains integral to the Church's mission, the board agreed that it must be complemented by professional conduct.

Archbishop Alex Thomas, the bishops' chair of the Caritas Board, strongly emphasised this point, stating:

“Let us separate holiness and professionalism.”

The board also acknowledged irregularities in grant application processes, project implementation, and monitoring and evaluation systems.

In response, three new committees were established to address key operational areas:

1. Finance Committee – Members from Harare, Bulawayo, and Hwange (Chair: Harare)
2. Projects Committee – Members from

Chinhoyi, Gweru, and Mutare

3. Human Resources Committee – Members from Masvingo, Mutare, and Gokwe (Chair: Fr. Mugara)

To enhance efficiency and follow-up, it was resolved that minutes of each meeting be circulated within 15 days.

The meeting opened with a presentation by officials from the Ministry of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare, who clarified aspects of the recently enacted Private Voluntary Organisations (PVO) Act.

The officials outlined expectations and compliance requirements for non-governmental organisations operating in Zimbabwe.

Speaking to SOCCOM after the meeting, Archbishop Alex Thomas said the Ministry's presentation was both informative and reassuring:

"For us at Caritas Zimbabwe, I don't see any challenge with the PVO Act.

"We are compliant.

"The government simply expects NGOs to adhere to the mandate under which they were registered.

"Our mandate is very clear, and we are executing it well."

According to Mr. Harrington Chuma, the National Coordinator of Caritas, the presentation affirmed that:

"for us as a faith-based organisation, there is nothing to fear from the PVO Act."

He added that what is required is simply to stick to the mandate for which Caritas was

registered — something Caritas Zimbabwe has always done.

Fr. Joseph Mugara, the Vicar General of Gokwe Diocese and a board member, said the ministry's session and the entire meeting were quite informative and eye-opening — particularly the reminder that Caritas is not exempt from corporate governance expectations.

"We should adhere especially to the Terms of Office for board members," he said.

On the strategic plan, Archbishop Thomas expressed both satisfaction and concern:

"I am very happy with the strategic plan, which was developed collaboratively by board members and diocesan coordinators, and later approved by the bishops.

"What disappointed me, however, was the misunderstanding in some dioceses following its launch.

"Thankfully, this board meeting has helped identify the root of the issue, and we are committed to resolving it."

He added:

"What we want is a united Caritas Zimbabwe. With unity, we can be a powerful and active instrument for development."

Board members agreed that the meeting created a shared understanding across structures. It was acknowledged that communication within Caritas had not been effective and that the strategic plan should serve as a unifying document.

Strategies will now be put in place to bring that vision to life.



Officials from the Ministry of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare follow the proceedings.

NEWS IN PICTURES



SCENES FROM THE NATIONAL YOUTH CONGRESS



NEWS IN PICTURES



Priests interact during the luncheon



Inner City Deanery mwoyo musande members listen attentively to their facilitator Fr Jagaja on their pilgrimage at the Shrine of Our Lady of Perpetual Help, a pilgrimage shrine



NEWS IN PICTURES



The Binga Deanery draws resolutions for the Jubilee Year

By Quegas Mutale in Binga, Diocese of Hwange



A cross-section of attendees engage in the meeting

As the Catholic Church celebrates the Jubilee Year 2025, Binga Deanery in the Diocese of Hwange has drawn up resolutions to live in the spirit of the jubilee.

Activities undertaken by the Church in Binga include visiting the sick and bereaved, making resolutions at the deanery level, and engaging in other works of mercy.

During the Deanery Pastoral Council meeting held at Tusimpe Pastoral Centre in Binga from March 14–15, 2025, participants formulated resolutions for the Jubilee Year that are to be implemented throughout the deanery.

The Dean of Binga Deanery, Fr. Masimba Nyoni, urged the deanery leadership to ensure that the faithful developed and implemented meaningful Jubilee Year resolutions.

One priest remarked, "People seem to be losing faith in some centres, and as the Deanery Pastoral Council, you may need to help them." Among the resolutions was a commitment to investigate the decline in the number of faithful in some centres and missions.

Fr. Nyoni tasked the Social Communications (SOCCOM) Commission in Binga with conducting the research and providing feedback to the Deanery Pastoral Council.

Fr. Nicholas Nkamba, Priest-in-Charge of All

Souls Mission, proposed the inclusion of the Franciscan Third Order group at St. Padre Pio Mission to reflect the Church's spirit of inclusivity, echoing the vision of Pope Francis.

Each mission in the deanery presented reports that highlighted successes, challenges, and recommendations, with strong emphasis on enhancing catechism instruction.

During the Easter Vigil of 2025, 10 people were baptized and five received First Communion at All Souls Mission.

Similarly, 17 people were baptized and five received First Communion at St. Mark's Mission. These developments demonstrate that despite existing challenges, the Church in Binga continues to grow.

Reports confirmed that various missions had already begun their Jubilee Year initiatives.

For instance, St. Padre Pio Mission visited those who had lost their faith in an effort to bring them back to the Church

St. Mark's Mission engaged in agricultural projects such as gardening and goat rearing to support the priest in fulfilling the mission of evangelisation.

Fr. Nyoni encouraged the faithful to attend workshops to deepen their understanding of the faith.

The Chairperson of the Binga Deanery Pastoral Council, Mr. Enock Mugande, called on St. Joseph's Guild to lead by example and revitalize their activities in areas where they were inactive.

Fr. Nyoni supported this by citing All Souls Mission as an example where men of the Guild were actively involved.

The Catholic Youth Association (CYA) requested parental support for youth programs aligned with the Jubilee Year.

The council encouraged youth from all missions to participate actively in Church affairs.

Virnela Mweembe reported that the Legion of Mary was active in three missions.

The Legionaries highlighted their participation in deanery and diocesan events and expressed plans to initiate income-generating projects to reduce reliance on individual donations.

They have also embraced technology by conducting meetings online.

Siabule Mizeezo, Secretary of the Missionary Childhood Association (MCA) at the national level, appealed to the Binga Deanery leadership to support children in creating their own spiritual programs.

The Catholic Young Adults Association (CYAA) was praised for organizing weddings, holding weekly meetings, visiting the sick, and planning pilgrimages to Monze Diocese in Zambia and Mutemwa in Harare later this year.

