

CATHOLIC CHURCH NEWS

**JUN
2025**

NHAU DZEKIRIKE

INDABA ZEBANDLA

ISSUE NO.132



- **ZCBC AND A PONTIFICAL COMMISSION LEAD SAFEGUARDING PUSH**
- **CASSA CHORAL COMPETITION UPLIFTS CATHOLIC LEARNERS**
- **COUPLES REKINDLE LOVE AT WORLDWIDE MARRIAGE ENCOUNTER**
- **CCJPZ STAKEHOLDER MEETING CALLS FOR STRONGER COLLABORATION**



More than the expression of ideas

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Editor's desk

Dear Reader,

They say once is a mistake, twice is a habit—but we promise, we're still learning. Like a shepherd who arrives late to the fold but brings fresh grass and good cheer, we come to you, dear friends, a little behind schedule... again.

This time, the delay came from those spirited rounds of verification and the patient wait for responses—holy patience indeed! We ask your understanding—and perhaps a forgiving smile. But we believe this issue was worth the wait.

June, the month in which the Church invites us to contemplate the Sacred Heart of Jesus, pulses with stories that echo His compassion, His faithfulness, and His boundless love for humanity.

The heart of Christ is more than a symbol—it is a living call to draw near, to return, and to remain. It beats at the centre of all authentic evangelisation, mission, and communion.

How fitting, then, that the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart in the Archdiocese of Harare celebrated its 100th anniversary this June.

The Cathedral is not only a monument of architecture and faith—it is a spiritual centre that has drawn generations to the altar of mercy and hope.

Our centenary story is not merely a history; it is a testimony to God's enduring love for His people in this land.

We also witnessed that same rhythm of grace in the joyful expressions of faith from our Catholic schools. In the Archdiocese of Harare and the Diocese of Masvingo, the CASSA choral competitions brought together students whose voices rang out not only in harmony but in catechesis.

These were not just performances—they were acts of witness, songs of faith in motion.

Through music and youthful energy, a vibrant Catholic identity is being nurtured.

And what energy we saw too on the playing fields. High schools across the Archdiocese of Harare came alive with the spirit of the CASSA Ball Games. These contests were about more than goals and medals—they were about sportsmanship, resilience, and grace under pressure.

All Souls High School in Mutoko offered generous hospitality and excellent organisation, reminding us that these events are opportunities not just to compete, but to form character.

June also marked a significant moment in the Church's commitment to safeguarding.



The ZCBC Safeguarding Commission, in collaboration with the Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors – Africa Region, hosted a crucial workshop on the Universal Guidelines Framework.

This gathering was more than administrative. It was pastoral. It reflected a Church willing to confront its wounds, to revise its policies, and to ensure that the dignity of the most vulnerable is protected.

This is the work of the Sacred Heart in our time—compassion not in word alone, but in action.

Beyond our borders, we witnessed the continued collaboration of the Church in Africa.

SECAM and Caritas Africa met in Accra, renewing their joint commitment to justice, ecological care, governance, and human development.

Their alliance is a sign of hope—a reminder that the Gospel must continue to shape policies and uplift lives across our continent.

And in the quiet serenity of Emthonjeni Pastoral Centre in Bulawayo, couples gathered for the Worldwide Marriage Encounter Original Weekend.

In a world of noise and distraction, these retreats become sacred spaces of reconnection.

Couples travelled from across the country, even from Harare, to rekindle the flame of love and faith. In such moments, we're reminded that love is not simply an emotion—it is a daily decision, a covenant renewed again and again.

So yes, we arrived a little late—but we come with hearts full, and stories aflame.

As we offer you this edition, may the fire that burned in these encounters—from youthful melodies to renewed marriages, from pastoral workshops to continental alliances—inspire your own heart to beat in rhythm with Christ.

In this month of the Sacred Heart, may we remember that at the centre of all our work, all our efforts, all our mission, is the love of Christ poured out for the world.

Thank you for your patience. Thank you for reading us, supporting us, correcting us, praying for us. This mission continues—through your hands, your encouragement, and your prayer.

May the Sacred Heart of Jesus, burning with love for all, continue to ignite in us a fire that never fades.

Warmly,

Fr. Johnston Z. Mlambo



ZCBC and a Pontifical Commission lead Safeguarding push in Zimbabwe: a historic step toward unified protection policies

By Fr. Johnston Mlambo

Harare, – June 25, 2025

In a significant step toward strengthening the culture of safeguarding within the Catholic Church in Zimbabwe, the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops' Conference (ZCBC), through its Safeguarding Commission, convened a two-day workshop in collaboration with the Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors (PCPM) – Africa Region.

The workshop, held in Harare from the 24th to the 25th of June 2025, brought together Vicars General, Pastoral Coordinators, and members of the Conference of Major Religious Superiors of Zimbabwe (CMRS-ZW).

Also in attendance were Fr. Tryvis Moyo, the Secretary General of ZCBC, and his deputy, Fr. Mgcini Moyo, signifying high-level support for the evolving safeguarding mandate.

At the heart of the workshop was the presentation and contextual interpretation of the Universal Guidelines Framework (UGF)—a comprehensive global document published by the PCPM in 2024, outlining the Catholic Church's shared safeguarding principles.

According to Sr. Theresa Nyadombo, National Coordinator of the ZCBC Safeguarding Commis-

sion, the workshop's aim was to foster awareness and local alignment with these international guidelines, while recognising Zimbabwe's unique pastoral and cultural context.

"These universal guidelines are not meant to discard what we already have," Sr. Nyadombo explained in an interview, "but to help us identify and close the gaps in our current diocesan policies. They provide a common vision of safeguarding across the world—what the Church stands for in protecting minors and vulnerable adults."

The Universal Guidelines Framework (UGF) is structured around ten pillars that define effective Church safeguarding. In simple terms, they cover the following areas:

1. Leadership commitment to a zero-tolerance culture.
2. Structures and teams that implement safeguarding.
3. Up-to-date safeguarding policies that are accessible and clear.
4. Codes of conduct that protect vulnerable persons and guide behaviour.
5. Safe recruitment and formation of Church personnel.



Fr Bernard Mukwewa stresses a point

6. Ongoing training and education for all Church actors.
7. Pastoral care and support for victims and survivors.
8. Transparent case handling and reporting of abuse.
9. Regular monitoring and evaluation of safeguarding efforts.
10. Accountability and transparency to the Church and wider society.

Sr. Nyadombo emphasised that these guidelines are not rigid rules, but tools meant to be adapted. "Our challenge is to interpret them within our language, culture, and legal realities," she said.

"For example, how do you talk about 'safeguarding' in Shona or Ndebele in a way that people understand? And how do we deal with customs or social norms that may clash with child protection?"

Notably, Zimbabwe is serving as a pilot country in the implementation and contextual testing of the Universal Guidelines. This gives the Church in Zimbabwe a unique voice in helping refine the global framework.

"The Pontifical Commission is listening to us," said Sr. Nyadombo. "Our input from this workshop, the gaps we identify, and our local solutions—they will feed into the broader revision of the guidelines. We are not just receiving a global

document; we are co-shaping it."

Every diocese in Zimbabwe already has some form of safeguarding policy. But as laws evolve, pastoral contexts shift, and best practices emerge, policy review becomes essential.

"Policies are living documents," Sr. Nyadombo noted.

"They must be reviewed regularly—ideally every three years—to remain relevant. This includes checking whether procedures for reporting abuse are clear, whether staff are trained, and whether victims and survivors are receiving proper care."

The workshop challenged each diocesan delegation to go back and evaluate the strengths and gaps in their policies using the new framework.

In a strategic planning session, participants were asked to outline what practical steps they will take upon returning to their dioceses.

"We are not here to dictate to them," Sr. Nyadombo clarified.

"They must define their own diocesan priorities, engage their bishops, and act. It doesn't take money to start awareness. It takes commitment."

Beyond structures and guidelines, Sr. Nyadombo stressed that safeguarding is about people, particularly those who have suffered harm.

"These guidelines insist on accompanying victims and survivors. Healing is not just psychological—it's spiritual, pastoral, and communal. We must listen. We must care. We must restore trust."

As the workshop concluded, participants expressed renewed conviction that safeguarding is no longer a side task—it is central to the Church's mission of evangelisation.

Bringing in a pastoral perspective, Fr. Mgcini Moyo, National Pastoral Coordinator and Deputy Secretary General of ZCBC, welcomed the workshop as a timely intervention.

"First of all, I would like to appreciate the importance of this workshop because it lays a firm foundation for whatever systems and structures we are going to use in addressing safeguarding," said Fr. Moyo.

"We have already done something as a Church in Zimbabwe, but perhaps the foundations were not sufficiently inclusive or informed by broad consultation."