Fr. Nyoni noted that CYAA was particularly active at St. John Mary Vianney.

The council discussed challenges faced by youths transitioning into adult Church associations and emphasised that missions should address these transition issues.

Mr. Richard Muleya of Caritas Hwange (Binga Sub-office) reported an increase in school enrolment and improved attendance, attributed to the school feeding programs they implemented.

Quegas Mutale had an opportunity to share his enriching experience in Rome, which sparked thoughtful discussions among participants seeking a deeper understanding of the universal Church.

Fr. Praise Muunga, Associate Priest at All Souls Mission, facilitated the session on developing Jubilee Year resolutions.

He emphasized:

"We need to come up with resolutions to live in

the spirit of the Jubilee.

"Our Christianity is faith lived in action.

"We are guided by the Jubilee and Hwange Diocesan themes. The diocesan theme is the actualisation of the Jubilee.

"Last year, we focused on the Eucharist, with parishes holding adoration every Sunday before Mass.

"This year is the Year of Grace. Jubilee comes with graces such as forgiveness. We need to make time for the Sacrament of Confession.

"We are encouraged to go for confession as much as possible".

The resolutions developed from the meeting include, but are not limited to: frequent confession, supporting youth in pastoral activities, initiating charity projects, promoting self-reliance, exercising exemplary leadership, praying the Jubilee Prayer, engaging in Bible sharing, and ensuring ongoing catechesis.

Fr. Nkamba encouraged each mission to implement practical actions to help parishioners receive the graces of the Jubilee Year.

Priests urged the faithful to learn how to properly confess, supported by catechism teaching. There was also a call for priests and SOCCOM to collaborate in producing infographics, podcasts, and videos on faith, catechesis, and confession.

Mr. Muleya emphasized the importance of involving laypeople in teaching catechism, encouraging them to conduct research and lead sessions.

Fr. Nyoni explained the meaning of plenary and partial indulgences, and the conditions required to benefit from them, such as confession, receiving Holy Communion, and praying for the Pope's intentions.

"As parishes, let us come up with practical resolutions for the Jubilee Year.

"Jubilee helps us reconcile with God, with each other, and with creation. Climate change is destroying so much—some species are even becoming extinct.

"This is one of the main aims of this council. Let's discuss practical things we can go and do," said Fr. Nyoni

SECAM: Seminar for African theologians on the vision of the Church 2025-2050

By Charles Ayetan



Participants pose for a memorable photo

The Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar (SECAM) organised a seminar for on the "Vision of the Church-Family of God in Africa and its islands for the next 25 years: 2025-2050". At the end of this seminar, on the 2nd and 3rd April 2025 in Accra, Ghana, a document was drawn up and will be sent to the bishops for deliberation.

The capital town of Ghana, Accra, hosted a seminar of African theologians on the vision of the Church in Africa to 2050. The meeting was officially opened by Fr. Rafael Simbine Junior, Secretary General of SECAM.

At the beginning of the seminar, Fr. Alfred Bebody, SECAM's Deputy Secretary General in charge of the Evangelisation's Commission, set out the context for the meeting, which is taking place in "a continent brimming with youthful energy, cultural richness, spiritual depth, and a growing Christian population" and which faces "enduring challenges: political instability, poverty, environmental degradation, and cultural shifts".

The meeting was moderated by Fr. Prof. Albert Ngengi Mundele, priest of the diocese of Kenge in the Democratic Republic of Congo and director of the Catholic Biblical Centre for Africa and Madagascar (BICAM-CEBAM), the Nairobi-based organ of SECAM responsible for promoting the biblical apostolate in Africa. The reflections focused on twelve themes based on six pillars, each representing a major priority for the Church's journey. These pillars are: 1. evangelisation; 2. ongoing formation and co-responsibility; 3. justice, peace and integral

human development; 4. Climate and environment; 5. Ecumenism and inter-religious dialogue; 6. Technology and digital evangelisation.

The 12 pillars are as follows: 1. Evangelisation (Catholic education and theological tradition); 2. A self-reliant Church; 3. A family model of leadership; 4. Formation on missionary discipleship and synodality; 5. Care for creation; 6. The youth and the renewal of the Church; 7. Justice, peace and integral human development; 8. Ecumenism and interfaith dialogue; 9. Mission in the digital environment; 10. The health of the people of God; 11. Liturgical life of the African Church; 12. Church and politics.

Prior to and during this seminar, theological reflection focused on these twelve themes, and relevant proposals for the Church and African society emerged from the exchanges between theologians and pastoral workers to guide pastoral action during the quarter of a century that begins with this Holy Year, a Jubilee Year for the Catholic Church on the theme: 'Pilgrims of Hope'.

Plenary sessions and group work sessions alternated during the seminar, and the fruits of their labours were presented before the closing ceremony on Thursday evening, 3 April 2025. The document setting out the 'Vision of the Church-Family of God in Africa and its islands for the next 25 years: 2025-2050' will be given to the members of the Theological Commission (Comitheol) at the end of this meeting, for a final review before being presented to the bishops for deliberation at their next plenary assembly in July-August 2025.

ZCBC Education and Safeguarding Commission endeavours to make schools safe environments

By Fr. Johnston Mlambo

The Education and Safeguarding Commission of the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops' Conference (ZCBC) recently underwent strategic training, from 28 April to 2 May 2025, to scale up its Safe Schools Pro-



Participants during the training session

gramme, with the aim of expanding the initiative to all dioceses in the country.

The training was facilitated by two experts from Spring Impact, a United Kingdom-based organisation specialising in scaling social impact programmes. It was attended by the Education Commission's core team and focused on developing a sustainable and cost-effective scale-up strategy.

According to Sr. Theresa Nyadombo, coordinator for the Education and Safeguarding Commissions, the programme is now ready to move beyond awareness-raising into full implementation across more dioceses.

"We want to expand our programme. So far, we've introduced it and raised awareness in several dioceses. Now, we are asking: how best can each diocese broaden its reach to ensure everyone is included?" she said.

The Safe Schools Programme aims to create safer learning environments by tackling violence in schools. Violence has been experienced in the form of corporal punishment, peer-to-peer

bullying, and other forms of abuse. The Commission is learning to scale the programme without increasing financial strain.