A cross-section of attendees shows keen interest in the presentation

He noted that some policies were developed more out of external expectation than local realities.

With the UGF, there is now a push for more contextualised policies that incorporate cultural realities, legal frameworks, and language sensitivity.

"We are not starting from scratch. Some dioceses already have functioning safeguarding structures, and we must acknowledge that good work," he added.

"But now it's about moving from policy on paper to practice that protects."

Fr. Kelvin Nyakupinda, Vicar General of the Diocese of Mutare, echoed the need for structure and coherence in diocesan safeguarding efforts.

"It also gives us room to create policies around safeguarding. Because if you see, issues to do with safeguarding were being done randomly, without any policy guiding," said Fr. Nyakupinda.

"This framework now is helping us to create a policy that speaks to our context and our culture—one that helps us identify and challenge even those practices that may be culturally accepted but contradict safeguarding principles."

He also stressed the expanded understanding of vulnerability, noting that it occurs at every level of Church life—including among those in authority. The Universal Guidelines, he said, make it easier for dioceses to draft their own proce-

dures while remaining rooted in Canon Law and global Church expectations.

"This now becomes a marriage between safeguarding and Canon Law. It guides us to know what is procedural and what is not," he explained.

"Even though dioceses already had safeguarding policies, these must now be reviewed in light of the universal guidelines. Safeguarding is safeguarding—whether you are in Europe or Africa. We need to speak one language."

With Zimbabwe playing a leading role in refining the global framework, and with diocesan leaders now empowered with updated knowledge, the Safeguarding Commission's message is clear:

The time to act is now. Not tomorrow. Not next year. Today.



Participants exchange insights during the session.

Faith set in stone, love lived in flesh: The Sacred Heart at a Century

By Fr. Johnston Mlambo



The Vicar General Fr Muguti and the Archbishop of Harare Robert Christopher Ndlovu cut the cake

Harare- The sky was a brilliant, cloudless blue, and the gentle breeze that swept across the city felt almost sacramental— as if nature itself had paused in reverence.

By 7:30 a.m., the quadrangle of Dominican Convent High School was already alive with movement and anticipation.

Ushers checked every detail, the choir rehearsed their harmonies one final time, and media crews identified strategic positions to capture the grandeur of the day.

The decision to host the celebration at the school—just a hundred metres west of the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart—had been both practical and symbolic.

With over 4,000 people expected, the Cathedral grounds simply could not accommodate such a crowd.

Yet the spiritual centre of the event remained unchanged. Just across Simon Muzenda Street, the clergy vested at the Cathedral, and from there, a solemn and majestic procession began.

As we moved from the Cathedral—the very ob-

ject of our celebration—towards the quadrangle, the bells of the Sacred Heart rang out.

Their rich, sonorous tones, perhaps unheard for generations, echoed down the street and into the hearts of all gathered.

For many, it was the first time hearing them; for others, a nostalgic memory awakened.

From their elevated tower, the bells seemed to touch the sky, their sound carried upward by the wind—as if calling all of heaven to witness this moment.

Our vestments swayed gracefully with each step, the breeze giving them rhythm, while the bells handed us over to the soaring voices of the choir waiting near the altar.

Giant screens flanking the courtyard beamed our entry to all present, and many smiled to see themselves walk across the threshold of this historic moment.

Indeed, on the 28th of June 2025, we gathered not just to mark the passing of time, but to celebrate a hundred years of faith, a legacy of love, and a future filled with hope—the living spirit of

the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart, now echoing beyond its walls.

A cathedral is far more than an architectural landmark or administrative centre.

Theologically, it is the heart of the diocese—the visible sign of the Church's unity under the bishop, who is the successor of the apostles.

At its core is the *cathedra*, the bishop's chair, from which the word cathedral derives.

This chair is not a mere piece of furniture; it symbolises the bishop's teaching authority, his pastoral care, and his role as a guarantor of apostolic faith within the local Church.

In a deeper spiritual sense, the cathedral is a sacramental sign of Christ's presence among His people.

Just as Christ is the cornerstone of the Church (Ephesians 2:20), so too is the cathedral a cornerstone of diocesan life.

From this place, the Church proclaims the Gospel, celebrates the Eucharist, and gathers God's people into communion.

It is the place where the local Church breathes—its feasts, ordinations, funerals, jubilees, and Chrism Masses all flow from and return to this sacred centre.

However, due to space constraints, ordinations and Chrism Masses are not celebrated in the Cathedral.

Theologically, the cathedral also points to the heavenly Jerusalem.

Its architecture, liturgy, and art are meant to lift minds and hearts to God, serving as a foretaste of the eternal liturgy of heaven (cf. Revelation 21).

When the faithful gather in the cathedral, they become visible signs of the mystical Body of Christ on pilgrimage—rooted in history, yet longing for eternity.

The Cathedral's physical location within the city holds profound symbolic resonance.

Nestled on the northeastern edge of Harare's Central Business District, at the intersection of Herbert Chitepo Avenue and Simon Muzenda Street, it stands as a sentinel—watchful and unwavering—between two worlds.

Just beyond its walls lies the Avenues, a residential area known not only for its apartment blocks and flats, but also for the social challenges that often come with urban life: drug and substance abuse, prostitution, and the struggles



Cathedral youths raise awareness on drug and substance abuse through a powerful dramatised song during the Centenary Mass.

of economic desperation.

Yet, rather than retreat from this reality, the Cathedral stands firm—as if deliberately placed at this threshold—to be a beacon of grace where the Church meets the woundedness of society.

Its doors open not only to the devout but also to the weary, the addicted, the searching.

This juxtaposition of holiness and hardship is not accidental.

It reflects the very mission of the Church: to be light in darkness, salt in a tasteless world, and balm for the broken-hearted.

In the words of Pope Francis, "the Church is a hospital for sinners, not a museum for saints."

This tension between sacred space and social struggle was brought into sharp focus during the centenary celebration itself.

As part of the liturgy, the youth of the Cathedral presented a moving musical piece highlighting the scourge of drug and substance abuse that is ravaging the lives and futures of many young people today.

As they sang, some dramatised the disorientation and despair that come with addiction—staggering, collapsing, and reaching out—as if crying for help on behalf of their peers.

It was a stirring moment. One could not help but sense the prophetic voice of the Church rising from the heart of the city, refusing to ignore the pain outside its gates.

The Cathedral, then, is not merely a spiritual centre—it is a place of encounter, a place where God's mercy meets human brokenness.

Its location near the margins of the CBD is a

theological statement in itself: that the Church must never isolate itself from the world it is called to redeem.

As part of the centenary celebrations, a moving historical synopsis of the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart was presented to the congregation.

In his address, Mr. George Chirenda, Chairperson of the Centenary Celebrations and Preparations Organising Team, captured the essence of what it means to reach 100 years as a parish community.

"Established in 1925, this sacred institution has been a beacon of faith, hope, and love for generations," he said, noting that the theme of the day — "100 Years of Faith, a Legacy of Love, and a Future of Hope" — encapsulated not only a span of time but also the heart and soul of the community that has gathered at the Cathedral over the years.

The synopsis paid tribute to the visionaries and missionaries who laid the foundation of the Church, such as Monsignor Robert Brown, and those who established and sustained the sacramental life of the parish.

It also honoured the contributions of parishioners through the generations. In a tone of gratitude, he proclaimed:

"Chokwadi hatigoni kukutendai zvakakwana!" (Indeed, we cannot thank you enough!) — a heartfelt appreciation of the sacrifices made by both clergy and laity over the century.

One poignant moment in the synopsis linked the Cathedral's legacy not only to religious life but to Zimbabwe's broader national journey.

The chairman recalled how the Dominican Sisters, whose convent stands on the grounds where the Mass was celebrated, aided liberation heroes like Robert Mugabe and Enos Nkala during the struggle for independence.

"These 100 years of faith," he said, "are not only significant for the Catholic Church but also serve as a major point of national reflection."

The Cathedral's century-long mission has extended beyond liturgical life.

From education to healthcare, charity, and evangelisation, the parish has contributed significantly to the well-being of the city and nation.

The Dominican Convent was highlighted as a "shining mark" of the Church's contribution to education, while institutions such as the Tsuru

Clinic and the Society of St Vincent de Paul were cited for their outreach to the vulnerable.

In keeping with the celebratory mood but with an eye on the future, the synopsis also unveiled a vision for the next chapter.

Plans are already underway for the construction of a Centenary Block within the Cathedral grounds — a tangible sign of the current generation's commitment to the Church of tomorrow.

"The block will be the legacy that the present generation will hand over to those coming in the future," the chairman said, urging all in attendance to pledge their support.

In a spirit of Catholic universality, the multilingual nature of the Cathedral parish was also celebrated.