"Currently, we are active in Hwange, Bulawayo, and Chinhoyi. We will begin preparations in Masvingo and Gweru this August, targeting full implementation by January. We have already covered Harare, Mutare, and Gokwe from 2019 to 2022," said Sr. Theresa.

The training also served as a form of monitoring and evaluation, allowing the Commission to assess its impact and adjust for improved effectiveness.

Positive outcomes have already been observed in the dioceses where the programme was first implemented.

"They are now writing proposals, conducting workshops with boarding masters, teachers, and parents. It's making a difference," she added.

Dorcias Mgugu, programmes officer, said that the Commission was witnessing reduced cases of corporal punishment and bullying, and not-

ed a gradual increase in the number of parents participating in the positive parenting programme.

One major success influenced by the programme is the development of a safeguarding policy in the Archdiocese of Harare.

In Bindura, parents—empowered by the programme—mobilised to report and help apprehend individuals who were abusing children on their way home from school. However, Sr. Theresa cited limited financial resources as a major challenge in the scaling process—one reason the training was necessary: to explore ways of expanding while maintaining sustainability.

Bishop Eusebius Nyathi, the bishop chair of the Education Commission who was also part of the core team being trained, emphasised that the Safe Schools Programme benefits not just the Church, but Zimbabwean society at large.

"As a nation, we will benefit. Our schools have been places of abuse, corporal punishment, and bullying. The Safe Schools Programme addresses these issues directly," he said.

He noted that Porticus, the programme's funder, recommended the training and selected Spring Impact to assist in developing a scaling strategy to ensure greater impact.

Bishop Eusebius Nyathi added:

"It was more of a strategic workshop—helping us evaluate our work and explore how we can become more effective. The facilitators made us think critically about whether we are carrying out too many tasks at the same time and helped us reflect on our core problem. While abuse happens even in homes, our current focus is on schools."

Bishop Nyathi expressed hope that the workshop would lead to more effective implementation of the programme across the country.

Spring Impact consultants Nikesh Shoame and Mike O'Maera led the training. Nikesh described their role:

"We're working with the ZCBC team to assist in scaling the Safe Schools Programme."

Mike added:

"Our main focus is to build the capacity of local organizations. We're supporting the Education Commission to expand their programme to all eight dioceses—and even the entire school system."

This is Spring Impact's first collaboration with ZCBC.

Since February, they have reviewed existing policies and documents, identifying key elements to amplify for maximum impact.

"Scaling requires a model and a prototype. We help the team define their problem clearly and repackage solutions in a way that resonates with potential partners and stakeholders," said Mike.

He noted that the process includes assessing potential partners—including government bodies and NGOs—to ensure broader collaboration.

"Our model helps teams think through funding, resource mobilization, and monitoring and evaluation."

Mike further explained that the programme targets reducing corporal punishment, fostering positive discipline, and promoting positive parenting – with schools as the central hub of change.

"The school is the point where teachers, learners, parents, and the broader ecosystem meet. This is where change must begin."

He acknowledged both government and ZCBC policies already in place on these issues, highlighting how the Safe Schools Programme complements them.

Spring Impact is also working on similar projects in Tanzania, partnering with government ministries and grassroots organizations to combat violence against children.

The team sees similar potential in Zimbabwe.

"ZCBC already has a good understanding of the problem. They've implemented effective responses and carried out valuable research. Our role is to help them focus and present their findings in a compelling way—especially when partnering with the government," said Mike.

He emphasised that corporal punishment, though banned, continues in many schools and contributes to children dropping out and turning to risky behaviours, including drug abuse.

"We are not bringing outside solutions. The Commission already had solutions. We are providing strategic guidance to help scale them across the country," he clarified.

The key outcome of the workshop was the development of a clear scale-up strategy, with the target of reaching 126 schools over the next ten years.

Dorcas Mgugu found the training empowering:

"It's insightful and thought-provoking. It challenges us to ask: what problem are we trying to solve, what outcome do we expect, and how will we achieve it?"

She continued:

"We're not doing something entirely new—we're building on what we've already been doing. But now, we're aiming to take the programme to a higher level. We hope to have it running in 25 schools by August, and from there, expand further."

Dorcas also noted the need to move from direct implementation with dioceses to strategic partnerships if the programme is to reach all 126 Catholic primary schools.

"They've given us a list of potential scale-up pathways," she said.

The hope is that the Safe Schools Programme will be a resounding success, reaching all corners of the country and transforming the learning environment for thousands of children.

The Catholic Church, through its Education and Safeguarding Commission, remains steadfast in its commitment – not only to improving the quality of education but also to ensuring that every learner is protected, valued, and given the opportunity to thrive in a safe and nurturing environment.



The Church's role in bringing transformative change in SADC

By Fr. Johnston Mlambo

Pretoria, South Africa — The Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace in Zimbabwe (CCJPZ) actively participated in the 2025 annual IMBISA Justice and Peace Conference, held from 8 to 11 April at the serene Padre Pio Retreat Centre in Pretoria.

Themed "Building Strategic Relations for the Church to Bring Transformative Change in IMBISA Countries," the conference brought together Justice and Peace representatives from eight Southern African countries: Zimbabwe, South Africa, Angola, Mozambique, Namibia, Lesotho, Eswatini, and São Tomé and Príncipe. The Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops' Conference delegation comprised Mr. Paul Muchena, National Coordinator of CCJPZ, and Fr. Johanes Maseko, National Coordinator of the Catholic Parliamentary Liaison Office (CPLO).

Mr. Muchena delivered a compelling presentation on the major challenges facing Zimbabwe. He cited persistent political polarisation, governance deficits, systemic corruption, economic collapse, widespread human rights violations, climate change-induced food insecurity, gender inequality, and social exclusion as core issues affecting the nation.

In his address, Mr. Muchena also proposed a series of key recommendations aimed at fostering lasting solutions.

These included comprehensive institutional reforms, a push for economic justice, increased environmental stewardship, and a national framework for truth and reconciliation.

His presentation underscored the urgency for proactive engagement by the Church to help bring about structural transformation.

Zimbabwe was also represented by Mr. Albert Dhafana, who presented on "The Role of SADC in Stabilizing the Southern Region: The Contribution Expected from Churches and Other Living Forces."