From being a predominantly English-speaking community, the Cathedral now resonates with voices in Shona, Ndebele, French, Portuguese, and even Tonga, with the choir preparing a song titled "MBULI BBALABALA YACHILANGILO" for the upcoming St Cecilia Choir Competitions.

This, he said, was a modern echo of Pentecost: "This Cathedral once primarily an English-speaking parish now resonates with the voices of many... a testament to the Church's living breath of Catholicity."

The synopsis ended with a powerful metaphor comparing the parish's growth to a living organism, rooted in unity yet branching out through small Christian communities, guilds, and various ministries.

From a small seed planted a century ago, the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart has grown into a sanctuary of prayer, a centre of service, and a sign of hope for the city of Harare.

In his homily, the Archbishop of Harare and par-



The Archbishop gives his homily



The Archbishop blesses the balloon rosary before it is released, symbolising prayers rising to heaven

ish priest of the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart, Robert Christopher Ndlovu, offered a deeply pastoral and reflective message that touched the hearts of the thousands gathered.

He began by acknowledging a simple yet profound reality—the Cathedral had become too small for the growing community it had nurtured for a century.

“We have grown so big that our mother can no longer contain us,” he said with a warm but honest tone, referring to the Cathedral building itself.

“For the past 100 years, a number of people, both living and dead, have converged in that building to celebrate our faith in different forms.”

The Archbishop paid tribute to all priests—past and present—who had served the Cathedral, as well as to the faithful who had journeyed with the parish throughout its century of existence.

But he also challenged the congregation to make the centenary a moment of spiritual renewal.

“It is a day to re-educate ourselves in the faith,” he said.

Quoting from the Gospel of Matthew, he encouraged the faithful to embrace their role as light in a world overshadowed by moral darkness:

“Kristo akati: ‘Imi muri chiedza chepasi, guta rakavakirwa pamusoro pegomo haringavanzike. Naizvozvo chiedza chenyu ngachipenye pamberi

pevanhu kuti vaone mabasa enyu akanaka, vobva vakudza Baba venyu vari kudenga.”

“Kwemakore zana apfuura, chiedza chemuten-deri woga woga aipindira paCathedral chaifan-ira kunge chichipenya, chichivhenekera vanhu vose—kunyanya vari muguta reHarare—chichiun-za mweya wakanaka werudo.”

In these words, the Archbishop not only praised the spiritual role of the Cathedral over the years, but also offered a theological vision for the next century: that the Church must continue to be a light, a moral compass, and a refuge for the broken.

Reflecting on the sacredness of the space, he reminded the congregation that the Church building is not just a structure of bricks and mortar, but a privileged place of divine encounter:

“Every Church building is a privileged space of encounter with God. There we meet to worship God in spirit and in truth,” he said.

“For Jesus, the Temple was a dwelling of His Father and a house of prayer. That’s why He drove out those ... who had turned it into a marketplace.”

In light of this, the Archbishop made a strong pastoral appeal to the faithful to reverence sacred spaces—not only the physical building, but also themselves as living temples:

“Ngatidzidzei kuremekedza dzimba dzakateket-erwa kuna Mwari,” he said.

“Ngatiziveiwo kuti isu vatenderi takaitwa Temberi

yaMwari. Kana tichitaura nezveutsvene hwemba yaMwari, ngatitaureiwo nezvehutsvene hwedu isu tinoungana imomo tichinamata.”

In one of the more poignant moments of the homily, the Archbishop turned his attention to a growing trend: the celebration of sacraments, particularly weddings and funerals, outside the Church.

He cautioned against reducing these sacred moments to social functions:

“Let us take pride in celebrating the Sacraments in the Church,” he urged.

“Vazhinji vedu vava kufunga kuti maGardens nemaParks are the best for weddings. Maybe they are best for videos and photos, but not for weddings. I believe there are blessings that go with marriages solemnised in the Church, in front of the Blessed Sacrament.”

He also expressed concern over the practice of celebrating funeral Masses at cemeteries, bypassing the Church:

“Munhu watainamata naye muChurch, hatichada kuti tiwonekane naye muChurch,” he lamented.

The Archbishop’s homily was both a celebration and a wake-up call—a call to honour the past, live the present with reverence, and walk into the future with a renewed sense of purpose, rooted in the life of the Church and centred on Christ.

In his address to the congregation, the Vicar General of the Archdiocese of Harare offered a compelling historical narrative tracing the missionary roots of the Cathedral and the growth of the Catholic faith in Zimbabwe.

He brought to life the early journey of the Society of Jesus (Jesuits), whose members were the pioneers of Catholic missionary activity in the country.

He explained that the Jesuits first arrived in Matabeleland, where they engaged in missionary work after consultations with King Lobengula.

Facing various challenges, they later moved to Mashonaland and settled in Chishawasha in 1891, under the leadership of Fr. Augustus Richards, SJ.

From this mission base, the Jesuits would go on to establish several key missions across the country, including Visitation Makumbi and St. Peter’s Mbare.

A key figure in this missionary journey was Fr. Aloysius Leboeuf, SJ, whom the Vicar General described as an “architect par excellence.”

Fr. Leboeuf not only evangelised but also designed sacred spaces that would serve the growing Church.

It was he who designed the first chapel at the Dominican Convent grounds—the very site of the centenary celebration.

This humble chapel, intended primarily for chaplaincy, seated only 40 people. However, as numbers swelled, Fr. Leboeuf designed a larger chapel accommodating 200 people, dedicated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

“Saka zita rekuti Sacred Heart of Jesus harina kutangira uko, rakatangira pano paChapel yanga iine vanhu 200,” he explained, grounding the Cathedral’s name not in distant association but in local, historical reality.

The name Sacred Heart of Jesus was no mere designation—it was foundational. When the Jesuits began their mission, they dedicated it entirely to the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

Even the Dominican Sisters who accompanied them were part of the Congregation of the Dominican Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

The missionary enterprise itself was consecrated by Pope Leo XIII, giving it a deep ecclesial and spiritual foundation.

As the Catholic community continued to grow, Monsignor Robert Brown, then Prefect Apostolic of the Zambezi Mission, laid the foundation stone for a much larger church on 28 June 1924—exactly 101 years to the day before the 2025 cen-



A visual journey through time: historical photographs of the Cathedral now grace its walls, telling the story of a century of faith, architecture, and community.

tenary celebration.

Just over a year later, on 2 August 1925, the doors of what would become the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart were officially opened.

The Vicar General also shared a fascinating detail that captivated many: the Cathedral houses relics of St. Clement of Rome, one of the earliest successors of St. Peter and third pope of the Catholic Church.

This sacred link reinforces the Cathedral's apostolic connection to the universal Church.

The design of the Cathedral itself bears the mark of Fr. Leboeuf's genius.

In addition to designing the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart, Fr. Leboeuf was also the architect behind the St. Mary's Minor Basilica in Bulawayo, another jewel of Catholic architecture in Zimbabwe.

This historical reflection not only honoured the legacy of those early missionaries, but also deepened the sense of identity among today's faithful—connecting the past to the present, and anchoring the Cathedral's physical presence in the enduring memory of sacred intention and missionary zeal.

In the aftermath of the celebrations, the Cathedral Parish Chairperson, Mr. Pius Magama, shared his reflections in response to a post-event interview.

As someone who bore the weight of leadership during the planning and execution of the centenary, his words offered insight into the human effort behind the grand liturgical day.

"The build-up to the occasion was hectic. The planning meetings started last year," he wrote, acknowledging the intense preparations that led up to the day.

For him, the success of the event lay not only in numbers or logistics, but in the unity of purpose and shared commitment:

"The centenary celebration was an ecstatic day, it was a spirit-filled event.

"The numbers did not disappoint and so truly, as a mother parish, the Cathedral embraced all.

"Our organising team worked in synodality with the entire parish groups and SCCs. It was hands on the deck for everyone, and so success is attributed to the team display."

With honesty and responsibility, Mr. Magama also mentioned one challenge faced during the



Parishioners get food

event:

"Sadly, though, there were some reported cases of discomfort from the food consumed from some food serving points, and the parish is seized with the matter."

Yet above all, his tone was one of gratitude—for being part of history, and for the support the parish received from many corners:

"As the parish exec chair during the period of the centenary celebrations, the event was my highest privileged honour.

"I am grateful for the support given by parishioners from the parish, and from other parishes and from the corporate world.

"We shall always cherish such support, and do not take it for granted."

His words, simple yet sincere, reminded all that while the Cathedral may be a towering monument of faith, it is ultimately built and sustained by the everyday faithfulness of its people.

As the sun set on the centenary celebrations of the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart, many parishioners left with hearts full of joy and gratitude.