Mr. Dhafana emphasised that while the SADC region remains comparatively stable relative to other parts of Africa, emerging trends threaten this peace.

These threats include the escalating effects of climate change, regional geopolitical tensions, and economic vulnerabilities.

He warned of disturbing developments such as the rise of terrorist activity in the Democratic Republic of Congo and Mozambique, increasing civil unrest in South Africa and Eswatini, and foreign military intrusions, including by Rwanda.

Additionally, he noted that illicit trade—including human trafficking and smuggling—is on the rise, with SADC countries becoming transit points for people from war-torn regions such as Somalia and Ethiopia.

These developments, he said, pose significant risks to state security and the integrity of public institutions.

Participants from other IMBISA countries echoed similar concerns while applauding the platform's role in fostering solidarity.

Mamokhansto Nkune from the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace (CCJP) in Lesotho reflected positively on the workshop:

"It has really helped me remember the essence of our mission as a Justice and Peace commission. The discussions on peacebuilding, social cohesion, and conflict in extractive areas are

incredibly relevant. I realized there are many common issues among us, and collaboration is crucial, although we face challenges such as resource mobilization.”

Philani Mkhize of the Southern African Catholic Bishops' Conference (SACBC) also commended the gathering:

“It was a great meeting—my second—and there is marked improvement. I was particularly drawn to the discussion on advocacy. The Church must be a prophetic voice on issues affecting this region. That stood out for me.”

Reflecting on the conference, Mr. Muchena expressed satisfaction with the deliberations:

“The conference tackled the various social challenges in Southern Africa and explored the Church's role—particularly through Justice and Peace commissions—in engaging political leaders, youth, women, and socially excluded communities.

“Bishop António Sandramo, President of the IMBISA Justice and Peace Commission, emphasized that while the Church must remain apolitical, it must also serve as the conscience of society.”

He further stressed that the Church must intensify its efforts in critical areas such as election integrity, combating corruption, addressing youth issues like drug and substance abuse, and monitoring extractive industries.

Strengthening internal structures and increasing effectiveness are now urgent priorities.

Mr. Dhafana also highlighted several key takeaways from the conference. He noted that the topics discussed—justice, peace, and conflict resolution—were not only relevant but inherently people-centred and central to the Church's mission.

The open and rigorous structure of the workshop encouraged thoughtful and practical discussion, creating a highly engaging environment. He praised the effective leadership and unifying presence of Bishop António Sandramo and the IMBISA Secretariat staff, which helped coordinate efforts across national boundaries.

A particularly powerful moment was the presentation by Rev. Martin from Tanzania (FOCCISA), which demonstrated the great potential of ecumenical unity in addressing Africa's complex challenges.

Equally compelling was Fr. Knox's emphasis on the importance of treating young people not merely as beneficiaries but as active protagonists in the mission of the Church. Finally, Mr.

Dhafana expressed optimism about the growing collaboration between IMBISA and SADC, especially through a proposed Memorandum of Understanding, which promises to deepen regional engagement and cooperation.

Dhafana praised contributions from countries like Lesotho, Eswatini, Angola, and Mozambique, noting a strong emphasis on local solutions to electoral, migration, and social justice challenges.

He cited Zimbabwe and South Africa's experiences as validating the enduring relevance of Pope Paul VI's teaching: “If you want peace, work for justice.” He described the conference as a “Kairos moment” for IMBISA—a divinely opportune time for transformative action.

Bishop Thulani Victor Mbuyisa, Chairperson of the Social Action Department of SACBC, closed the conference by commending participants for their courage and commitment in the face of numerous obstacles, including political instability in countries like Zimbabwe.

A comprehensive statement was issued on 10 April 2025, reaffirming the Church's prophetic mission to promote justice and peace in IMBISA countries. Key resolutions included:

- **Strengthening Prophetic Witness:** Reinforcing the Church's role in peacebuilding and challenging unjust systems.
- **Partnership with Regional Bodies:** Finalizing collaboration with institutions such as SADC and the African Union for coordinated peace and development efforts.
- **Youth Participation:** Encouraging sincere dialogue with young people as critical stakeholders in shaping a peaceful and just society.
- **Addressing Extractive Industry Harms:** Learning from SACBC's legal action against mining companies to address the exploitative nature of multinational corporations.
- **Resource Mobilization and Knowledge Sharing:** Enhancing internal capacity, documenting best practices, and fostering local ownership of Justice and Peace work.

The 2025 IMBISA Justice and Peace Conference offered a crucial platform for the Church in Southern Africa to reaffirm its role in fostering justice, unity, and transformative social engagement. The Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace in Zimbabwe, along with its regional counterparts, emerged from the gathering renewed and committed to building strategic relationships and delivering on its prophetic mandate for the common good.

Hope in the midst of adversity

By Consolata Nyengetera Gasva

WE ARE DWELLING IN AN IMPERFECT WORLD FILLED WITH SO MUCH TURMOIL AND TURBULENCE.

Economic meltdown, pandemics, unemployment, barrenness, drug and substance abuse are some of the calamities that have ravaged us and have threatened even the very existence of our own spiritual life.

Some of us are yet to have our prayers answered—for instance, the cries and agony of a barren woman, and the frustration and pain of living with a deadly chronic disease like kidney failure and having to endure dialysis three times a week.

Imagine the deep agony of an unemployed graduate roaming the streets, frequently and frantically seeking to get something just to get by, and yet the situation and future remain doomed.

The situation seems utterly hopeless.

I have realised the paradox between hope and waiting upon God, even when there is no sign of any rain coming—until you start hearing the sound of rain, like Elijah.

I firmly believe that we are in a fast-paced technological globe, with invented machines that yield instant results—to the extent that we have instant noodles and porridge—yet that may not be the reality with God.

At times, to have hope and emerge victorious comes from withstanding the agony of waiting, as the Prophet Isaiah propounds in chapter 28:16: “He that believes shall not make haste.”

What distinguished these trailblazers and pacesetters—individuals such as Abraham, Joseph, and Hannah—is their ability to wait, even up to old age, to be granted their own children. Patience is that hope—that ability to wait and keep a good attitude while waiting.