For some, it was the liturgy. For others, it was the music, the unity, the crowd—or simply being part of history.

A few shared their personal impressions.

Mrs. Rambai Carr spoke fondly of the music and its impact beyond Zimbabwe's borders:

"The celebrations were very good. The singing was lively and good. Even some people who are



Congregants stand in an act of thanksgiving and prayer.

abroad—I shared some clips and photos of the event—they were impressed and said they miss the singing at home.”

Mrs. Clare Umali was full of praise for the seamless execution of the programme:

“It was well organised and wonderfully done.”

For Ms. Leona Mugabe, the celebration was beautiful overall, though she noted a few areas that could be improved:

“The liturgy went well, though some dances from the youths needed moderation,” she said.

“I also felt that the notices were too many. If the notices take more time than the homily, it is not right. I think we need to improve on that.”

These reflections, while varied, echoed a common truth: the Cathedral’s centenary was not just a commemoration of the past—it was a shared experience of faith in action, a living testimony to a Church that celebrates, reflects, and always seeks to grow.

The centenary of the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart was more than a celebration of a building—it was a spiritual homecoming, a moment of gratitude for a century of grace, and a recommitment to the mission ahead.

Rooted in the sacrifices of missionaries and the faith of generations, the Cathedral has stood as a mother to many, embracing both saints and sinners, the weary and the hopeful.

As it looks to the future, it carries within its walls not just the echoes of the past, but the living

voices of a Church alive—singing, serving, and witnessing in a world still hungry for light.

With hearts full and feet ready to walk forward, the faithful of Harare proclaim not only “Happy birthday, Cathedral!”—but also “Lead us, Sacred Heart, into the next hundred years.”



Missionary Childhood in joyful play during the Centenary Mass — a celebration of faith through the innocence and energy of young hearts.



For some, it was a heartfelt moment of reconnection

Harmony in spirit and sound: CASSA choral competition uplifts Catholic learners

By SOCCOM Reporter



*Nagle House, the champions
Photos for this story were taken by Saddam Mukango.*

Harare- Music holds a unique power in human life. It enlivens celebrations, soothes sorrow, offers comfort in distress, and enhances prayer and meditation.

In Catholic secondary schools, however, it does more than entertain—it unites.

Music becomes a shared spiritual and cultural expression, allowing learners to come together in faith, harmony, and mission.

In this light, music serves as a vital tool of evangelisation.

As Sr. Monica Maparura, the Education Secretary for the Archdiocese of Harare, aptly noted:

“The learners have an opportunity to mix and mingle for cultural exchange, learn from each other, appreciate Catholicism, benefit from spiritual nourishment, become prayerful academic people.”

These choral competitions provide much more than a platform for performance.

They present opportunities to form young minds around contemporary themes, inspire school pride, and promote spiritual and moral values through artistic expression.

On 7 June 2025, the Catholic Secondary Schools Association (CASSA) of the Archdiocese of Harare held its highly anticipated choral music competition at Belvedere Teachers' College.

The event drew 17 Catholic high schools from across the Archdiocese, all eager to display their vocal talent and creativity.

The competition commenced with a Eucharistic celebration presided over by Fr. Davison Lukio, with several priests concelebrating.

It was a fitting spiritual beginning for what became a vibrant showcase of talent and teamwork.

According to Sr. Monica, the competition was marked by “creativity, innovation, and exciting levels of skill.”

She commended the meticulous planning reflected in the staging, décor, seating arrangement, choice of adjudicator, master of ceremonies, and overall time management.

Nagle House High School emerged victorious, taking first place with a well-coordinated and compelling performance.

However, one of the most notable stories of the day came from All Souls High School of Mutoko, which clinched second place—an unexpected but well-deserved feat.

In a follow-up, SOCCOM captured the pride and elation of the All Souls school community.

“We feel proud and grateful,” said Fr. Upenyu Tawoneyi, the school's local responsible authority.



St Francis of Assisi Chivhu

"We attribute this to thorough choir practice sessions and to the school administration that has stepped up its support for our school choir."

School head Mr. Felix Shoko echoed the sentiment.

"The choir worked together as a team. The coach and conductor were united in spirit, which helped build oneness and discipline in the group," he explained.

He credited their success to "creativity, smartness, and accurate set-piece notation."

The school's choir conductor, Nomutsa Chironda, also celebrated the victory. "[Coming second in such a tightly contested competition made me feel] happy, honoured, and grateful," he said. "It means a lot—it's something I've always wished for."

Nomutsa's journey as a choir conductor began early.

"I started conducting choirs at age 8 as part of the Holy Childhood at our parish," he shared. "It continued through sections and now at high school."

Like any committed artist, he faced challenges. Balancing rehearsals with soccer commitments, occasional disobedience, late arrivals, and clashes with academic schedules all tested his resolve. But he remained undeterred.

"Persistence, patience, tolerance, hard work, and respect," he said, are the principles that carried him and his choir forward.

He aspires to become a music coach and com-

poser in the future.

Nomutsa was named the third best conductor of the competition.

The top conductor came from Monte Cassino, whose choir came second overall, followed by Nagle House, whose conductor was adjudged second-best.

Meanwhile, schools like St. Vincent, St. Peter's Mbare, and St. Francis Chegutu found themselves at the bottom of the rankings—an outcome that presents room for growth and learning in future competitions.

As the melodies faded and the trophies were handed out, the day reminded all present that music is not only a source of joy and excellence—it is also a tool for building community, deepening faith, and inspiring young people to dream beyond the classroom.



All Souls High School



Sr. Monica Maparura, the Education secretary - Archdiocese of Harare

Couples rekindle love at transformative worldwide marriage encounter weekend

By Oswin and Susan Mkumbuzi



Couples share joyful moments during the Marriage Encounter workshop

Bulawayo- From 27 to 29 June 2025, the Worldwide Marriage Encounter (W/WME) hosted a spiritually enriching Original Weekend at Emthonjeni Pastoral Centre in Bulawayo, bringing together couples from across the Archdiocese and even as far as Harare for a weekend dedicated to rediscovering the sacred bond of marriage.

Graced briefly by the Local Ordinary of the Archdiocese of Bulawayo, Archbishop Alex Thomas, the weekend welcomed participating couples into a safe, loving environment where they could disconnect from daily routines and distractions and focus exclusively on each other.

The programme was facilitated by a priest, Fr. Limukani Ndlovu, alongside three experienced presenting couples — known as the Admin Couple, the Middle Couple, and the Rookie Couple.

Throughout the weekend, couples participated in a series of guided presentations on marriage and relationship dynamics, followed by private moments of written reflection and dialogue.

Each session encouraged participants to communicate openly and lovingly, exchanging their written thoughts and feelings to foster deeper

understanding and empathy.

Key themes included:

- Identifying and Communicating Feelings – Participants were guided on how to distinguish thoughts from feelings, and how to express both without confusion.
- Self-Acceptance and God's Purpose – A powerful session reminded attendees that "God does not create junk," encouraging personal affirmation and spiritual identity.
- Listening with the Heart – Drawing from the Parable of the Sower (cf. Mt 13:3–9, 13–15), this talk focused on how heartfelt listening cultivates joy and connection.
- Accepting Limitations and Reaching Out – Couples explored the value of embracing one another's flaws and offering support rather than judgment.
- God's Plan for Marriage – Referencing Genesis 1:26–27 and 2:24–25, this talk reminded couples that marriage is a divine vocation through which God's love is revealed.
- Dreams for Marriage and the Movement – Couples were encouraged to share their hopes for the W/WME movement and for their own re-



Mr Oswin and Mrs Susan Mkumbuzi and Fr. Limukani Ndlovu

relationships.

The weekend was not just informative but truly transformative. Many couples experienced renewed affection, stronger commitment, and a revitalised sense of purpose within their marriage. Others described the encounter as a healing journey — a chance to mend old wounds and begin anew.

Former WWME National Leaders Don and Sini Dube remarked, "The weekend was splendid... couples were engrossed fully, exhibiting signs of real transformation in their relationships. Their responses to the presentations and dialogue questions were very encouraging."

Priscilla and Andrew Sibanda also shared their experience: "This weekend was led by the Holy Spirit. The cooperation among Steering Committee members, the generosity of Weekend Couples, and the spiritual support from Prayer Couples — including prayer letters with chocolates and sweets — was truly touching."



Participating couples pose for a group photo, preserving cherished memories of the Marriage Encounter workshop.

The Dlamini couple, Buthelezi and Jocelyn, offered a heartfelt challenge to others: "We had a very lovely weekend and learnt how to open up, discuss, and use dialogue to address challenges in our marriage. I wish more couples could attend this programme, because many marriages collapse simply because spouses don't know how to talk to each other."