Life is about fighting—and fighting to the very end—which is actually doing absolutely all that we can through prayer, fasting, and crying to God, believing that no matter how perfect we believe our timing to be, God’s timing is always the best and the most appropriate for us.

I vividly recall a statement continuously echoed by the outspoken lecturer at the University of Zimbabwe, Mr Gwekerere, during my

time there:

“The best person to compete with in life is oneself, because we are born with different time zones of what will occur in our lives.”

If we are not secure concerning our worth and uniqueness in Jesus Christ, we will find ourselves naturally competing with that person out in the world who appears to be successful or is in that time zone of abundance and lavishness.

Believe me, brethren, the fact that someone else got somewhere you fervently want to be before you does not mean that you are denied the same thing.

You will never know why you exist if you use the yardstick of measuring someone else’s existence to measure yours.

The pieces to life’s puzzle may not be simply fitting together, leaving you confused, angry, and disillusioned.

I acknowledge those continuously lingering questions in your mind, dear reader: “Why is this happening to me?”

You know that God is the Father and you believe in Him, yet you are aware of that gnawing sense of betrayal and abandonment—that God allowed you to see your only son being ravaged and wasted by drug and substance abuse.

These are fundamental questions that threaten your spirituality—or anyone’s.

I feel that at times, God does not answer or explain to us why we come across some tragedies and calamities.

We can’t fight God.

At times, He does not parade His plans and purposes for our approval, because He is a mysterious God—and yet we are required to trust Him despite our lack of understanding.

The Scriptures emphatically reiterate that God cares and loves us.

For instance, David wrote that “The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those in spirit” (Psalm 34:18).

I don’t want to seem like I am minimising your pain if you have recently lost a child or have been diagnosed with a deadly, incurable disease, but I sincerely hope and pray that most times our discomfort is made unbearable by a

misunderstanding of time.

But remember the billions who went before us, and that our journey has been illusioned with a sense of permanency.

Truthfully, we are all just passing by, as postulated by Joyce Meyer in her book *The Beauty of Ashes*: "Suffering reminds us of the brevity of life."

One day, all of this will be a distant memory—when we will wear a seamless robe, with eyes like flames of fire and feet like fine brass.

Hence, even that hopeless-seeming financial constraint or unemployment will one day be a

distant memory as you land that dream job.

Expect periods of hardship to occur, and don't be dismayed when they arrive.

Lean into the pain when your time to suffer arrives, knowing that God will use this difficulty—this hopelessness—for His purposes, and indeed for our own good.

The Lord is very near because:

"The righteous cry out, and the Lord hears them; He delivers them from all their troubles. The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit." — Psalm 34:17–18



In Hope, members of the Inner City Deanery Mwoyo Musande guild solemnly pray at the Shrine of Our Lady of Perpetual Help- a pilgrimage shrine

Young faith communicators reflect on Pope Francis' life and legacy after his death

By *Quegas Mutale, Diocese of Hwange*

A group of young faith communicators who met Pope Francis in January 2025 have shared heartfelt reflections on his life and legacy following news of his passing. The group, part of the fourth cohort of faith communicators (FC4), underwent training by the Vatican Dicastery for Communication under the theme: "Faith Communication in the Digital World: A Synodal Perspective."

News of the Pope's death on April 21, 2025, came as a shock to the group. Just weeks earlier, Pope Francis had been discharged from Rome's Gemelli Hospital after over a month of hospitalization. His subsequent public appearances had kindled hope for his recovery.

The first among the group to share the news was Nour El Khoury Najem from Lebanon, citing Vatican News. "Our beloved Pope is dead," she announced in a message to the group.

Their reactions reflected deep sorrow, personal connection, and admiration for the late pontiff.

"But he was okay yesterday, meeting with JD Vance. May his soul rest in eternal peace... We were lucky to meet him," said Susan Nzomo from Kenya.

April Joan from the Philippines wrote, "Heart-breaking for all of us. It feels really different because we met him up close."

Christine Linda Makau of Kenya added, "Though it's clearly symbolic... it's divine. He fought!"

"I'm just hoping it's not true," commented Michael Maduekwe of Nigeria.

From Portugal, Carolina Berlim said, "This doesn't seem real. [However,] we must have hope. [We] have to keep going and keep being the Church that he dreamed of. That's what he would've wanted."

Blessed Anulika Gloria Okpalanozie from Nigeria added, "It is well. May his soul rest in the Lord." She continued, "Guys, I actually don't know how to process this... No. Not now. He should have held on till... It has been an emotional rollercoaster since after meeting with the Pope—from his illness, to fervent prayers, then his discharge, and now death."

The young communicators described Pope Francis as deeply humble, compassionate, and close to the poor and marginalized. "Pope



Faith communicators at Vatican Museum near the sistine chapel

Francis was so humble and meek," said Makau, noting that even many Protestants were moved by his passing.

Anulika confirmed this, sharing that her Protestant mother-in-law called to offer condolences. "She recognised the privilege it was to have met him. She understood that losing a Chief Shepherd was a hard hit for the flock. And that, for me, was purely humane regardless of our religious divide."

"Indeed, Anulika. He was a true diplomat with a true calling. He did not despise anyone," Makau replied.

"We can only pray that the Church gets a phenomenal leader again," said Anulika. Berlim added, "He will surely intercede for the next conclave."

"Papa Francesco touched the peripheries, and he did so by re-engineering the love that begins from the heart—love for your neighbour as yourself," Anulika added.

Makau echoed, "He would not discriminate."

"I hope the people and the youth will still go to the Jubilee," said April.

Anastasiia Kuriata from Ukraine reflected, "I came to Church and converted in 2013. I don't know other Popes. I know Francis will be a saint. He gave all of himself to Christ. I am in love with his spirit—his vibe, how he communicated, how he broke borders, how close he was to anyone."

These reflections show the profound personal and spiritual impact Pope Francis had on young Catholics around the world. The FC4 group joined the universal Church in mourning, while also celebrating the legacy of a Pope who shaped their understanding of faith, mercy, and global solidarity.

Catholic Nurses' Guild of Bulawayo celebrates Jubilee of the sick and health care workers

By SOCCOM Reporter



A cross-section of participants listen attentively

The Catholic Nurses' Guild (CNG) of the Archdiocese of Bulawayo gathered at Emthonjeni Pastoral Centre from 4th to 6th April 2025 to commemorate the Jubilee of the Sick and Health Care Workers—an occasion proclaimed by His Holiness Pope Francis in the Jubilee 2025 General Calendar.

The three-day celebration was marked by a series of presentations, personal testimonies, and spiritual devotions, delivered both physically and virtually.

The event created a platform for Catholic nurses to reflect, recharge, and support one another in their vocation.

Mrs Mollie Gabellah opened the session with a reflection on the origins of the Catholic Nurses' Guild and underlined the importance of fortifying the group as "a safety net for nurses who sometimes feel overwhelmed physically, emotionally and mentally."

Fr James Batsirai, one of the diocesan resource persons for the Jubilee Year, offered a theological exposition on the theme.

He traced the historical and biblical roots of the Jubilee tradition, starting from the Jewish context in Leviticus 25, and thoughtfully

connected it with the story of Naaman and Gehazi in 2 Kings 5—highlighting the profound role of servants in divine encounters. He challenged participants with two piercing questions: "Do you leave people you interact with saying, 'Surely there is God in the Catholic Church?' Is it the time to be corrupt and to be extorting things?"

In a comparative presentation, retired nurse Mrs Thabitha Phiri engaged participants in a dynamic discussion on the evolution of nursing—looking at the nurse of yesterday, today, and tomorrow.

The consensus was clear: "There is an urgent need for a review of systems and policies so as to restore the dignity of the nurse and that of the client—both of which seem to be forgotten."

Addressing the issue of professionalism, Mrs Anelia Ndlovu, Provincial Nursing Officer for Matabeleland North, spoke passionately about the importance of upholding nursing ethics.

She emphasised "moral and ethical principles that guide the nurse's behaviour and decision-making," which include honesty, trustworthiness, respect, compassion, accountability, and critical thinking.



A deeply moving testimony came from Mrs Cornelia Ndlovu of Divine Mercy Parish, who recounted her experience of overcoming a severe medical prognosis.

"Despite the doctors having told me that I was going to use the wheelchair for the rest of my life, I found myself moving from a wheelchair to a calliper and finally to a raised shoe," she shared, drawing admiration from the audience.

Mrs Debra Mabunda turned the spotlight on the caregivers themselves, noting: "Nurses also need to be cared for, especially in the Zimbabwean scenario where they work under difficult conditions with limited resources and support which is hard to come by."

Dr Kushupika Dube, Principal Tutor at Mpilo School of Midwifery, addressed the sensitive topic of care following stillbirth.

"Stillbirth is a global burden and is higher in Sub-Saharan Africa and Asia where it occurs in every sixteen seconds," she noted.

She introduced Community Engagement and Involvement (CEI) as a model that involves community participation in addressing such health issues, and stressed the need to raise awareness on "preconception care especially among the youth and young adults as that would go a long way in preventing stillbirth."

Adding an ecumenical voice to the Jubilee, Mrs Sibusisiwe Moyo—Sister-in-Charge at Phumula Hospital in Tsholotsho District and a member of the Brethren in Christ Church—highlighted the harmony between Christian values and professional nursing ethics.

"We need to live our faith in our daily lives

even as we practise our nursing," she urged.

In his homily, the Metropolitan Archbishop of Bulawayo, Most Reverend Alex Thomas, thanked the nurses for their dedicated service, reminding them that they are participating in God's mission. He comforted them by assuring, "The Lord is always with them." In her vote of thanks, Mrs Petty Jogo, Vice Chairperson of the Guild and Senior Tutor at Mpilo School of Midwifery, expressed heartfelt appreciation:

"We thank God the Almighty who gave us the opportunity to be renewed, to experience each other's support, and who has afforded us the opportunity to encounter Him in the sacraments we have celebrated together, including the individual confessions and Holy Adoration which was conducted by Fr Agreement Ngwenya."

Her final message was a call to mission:

"Let us go back and give holistic care and support to our clients, aware that we are missionary disciples who are called to give hope always with healing hands and hopeful hearts."



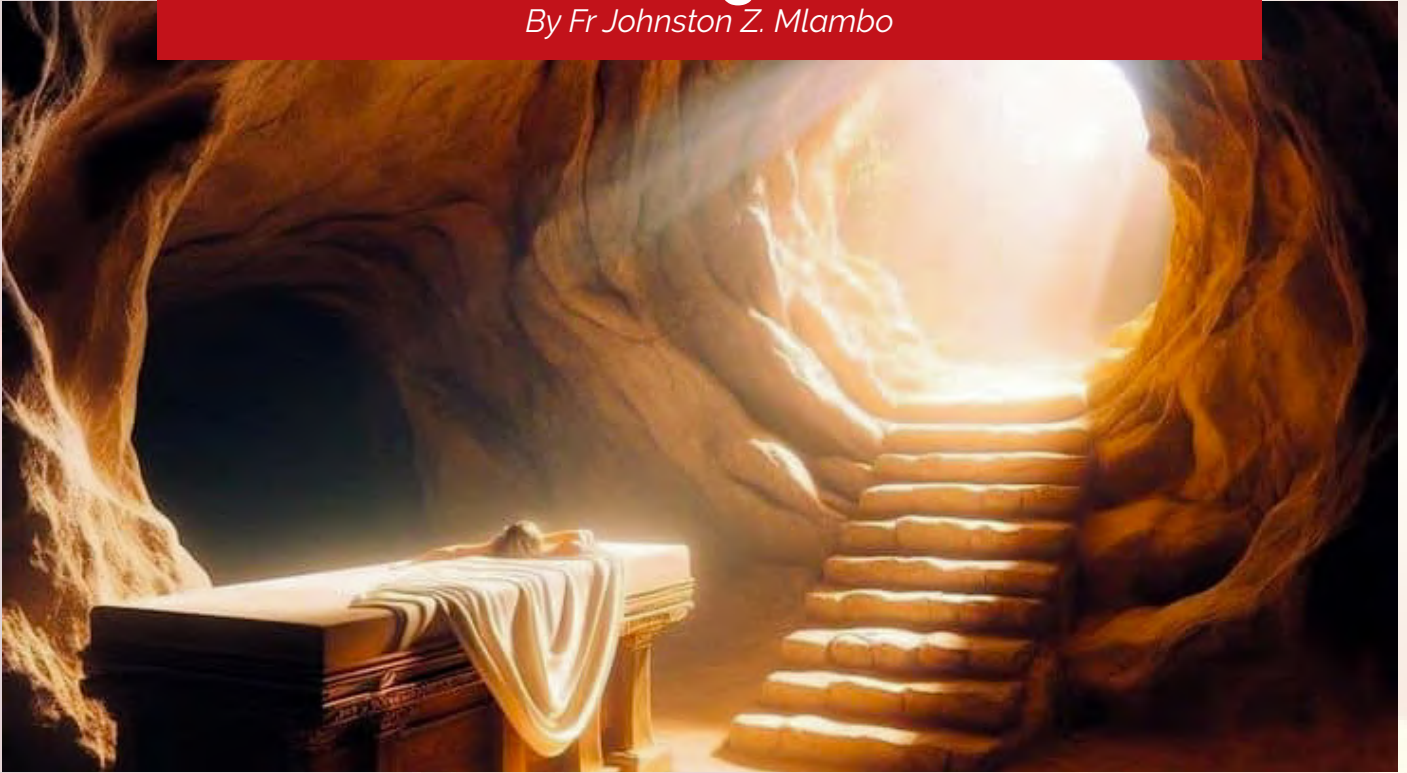
Archbishop Most Reverend Alex Thomas celebrates Mass for the pilgrims