The WWME weekend also highlighted the importance of the Dialogue Tool, a simple but powerful method of communication that empowers couples to express themselves constructively and lovingly — even on issues they previously struggled to discuss.

In addition to strengthening marriages, the programme encourages participation from priests and religious, equipping them with valuable interpersonal and pastoral tools that enhance their ministries.

A spirit of generosity and community permeated the entire event.

Encountered couples not only returned to assist with logistics and hospitality but also demonstrated that marriage, when nurtured through faith and fellowship, truly is a journey best travelled together.



Couples take notes during a presentation.



Gandare couple

Catholic communicators in Hwange diocese urged to redeem falsehoods through truthful storytelling

By Quegas Mutale, diocese of Hwange



Participants follow proceedings during the capacity building workshop

Hwange- Catholic communicators in the Diocese of Hwange have been urged to counter misinformation and disinformation by engaging in truthful storytelling that brings hope and reflects the spirit of Christian witness.

Fr. Stanislaus Lumano, the Spiritual Director for Social Communications in Binga Deanery, made this appeal during Holy Trinity Sunday Mass at St. Francis of Assisi Mission, where Catholic communicators from across the diocese gathered for a two-day capacity-building workshop held from 14 to 15 June 2025.

"As communicators, we are called to communicate the truth," said Fr. Lumano.

The workshop drew 21 participants representing all seven deaneries in Hwange Diocese: Binga, Dete, Lupane, Hwange Urban, Empumalanga, Makwa, and Victoria Falls.

The training aimed to enhance skills, deepen theological grounding in communication, and foster a shared commitment to the Church's evangelising mission through media.

Fr. Lumano cautioned against the spread of false narratives in society, echoing the message of Pope Francis for the 59th World Day of Social Communications. He reminded participants

that God, the Creator, is the original storyteller, whose truth and beauty are communicated through creation itself.

Fr. Lumano emphasised that Catholic communicators are "pilgrims of hope" and should write stories that uplift, rather than dwell on negativity or sensationalism.

He encouraged participants to avoid being drawn to bad publicity and instead focus on the good that is unfolding in their communities.

"The Holy Spirit you received at Pentecost should help you to share good news about salvation," he added.

Citing Pope Francis, Fr. Lumano reminded the communicators that Christian storytelling must be grounded in truth, spoken with love and compassion:

"I dream of a communication capable of making us fellow travellers, walking alongside our brothers and sisters and encouraging them to hope in these troubled times."

Fr. Lumano further urged the participants to be fully committed to their role in social communications, advising them to document and share stories from their communities, including in indigenous languages.

He stressed that telling local stories is vital to both the Church's evangelising mission and the preservation of cultural identity.

The workshop also explored key Church documents on communications, including *Communio et Progressio*, the 1971 pastoral instruction on social communications.

Paragraph 65 of the document highlights the need for basic training to enable the faithful to fully benefit from modern media, while paragraph 71 underscores the importance of serious and specialised formation for those involved in communication ministry.

By grounding the workshop in this rich ecclesial tradition, the Diocese of Hwange reaffirms its commitment to building a media ministry that is professional, faith-driven, and responsive to the needs of the Church and society.

See Rome and live: reflections on the Jubilee of governments

By Fr Methuli Lanele Moyo



Ambassador Mietani Chauke, Honourable Jacob Mudenda and Senator Michael Nyambuya

Delegates from the Government of Zimbabwe, together with a small group of clergy, recently participated in the Jubilee of Governments, held from the 20th to the 22nd of June 2025 at the Vatican.

I had the privilege of being part of this remarkable pilgrimage—a time of prayer, dialogue, and deep spiritual connection.

Our delegation, led by Honourable Advocate Jacob Francis Nzwidamilimo Mudenda, the Speaker of Parliament, also included Senator General (Retired) Michael Reuben Nyambuya, Hon Senator Prisca Mupfumira, and Her Excellency Mietani Chauke, Zimbabwe's Ambassador to Italy.

From the Church side, our group comprised four priests, a religious brother, and members from various tiers of government and the Office of the President and Cabinet—Catholics and non-Catholics alike.

We met for our first briefing on 20 June at the Occidental Aran Park Hotel in Rome. In that meeting, the Speaker shared how our journey had come about.

"On the 24th of December 2024," Honourable Mudenda explained, "the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops through their Secretary General sent an invitation to President Emmerson Mnangagwa to attend the Jubilee of Governments.

"President Mnangagwa warmly accepted the

invitation.

"But because of his other duties, he assigned Vice President General Retired Constantino Chiwenga to attend the Jubilee.

"The Vice President, because of his humility, then asked me to attend since he recently had just visited Rome for the burial of Pope Francis and the inauguration of Pope Leo XIV."

So, Honourable Mudenda came to represent the Head of State of the Republic of Zimbabwe—leading our delegation with grace and deep appreciation for the significance of the occasion.

We were also spiritually accompanied by Fr Kizito Nhundu, Director of the Pontifical Mission Societies in Zimbabwe, and Fr Johane Maseko, Catholic Parliamentary Liaison Officer.

Their presence helped ground our experience in prayer and reflection, reminding us that we were not just delegates, but pilgrims.

The Jubilee for Governments ran under the theme "A Call for Unity and Stewardship."

It is part of the broader Jubilee Year initiated by the Holy See—meant to inspire leaders around the world to reflect on their moral responsibility and role in fostering peace, dialogue, and human dignity.

Throughout the programme, we attended keynote addresses, participated in rich panel discussions, and had moments of quiet spiritual reflection.



Pilgrims share lunch with His Lordship, Bishop Rudolf Nyandoro.

It wasn't just about policy and governance; it was about hearts and values.

Pilgrims also visited significant religious sites, prayed together, and marvelled at the beauty of faith expressed across cultures.

Rome welcomed us warmly—but Rome also tested us.

The summer sun was relentless. I remember particularly Saturday, 21 June, when we processed through the Holy Door—our faces shining not just with sweat, but with joy and reverence.

We were united in prayer, and it was beautiful to see how the spirit of the moment brought us together, regardless of our denominations.

Among the government delegates we accompanied, not all were Catholic.

Yet anyone watching us sing with such joy and unity would never have noticed.

The sacredness of the moment had eclipsed all labels.

Despite being far from home, I felt strangely at ease.

The people of Rome—the market vendors, the taxi drivers, the servers in restaurants—all exuded a warmth that made us feel as if we were among family.

Everyone seemed to carry a deep respect for the Church and its mission.

The Jubilee was truly for everyone.

We even had a chance meeting with Bishop Rudolf Nyandoro of Gweru, who had just arrived in Rome for the Jubilee.

We shared lunch at a local restaurant renowned for dishes that evoked a taste of home. As we

enjoyed the food and fellowship, Ambassador Chauke joined us too.

The afternoon was full of warmth, laughter, and shared stories—and yes, a glass of wine. After all, when in Rome...

One story I'll never forget involves our cheerful taxi driver, David.

Every time we called him, he would estimate his arrival time and end with the phrase, "I stay there."

At first, we were puzzled.

But eventually we realised what he meant: "I will be there."

When I gently explained the difference to him, we all laughed.

It was a genuine kind of laughter—the kind that reminded me of childhood and friendships built on understanding rather than words.

Leaving Rome was bittersweet.

It had embraced us with faith, beauty, and kindness. Honestly, part of my heart remained behind.

But like all good journeys, ours had to come to an end. We boarded our flight and landed back in Zimbabwe on 25 June 2025, arriving at Robert Gabriel Mugabe International Airport around 5 p.m.

And yet I returned home not empty-handed. I carried with me something lasting: a sense of unity, the joy of fraternity, and a deeper appreciation of the Church's universal mission.

People often say, "See Rome and die."

But after this experience, I would rather say: "See Rome and live."

NEWS IN PICTURES



NEWS IN PICTURES



NEWS IN PICTURES



NEWS FROM THE CONTINENT

Caritas Africa and SECAM renew their commitment to human development

By Charles Ayetan



Participants pose for a picture

The Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar (SECAM) and Caritas Africa have reaffirmed their commitment to joint action in areas such as governance, justice, peace, poverty reduction, integral ecology, and human development. This renewed collaboration follows a two-day strategic meeting held from 19th to 20th June 2025 at the SECAM Secretariat in Accra, Ghana.

The workshop brought together senior leadership from both institutions to strengthen their collaboration, providing an opportunity to exchange experiences and chart a structured and strategic path forward. Participants left the meeting feeling empowered and optimistic about the potential of this partnership to advance the Church's mission across Africa and its islands.