Nurses pose for a photo after the gathering

The Resurrection: A Sign and an Assurance

By Fr Johnston Z. Mlambo



“On the third day he rose again from the dead.” Christians profess this truth every Sunday and on every other solemnity.

The fact of the Resurrection was the spring-board of the apostles’ preaching, beginning with St Peter:

“Let this be known to you, and listen to my words ... Jesus the Nazarene was a man commended to you by God with mighty deeds, wonders and signs, which God worked through him in your midst, as you yourselves know. This man, delivered up by the set plan and foreknowledge of God, you killed, using lawless men to crucify him. But God raised him up, releasing him from the throes of death...” (Acts 2:14b, 22–24).

St Peter preached this on the day of Pentecost, using the fact of the Resurrection as his starting point and the basis for their speaking in tongues — or rather, the basis of their ministry. St Paul would later tell the faithful at Corinth that the Resurrection is the deposit of faith that he also had received. It is quite a long passage, but worth quoting in full:

“For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures...”

Now if Christ is preached as raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is

no resurrection of the dead? But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ has not been raised; if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain. We are even found to be misrepresenting God, because we testified of God that he raised Christ — whom he did not raise if it is true that the dead are not raised.

For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised. If Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished.

If for this life only we have hoped in Christ, we are of all men most to be pitied.

But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep.

For as by a man came death, by a man has come also the resurrection of the dead” (1 Cor 15:3–4, 12–20).

St Paul exposes the fact that there is no Christianity to talk about if the event of the Resurrection did not happen.

Explaining this article of faith, the Catechism of the Catholic Church says:

“The Resurrection of Jesus is the crowning truth of our faith in Christ, a faith believed and lived as the central truth by the first Christian community; handed on as fundamental by

Tradition; established by the documents of the New Testament; and preached as an essential part of the Paschal mystery along with the cross:

'Christ is risen from the dead! Dying, he conquered death;

To the dead, he has given life" (CCC 638).

We are Christians because of the event of the Resurrection. And we, being in the Easter season, I want to consider, in this article — first of all — the resurrection of Jesus, and then our own resurrection on the last day.

We read in the Holy Writ of individuals who were raised to life by a prophet, an apostle or by Jesus himself: for example, the Shunammite widow's son (2 Kgs 4:8–37), the son of the widow of Nain (Lk 7:11–17), and the remarkable event in John 11, where Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead.

Jesus' Resurrection cannot be equated to these miraculous events. Jesus' Resurrection is unique in that his body has been transformed. There is a connection between his old body — that is, the body he had before his passion and death — and his resurrection body, in that the marks of the wounds from the nails and a spear are still there.

There is, therefore, an undeniable continuity with his pre-death body. Thus, the Jesus who died and was buried in the tomb is the one who resurrected.

"Christ's Resurrection cannot be interpreted as something outside the physical order" (CCC 643).

"Yet at the same time this authentic, real body possesses the new properties of a glorious body: not limited by space and time but able to be present how and when he wills; for Christ's humanity can no longer be confined to earth, and belongs henceforth only to the Father's divine realm" (CCC 645).

After his Resurrection, Jesus begins to do things that he never did before — for instance, appearing in a locked room.

"The risen Jesus enjoys the sovereign freedom of appearing as he wishes: in the guise of a gardener or in other forms familiar to his disciples, precisely to awaken their faith" (CCC 645). This is an indication that he exists in another sphere. The Catechism of the Catholic Church explains this better:

"Christ's Resurrection was not a return to earthly life, as was the case with the raisings

from the dead that he had performed before Easter: Jairus' daughter, the young man of Naim, Lazarus. These actions were miraculous events, but the persons miraculously raised returned by Jesus' power to ordinary earthly life. At some particular moment they would die again.

Christ's Resurrection is essentially different. In his risen body he passes from the state of death to another life beyond time and space. At Jesus' Resurrection his body is filled with the power of the Holy Spirit: he shares the divine life in his glorious state, so that St. Paul can say that Christ is 'the man of heaven'" (CCC 646).

Perhaps this partly explains why his followers had trouble recognising him after the Resurrection. The resurrection narratives show that there was something changed in Jesus that made it difficult for his followers to identify him, and yet it was the same body with the wounds in his hands, feet, and the side torn by the soldier's spear.

Of course, some scripture passages tell us that "their eyes were kept from recognising him" (Lk 24:16). Yet some, even though they mention the failure to recognise him immediately, do not say their eyes were veiled. John tells us that Mary Magdalene only recognised Jesus when he called her name (Jn 20:11–18). She had stood before him weeping, even answered his questions, without realising it was him.

When Jesus appeared to the Eleven, he showed them his wounds and they were glad to see him. Yet, when he appeared to them again while they were fishing, we are told:

"Jesus said to them, 'Come and have breakfast.' Now none of the disciples dared to ask him, 'Who are you?' They knew it was the Lord" (Jn 21:12).