Strengthening Institutional Collaboration

"The purpose of this meeting was to build on our existing work, learn from each other's experiences, and develop a more structured and strategic collaboration," explained Mrs. Lucy Espipila, Executive Secretary of Caritas Africa, based in Lomé, Togo. "We reviewed the collaboration guidelines, identified priority areas for joint ac-

tion, and clarified the institutional roles and expectations that will guide our partnership," added the Kenyan-born executive.

Fr. Uchechukwu Obodoechina, Director of SECAM's Justice, Peace, and Development Commission (JPDC) and Deputy Secretary General of SECAM, described the sessions as enriching, with productive brainstorming that helped define clear roles and collaboration strategies. Fr. Obodoechina, a priest of the Catholic Diocese of Nsukka, Nigeria, emphasized the shared commitment of both institutions, stating: "Where one partner faces challenges, the other can complement—together, we can be a stronger, unified voice for Africa." He also proposed quarterly meetings to maintain momentum, exchange insights, and enhance the impact of their joint work.

Planned Joint Actions

This collaboration is anchored in a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between Caritas Africa and SECAM, particularly through the JPDC. The recent meeting provided an opportunity to revisit the collaboration framework and identify priority areas for joint initiatives, notably in advocacy, governance, justice, peace, poverty

alleviation, and environmental sustainability.

Concrete joint actions have been outlined for July to December 2025, focusing on advocacy around pressing issues such as debt relief and sustainable food systems. Fr. Obodochina also highlighted SECAM's participation at the 6th African Union (AU) – European Union (EU) Agriculture Ministerial Conference in Rome on 27 June 2025, where SECAM will co-host a side event with partners to address agriculture, Africa-Europe relations, and power imbalances.

Additionally, Mrs. Esipila briefed participants on the upcoming G20 Summit of Heads of State and Government, scheduled for 22–23 November 2025 in South Africa. Caritas Africa, along with Caritas Zambia and Caritas Zimbabwe, will represent the Church's voice in advocating for environmental protection and sustainable development at this global platform.

Looking ahead to 2026, both institutions will collaborate on the celebration of the 20th anniversary of *Deus Caritas Est* (God is Love), the first encyclical of Pope Benedict XVI, published on 25 December 2005. The anniversary event is planned for March 2026 in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire.

A Partnership that Cultivates Hope

Speaking within the context of the ongoing Jubilee Year themed Pilgrims of Hope, Fr. Alfred Beboddu, Deputy Secretary General in charge of Evangelization at SECAM and incoming Executive Secretary, expressed optimism about the evolving relationship between Caritas Africa and SECAM. "This renewed collaboration is a promising sign of our collective ability to face critical challenges such as debt, poverty, and ecological degradation," said Fr. Beboddu, a diocesan priest from Takoradi, Ghana.

He also provided updates on the work of SECAM's Evangelization Commission, which focuses on key themes such as safeguarding, synodality, and interreligious dialogue. Fr. Beboddu further mentioned the ongoing reflections toward SECAM's 25-year vision for the future of the Catholic Church in Africa, the draft of which will be presented to the bishops during the upcoming SECAM Plenary Assembly from 30 July to 4 August 2025.

Sustaining National-Level Engagement

Mr. Richard Akurugu Nyaaba, Executive Director of Caritas Ghana, also took part in the discus-

sions, presenting his institution's achievements and challenges. He emphasized priority areas for continued advocacy, including debt forgiveness, food systems, ecological protection, and the regulation of hazardous pesticides. Expressing his appreciation for the meeting, Mr. Akurugu highlighted how this collaborative approach between SECAM-JPDC and national Caritas structures serves as a valuable model for national-level partnerships, which he hopes will be replicated across Africa.

About SECAM and Caritas Africa

Founded in 1969 in Kampala, Uganda, SECAM serves as the continental body of the Catholic Church in Africa, with its headquarters in Accra, Ghana. Its mission is to strengthen pastoral collaboration among the bishops of Africa, promoting evangelization in all its dimensions, including charity and integral human development. SECAM plays a central advocacy role on behalf of the Church in Africa, notably through its Liaison Office to the African Union (AU) in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, and through the Justice, Peace, and Development Commission (JPDC).

Caritas Africa is one of the seven regional bodies of Caritas Internationalis, a global network of 162 national Caritas organizations operating in over 200 countries and territories. Comprising 46 member organizations, Caritas Africa works to promote integral human development, humanitarian response, and social justice across the continent. Based in Lomé, Togo, it supports member organizations through regional coordination, governance, and programmatic initiatives aligned with the Church's mission of serving the most vulnerable.



Deep in concentration: participants explore digital resources during the workshop



AMECEA & ACWECA: Representatives share synod implementation experiences with Tanzanian bishops

By Dalphina Rubyema

Representatives from the Association of Member Episcopal Conferences in Eastern Africa (AMECEA), specifically from Uganda and Malawi, participated in the Annual General Meeting of the Tanzania Episcopal Conference (TEC) with the purpose of learning and sharing experiences on the implementation of the Final Document of the Synod of Bishops in their respective countries.

The meeting, which brought together all Catholic Bishops of Tanzania and was held at the TEC headquarters, also included delegates from the AMECEA Secretariat. These included the Pastoral Coordinator, Fr. Florence Rutaiwa, the Social Communications Coordinator, Fr. Andrew Kaufa, and the Secretary General of the Association of Consecrated Women in Eastern and Central Africa (ACWECA), Sr. Bridgita Samba.

Archbishop Thomas Luke Msusa of the Catholic Archdiocese of Blantyre in Malawi expressed that he had learned a lot from the experiences shared during the meeting. He said the insights gained provided clarity on how to begin implementing the Final Synod Document in Malawi,

and he pledged to share the knowledge with fellow bishops under the Episcopal Conference of Malawi (ECM).

Sr. Bridgita Samba, Secretary General of ACWECA, highlighted how the organization collaborates with AMECEA

in implementing the Final Document. She emphasized that “the People of God walk together,” and one cannot claim to walk together in a boat while using personal resources without sharing them with others. She explained that ACWECA’s model is to utilize available resources from each member country for the benefit of all members.

She informed the Tanzanian bishops that, in implementing the Final Synod Document, ACWECA has already taken several steps, including collecting data from various groups such as youth and women and sharing this information with AMECEA. Furthermore, in collaboration with AMECEA, ACWECA organized a Training of Trainers (ToTs) workshop this past May in Tanzania. The training included priests, religious, and laypeople from different AMECEA countries, and the trained group has been tasked with forming



Determined not to miss a point, participants take notes during the session.

facilitation teams at national and diocesan levels in their respective countries.

"Additionally, ACWECA is preparing a training program for all its member countries on the Final Document (FD), scheduled to take place this November in Nairobi, Kenya. However, what I found especially inspiring in this meeting was how Tanzanian bishops include religious men and women and the laity in their plenary sessions," she noted.

Ms. Joyce Zako, the Youth Coordinator from the Uganda Episcopal Conference (UEC), appreciated the opportunity to participate in the meeting. She called on the Church in Tanzania and AME-CEA at large to ensure active youth participation

in the entire implementation process of the Final Synod Document.

"This is a timely moment for the Church to embrace youth as instrumental tools of the Church. Let us walk together in a Synodal manner in building the Church of God. We must appreciate the contribution of every individual, recognizing that youth possess diverse talents. The Church should engage them, motivate them, and make them part of this journey. Moreover, other groups in society should also be involved, as we are all children of God and must accept one another in our weaknesses and vulnerabilities without discrimination of any kind," she emphasized.



Sr. Bridgita Samba, Secretary General of ACWECA

“Embracing vocations: finding your path in God’s big family”

By Gabriel Isaac Kandewo

July is Vocations Month in the Catholic Church, and it’s more than just a date on the calendar—it’s a powerful invitation.

It’s a time when we pause, reflect, and ask ourselves: “What is God asking of me?”

Whether you’re a teenager still figuring out who you are, a young adult searching for direction, or someone simply open to God’s whisper, this month is a reminder that every life has a unique purpose.

Jesus once told His disciples, “The harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few” (Matthew 9:37).

These words ring even louder today.

The Church needs committed men and women—priests, sisters, brothers, deacons, lay missionaries—who are willing to say “yes” to something bigger than themselves.

Why Vocations Matter

The Church isn’t just buildings or Sunday services. It’s people—people called by God to serve, lead, comfort, and inspire.

From the sanctuary to the street, vocations help keep the heart of the Church beating.

St. John Paul II put it well when he said that a vocation is both a gift from God and our response to that gift. Each one of us is called to something.

And the earlier we start listening to that call, the clearer the path becomes.

How Do You Know Your Calling?

Don’t expect a burning bush or booming voice from the clouds. Discernment—figuring out what God wants from you—takes time.

Pope Francis describes it as a journey that involves patience, honesty, and a heart open to God’s voice.

Ask yourself: What brings me joy? What are my gifts? Where do I feel most alive when serving others? These questions can open the door to discovering your true path.

Every Calling Has Value

Whether you’re called to priesthood, religious life, marriage, or single life in service to others—your vocation matters.

Each one is a path to holiness.

The Catechism reminds us that every Christian has a role in the Church’s mission, and each path is a beautiful response to God’s love.

And yes, even today, God still calls young people—just like He called Mary, Joseph, and the apostles. The Church is counting on you.

Youth: You Are the Now of God

Young people are not just the future of the Church—they are its present. The world needs young hearts full of courage and conviction.

St. Teresa of Avila once said, “Prayer is an act of love.”

Imagine what can happen when young people turn their lives into a prayer of love through service, through mission, through their everyday choices.

Vocations aren’t only about joining a seminary or convent.

They’re about making a conscious decision to live your life for God—wherever He needs you.

So, What Can You Do?

This month, take some time out.

Maybe go for a quiet walk, journal your thoughts, attend daily Mass, or talk to someone you trust. Ask God to show you the next step.

Maybe He’s already speaking—you just need a little silence to hear Him.

And if you’re a parent, priest, or parish leader—be a voice of encouragement.

Sometimes, all a young person needs is someone to believe in their potential.

A Simple Prayer

Dear Lord,

Help me to be still and listen to Your voice.

Show me the path You have for my life,

And give me the courage to walk it,

Even when it’s unfamiliar or difficult.

Let my life reflect Your love. Amen.

Old age: a prideful chapter, not a disgrace

By Sr. Anuarite Manyahi



In a world that often idolises youth and vitality, old age is too easily dismissed as a time of decline.

Yet the truth is far richer: old age is a sacred chapter, a culmination of years lived, lessons learned, and wisdom quietly gathered.

It is a season to be embraced with reverence, not avoided with fear.

The Catholic Church has consistently upheld the dignity of the elderly, calling upon society to recognise their vulnerability and the risk of isolation they often face.

But more than that, the Church invites us to see in them a treasure trove of experience and insight—a living archive of resilience and grace.

Those who have weathered the storms of life, made mistakes and grown wiser through them, offer us something no textbook or screen can: real, lived wisdom.

Within the family, the elderly are more than caretakers of the past; they are pillars of stability, reservoirs of love, and custodians of culture.

Their stories are not just nostalgic memories—they are threads that weave generations together.

Their contributions to community and Church, both past and present, are immeasurable.

In response, the Church urges parishes and dioceses to establish ministries and programmes

that enable the elderly to remain engaged in the life of the Church.

It is in such spaces that they continue to give—not despite their age, but because of it.

“Do not cast me off in the time of old age; forsake me not when my strength is spent” (Psalm 71:9).

This cry from Scripture echoes deeply today, especially in a world where many elderly people fear becoming invisible.

It is a call to action—a reminder that their presence matters.

In the Catholic tradition, grandparents hold a particularly esteemed place.

They are often the first to introduce the youngest members of the family to prayer, to Church, and to the quiet joy of living a life of faith.

Through family rituals, tales of perseverance, and patient presence, they pass on not only the teachings of the Church but the living example of Christian virtue.

Recognising their indispensable role, Pope Francis instituted the World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly in 2021.

It is marked every year on the fourth Sunday of July, close to the feast of Saints Joachim and Anne, the grandparents of Jesus.

This year’s celebration on 27 July 2025, under the theme “Blessed are those who have not lost hope” (cf. Sirach 14:2), is both a tribute and a challenge: a tribute to those whose lives have radiated steadfast faith, and a challenge to us not to lose sight of their value.

Let this year’s observance be more than a liturgical date.

Let it be a true celebration within homes, parishes, and communities—a time to listen, to honour, and to learn.

The elderly are not just part of our past; they are a vital presence in our present, and a guiding light into the future.

As we prepare for the World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly, may we be reminded that the twilight years are not to be pitied or hidden away.

They are to be celebrated—pridefully, gratefully—as a beautiful chapter in the human story, filled with hope and holiness.

CCJPZ stakeholder meeting calls for stronger collaboration on rights-based development

By Fr. Johnston Mlambo



Linda Masarira and other participants keenly follow the presentations.

Harare — The Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace in Zimbabwe (CCJPZ) convened a high-level stakeholder engagement meeting at Africa Synod House in Harare on 18 June 2025 as part of its ongoing national dialogue on emerging social, economic, political, and environmental rights issues affecting Zimbabwe.

The meeting drew together representatives from the Ministry of Justice, Legal and Parliamentary Affairs, civil society organisations, Church institutions, and subject matter experts.

The aim was to foster a shared understanding of the challenges facing the country and propose sustainable, collaborative solutions that align with human rights principles.

Although officials from the Ministries of Environment, Climate and Wildlife, and Finance and Investment Promotion were invited, only the Ministry of Justice attended.

The Ministry of Finance cited prior commitments to the National Development Strategy 2 (NDS2) conference, while the Ministry of Environment cited manpower constraints.

Also in attendance were representatives from the Zimbabwe Heads of Christian Denominations (ZHOCD) and CCJPZ resource persons.

In his opening remarks, Fr. Mgcini Moyo, Depu-

ty Secretary General of the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops' Conference (ZCBC), drew inspiration from Pope Francis' encyclical *Laudato Si'*, reminding participants that, "The care of creation is an integral part of our Christian vocation—a vocation which includes economic, social, and environmental responsibilities."

Reflecting on Zimbabwe's national struggles, Fr. Moyo spoke passionately about the twin crises of economic hardship and environmental degradation, calling them not just unfortunate consequences of global trends, but lived realities that deeply affect the daily lives of Zimbabweans.

"These are not merely natural consequences," he said, "but real struggles affecting our brothers and sisters every day."

Citing Proverbs 31:8–9 which states, "Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves... defend the rights of the poor," Fr. Moyo emphasised the Christian moral duty to protect the vulnerable.

He raised alarm over issues such as rising inflation, exorbitant borrowing rates, widening inequality, and climate change, which he described as serious threats to sustainable development.

"It is our collective responsibility to find lasting

solutions," he urged, stressing the importance of balancing rights with responsibilities and the need to protect "our common home."

Fr. Moyo's theological reflections highlighted the role of religion in influencing attitudes toward national issues.

In a country where Christianity remains a dominant influence, he argued, the Church bears a responsibility to promote human dignity, social justice, and care for creation.

He called for policy approaches shaped by values, stewardship, and spiritual depth.

Quoting Pope Francis' remarks to the Global Solidarity Fund, he said, "We cannot live with the economic pattern that comes from liberals and the Enlightenment, nor can we live by the economic pattern that comes from communism. We need a Christian economy."

Challenging participants to reflect on Zimbabwe's goal of achieving upper-middle-income status by 2030, Fr. Moyo asked, "From a Christian and theological point of view, in whose hands will that wealth be? This is where theology comes in—this is where spirituality matters."

Economist Vincent Musewe presented on Emerging Social and Economic Rights Issues, opening with a quote from Albert Einstein: "The problems we face cannot be solved at the same level of thinking we were at when we created them."

He challenged participants to adopt innovative thinking to address Zimbabwe's stagnating economy, noting that despite being a well-educated nation, Zimbabwe often shies away from critical introspection.

His presentation outlined the country's economic regression from 1980 to 2025, with statistics pointing to deindustrialisation, declining formal employment, and increasing dependency on imported consumables.

Musewe concluded by calling for systemic transformation: "We must change not just the drivers of our economy but the engine itself. Changing the tractor driver won't make the tractor go faster—sometimes, we need to replace the tractor entirely."

Mr. L. Kabara, a legal officer from the Ministry of Justice, Legal and Parliamentary Affairs, delivered a presentation on Constitutionalism and Democracy.

He began by noting that a nation may possess brilliant minds, but without compassionate leadership, its people remain underserved.

"That is where the Church comes in," he stated. "Education changes minds, but religion changes hearts."

Kabara outlined the foundational role of constitutionalism in improving people's lives. He explained that a government's authority is derived from the Constitution, which ensures human rights, rule of law, good governance, and the separation of powers—stating that "those who make the laws should not enforce them."

He emphasised the need for free and fair elections, judicial independence, and civic education, including teaching constitutionalism in schools.

"The judiciary must be impartial, independent, and protected from external interference," he said.

He further elaborated on the significance of Chapter 12 Commissions, including the Zimbabwe Electoral Commission and the Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission, describing them as key to promoting constitutional democracy.

However, he said that concerns can be raised about their independence, especially considering where their budget comes from, and the remuneration of the judges.

On the controversial use of Statutory Instruments (SIs), Mr. Kabara clarified that while SIs serve to fill legal gaps in urgent situations, they are temporary measures with a maximum lifespan of six months.