This suggests there was something about Jesus after the Resurrection that made immediate recognition difficult — even though this was his third appearance.

Matthew is particularly interesting. He tells us that during the risen Lord's final appearance in Galilee, "some doubted" (Mt 28:17). If nothing had changed about him, there would have been no doubt.

The resurrected body of Jesus was physical, yet transformed (cf. Lk 24:39–40; Jn 20:27). These glorified traits may have contributed to

his followers' initial inability to recognise him. It is this fact that makes the Resurrection both a sign and an assurance.

It is a sign of the immense power of God. The transformed body of Jesus reminds believers of God's creative power — the One who made the universe and who has power over it. Only He who created life can resurrect it after death. Only He can reverse the hideousness that is death itself, remove its sting, and gain victory over the grave (cf. 1 Cor 15:54–55). In resurrecting Jesus, God affirms His absolute sovereignty over life and death.

"The truth of Jesus' divinity is confirmed by his Resurrection... The Resurrection of the crucified one shows that he was truly 'I AM', the Son of God and God himself" (CCC 653).

The Resurrection also proves the sinless character and divine nature of Christ. The Scriptures said that God's "Holy One" would not see corruption (Ps 16:10), and indeed, Jesus did not undergo decay (Acts 13:32–37). Paul preached: "Through Jesus the forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you. Through him everyone who believes is set free from every sin" (Acts 13:38–39).

This means Jesus is who he claimed to be: the Son of God and Messiah. According to Jesus, his Resurrection was the "sign from heaven" that authenticated his ministry (cf. Mt 16:1–4). Attested by hundreds of eyewitnesses (1 Cor 15:3–8), it is irrefutable proof that he is the Saviour of the world.

The Resurrection is also a sign of liberation: "... by his death, Christ liberates us from sin; by his Resurrection, he opens for us the way to a new life... Justification consists in both victory over the death caused by sin and a new participation in grace" (CCC 654).

This means Christians have nothing to fear. Christ's Resurrection assures us of liberation and that nothing is beyond God's power. Challenges may come, yes, but hope in the One who has power over all things gives inner peace even in tribulation.

Furthermore, the Resurrection is an assurance of life after death:

"Christ's Resurrection — and the risen Christ himself — is the principle and source of our future resurrection: 'Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep... For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive'" (CCC 655).

If Jesus Christ did not resurrect, then we have no hope that we will be raised from the dead. In fact, apart from Christ's Resurrection, we have no Saviour, no salvation, and no hope of eternal life. As Paul said, our faith would be "useless," the gospel would be altogether powerless, and our sins would remain unforgiven (1 Cor 15:14–19).

This takes us to the next article of faith we profess in the Creed: "I believe in the resurrection of the body." By this statement, we proclaim that we believe in the resurrection of our bodies on the last day and in life everlasting.

"We firmly believe, and hence we hope that, just as Christ is truly risen from the dead and lives for ever, so after death the righteous will live for ever with the risen Christ and he will raise them up on the last day" (CCC 989).

Jesus said, "I am the resurrection and the life" (Jn 11:25). There is no resurrection apart from him. He does more than give life — he is life. Death has no power over him, and he confers that life on all who trust in him (1 Jn 5:11–12).

"Jesus is the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep" (1 Cor 15:20).

In other words, Jesus led the way in life after death. The Resurrection of Jesus Christ is important as a testimony to the resurrection of human beings, which is a basic tenet of the Christian faith. Unlike other religions, Christianity has a Founder who transcends death and promises that his followers will do the same. Every other religion was founded by men or prophets whose end was the grave.

As Christians, we know that God became man, died for our sins, and rose on the third day. The grave could not hold him. He lives, and he sits today at the right hand of the Father in heaven (Heb 10:12).

"Belief in the resurrection of the body means not only that the immortal soul will live on after death, but that even our 'mortal body' will come to life again" (CCC 990).

Hence, the Resurrection of Jesus is a sign of what we are to be, the glory that awaits us, and an assurance that by his Resurrection our hope is guaranteed

In this article, Fr Mlambo writes in his personal capacity. His views do not reflect the position of the publication; he writes as someone with a keen interest in the Paschal mystery and as one who has reflected and written on it for some time.

Poetry Corner

I miss her

Dark clouds gather, lightning slashes the sky
The wailing wind whispers secrets,
as tears pass me by
I watch the sunset, dismayed and alone

Joy and happiness, lost, like autumn's leaves overthrown

My heart, once full of laughter,
now a hollowed space
Tears brim in my eyes, a constant,
sorrowful pace
Memories of our talks, our laughter,
our friendship true
All lost, yet buried deep, in memories of me and you

The love we shared, now a fading light
A memory I cling to, through the dark of night
I miss your love, your care, your guiding hand
Longing to turn back time, to see your smile once more stand

But alas, I'm engulfed, in this dark cloud of pain
The ache of being motherless, a wound that will remain
Yet, in my memories, you'll forever stay
And in my heart, I pray, you're in a better place, away.

By Marion Munkuli

Fraternity

The brotherhood or sisterhood is not for
lips to utter,
Neither is it for actions to flutter
But our hearts to master,
to promote the peace that every soul
seeks
And every dream sees.

It's the vision of fraternity
that swallows the ambition of enmity.
To starve the urge to revenge
and feed the desire to reconcile.
To live each day in a peace generated
by the
turbines within
And that way hatred has no win.

We have better unifying reasons than
politics.
We have better unifying reasons than
economics;
way better than religion and social
backgrounds
because should we breathe our last
today,
politics lives on.
Should we go six feet under at this
instant,
social life progresses
and so does religion and economics.

But what follows us is the 'fraternity'.
The love we gave in sincerity
But as well the fake love we showed
that was
divorced from reality.
The Creator can't wait for that moment,
when our actions will counter violence
and question the existence of hostility;
giving the world a little more stability
and
tranquility.

Have we ever wondered what's in the
harmony of
living as brothers and sisters authenti-
cally?
Or in the peace of embracing every
brethren
unconditionally?
It's the experiential knowledge of the
'All-in-all'.
Which then propels us to plead for the
stranger
And forgive the offender
To exercise political love
Knowing we all got one Father above!

By Sr Tsungai Madondo OP



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