Ideally, during that period, proper legislation should be enacted through Parliament.

The Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace in Zimbabwe continues to provide a platform for faith-based civic engagement, challenging both



Economist Vincent Musewe presents



CASSA 2025 ball games: Catholic schools unite for competitive and purposeful sportsmanship

By SOCCOM Reporter

The Archdiocese of Harare came alive with the spirit of competition, companionship, and Catholic identity during the CASSA 2025 Ball Games held at All Souls High School in Mutoko from 20–21 July.

The two-day sports festival brought together 16 Catholic secondary schools for a highly competitive and memorable encounter that showcased raw talent, teamwork, and holistic formation through sport.

The participating schools included Mount St Mary's Wedza, Visitation Makumbi, All Souls Mutoko, Holy Rosary Mvurwi, Musariri Secondary, Monte Cassino, Emerald Hill, Nagle House, St Peter's Kubatana, St Paul's Musami, Assisi Chivhu, Assisi Chegutu, St Michael's Mhondoro, St Vincent Secondary, Sacred Heart, and St Peter's Mbare.

Competing in volleyball, soccer, netball, handball, and basketball, students battled it out for top honours, demonstrating outstanding athletic ability and sportsmanship across all events. The results highlighted the depth of talent among the Catholic schools:

Top Teams by Sport:

Volleyball (Boys):

1. Visitation Makumbi
2. St Francis of Assisi Chivhu
3. Mount St Mary's Wedza

4. All Souls High
Volleyball (Girls):

1. Sacred Heart
2. All Souls High
3. St Francis of Assisi Chivhu

Soccer (Boys):

1. St Paul's Musami
2. St Francis of Assisi Chegutu

3. St Francis of Assisi Chivhu

Soccer (Girls):

1. St Francis of Assisi Chivhu
2. All Souls High
3. St Paul's Musami

Netball:

1. St Paul's Musami
2. St Francis of Assisi Chivhu
3. All Souls High
4. St Francis of Assisi Chegutu

Basketball (Boys):

1. St Francis of Assisi Chivhu
2. Mount St Mary's Wedza

3. St Peter's Kubatana

Basketball (Girls):



Sharon Mushamba - netball best player

1. Nagle House
 2. Visitation Makumbi
 3. St Francis of Assisi Chivhu
- Handball (Boys):
1. Mount St Mary's Wedza
 2. Visitation Makumbi
 3. St Francis of Assisi Chivhu
- Handball (Girls):
1. Mount St Mary's Wedza
 2. Nagle House
 3. Holy Rosary

Throughout the competition, All Souls High School proved a fitting host, winning praise for both its logistical coordination and warm hospitality.

Sr. Monica Maparura, the Archdiocese's Education Secretary, remarked, "Everything was well organised. The administration thoroughly prepared for the ball games. Everyone was involved, from staff to students, in ensuring that visitors were comfortable. I commend them for that."

Ms Priscilla Munodzana, the Sports Director at All Souls High School, echoed this appreciation, stating, "The hospitality and organisation were top-notch. From the moment the visiting teams arrived, they were welcomed warmly, with efficient logistics and excellent facilities that were perfectly suited for the competition."

Among the standout performers was St Francis of Assisi High School in Chivhu, which featured

prominently across several disciplines.

Their school head, Mr Manhongo, noted that the experience went beyond medals: "Games like this create a much-needed social network among youths. They get to play, eat, pray, and know each other, which fosters unity and keeps them occupied in a positive way. It also prepares them for NASH games and promotes sportsmanship."

Among the many shining moments of the CASSA 2025 Ball Games was the remarkable performance of Sharon Mushamba, a netball player whose talent, leadership, and determination earned her the coveted Best Player award.

Reflecting on the experience, Sharon wrote, "Wow, what an incredible achievement. I'm thrilled to be celebrating our outstanding victories in both the choir and CASSA Ball Games competitions. Our netball team, alongside the volleyball boys and soccer girls, didn't just participate — we conquered. Each team demonstrated exceptional skill, strategy, and sportsmanship."

She credited the collective effort of the school community, stating, "This success didn't come easily. It took hard work, perseverance, and a commitment to excellence from each and every one of us. We pushed ourselves beyond our limits, supported one another, and celebrated our differences — as Pilgrims of Hope."

Looking ahead, Sharon encouraged her fellow students to build on this momentum: "Let's continue to strive for excellence, to challenge ourselves, and to support one another. As young leaders of tomorrow, let's say no to drugs and yes to purpose."

Her words not only captured the celebratory mood but also echoed the deeper mission behind the games — forming young people who are resilient, united, and hopeful.

Coaches highlighted the rigorous training regimes and values instilled through sports.

One coach shared that structured training, warm-ups, and motivational support were key to preparing teams, while coordination and teamwork were the most visible outcomes.

For students, the games were a mixture of nerves and excitement.

One handball player shared, "I felt excited but partly scared because I didn't know the level of



Photos for this story were taken by Saddam Mukango.



Winners receive their awards.

competition to expect. It was tough, but with encouragement from teammates, it was memorable."

He added, "I learnt that the greatest glory in living lies not in never falling, but in rising each time you fall. I learnt to stand firm and to work well with others."

The event also nurtured friendships.

"Yes, we socialised and got to make new friends, which was exciting," said the student, who is already looking forward to next year's edition.

His advice to future participants was "Practice makes perfect. You can't expect to win without preparation."

Lloyd Chagwedera, Sports Director at St. Francis of Assisi High School in Chegutu and Secretary General of CASSA, commended All Souls High for a 'highly organised event', calling it a perfect venue for CASSA schools in the Archdiocese to evangelise, showcase the Catholic brand, and build community through prayer and games.

"Meals were excellent and timely, accommodation was available, and borehole water and clean toilets were in place. Security was tight, with the Zimbabwe Republic Police ensuring discipline throughout," he noted.

He also highlighted the professional handling of games and the presence of an appeals committee ready for arbitration.

Chagwedera praised the performance of Archdiocesan students at NASH nationals and on the international stage, naming Nagle House, Visitation, and Monte Cassino as outstanding ambassadors. "Each morning dose of Holy Mass cemented the theme Pilgrims of Hope, he said.

He credited Sister Monica Maparure, Archdiocesan Education Secretary, as the driving force behind sponsorships from Gramsol, Edulight, and Secondary Book Press.

Chagwedera also revealed that CASSA plans to open a Facebook page to market its brand and attract sponsorship from alumni and the broader business community.

As the final whistle blew on an event filled with energy, sportsmanship, and joy, CASSA 2025 left an enduring mark not just on scoreboards but in the hearts of learners, teachers, and administrators.

It reaffirmed the role of sports in the Catholic education system—not just as a form of physical development, but as a vital tool for building community, fostering discipline, and nurturing the holistic growth of the young.



Kicking out despair: CCJP Harare champions youth empowerment through soccer

By Fr. Johnston Z. Mlambo

Harare- Zimbabwe continues to grapple with one of the highest unemployment rates globally.

Every year, thousands of graduates emerge from institutions of higher learning only to find themselves navigating survival through menial jobs, street vending, or informal trade.

The lack of opportunities has left many young people vulnerable, pushing some into crime, drug and substance abuse, and prostitution—each path laden with devastating personal and societal consequences.

Amid this crisis, the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace (CCJP) in the Archdiocese of Harare has turned to an unexpected yet effective tool—football.

Recognising the pressing need for constructive youth engagement, the CCJP responded to widespread calls from young people involved in

its various projects.

Their consistent plea? “Give us something to keep us occupied, to stay away from drugs and crime.”

In response, CCJP organised a youth soccer tournament that brought together young people from across the Archdiocese of Harare.

Speaking to SOCCOM, the CCJP Coordinator, Dr. Locadia Shayamunda, explained the vision:

“The idea came as one practical way of using sports and learning in one go—raising issues of wellness and mental health among young people.

“This particular tournament builds on a previous one held in March 2024 in Chegutu, supported by CAFOD.

“That first event involved four parishes. The success and feedback from that initiative compelled us to scale up to include all parishes in the Archdi-

ocese.”

The tournament, hosted at St. Peter’s Kubatana, drew participation from nine parishes including St. Matia Kalemba (Norton), St. Michael’s (Mhondoro), St. Paul’s (Musami), Sacred Heart Cathedral, Holy Cross (Budiro), St. Patrick’s (Glen Norah), St. Mary’s (New Highfield), Holy Trinity (Kuwadzana), and Chikomba Rural District Council.

With over 250 people in attendance, the event exceeded expectations—especially considering it was held on a weekday.

“We were pleased with the turnout,” said Dr. Shayamunda. “However, future tournaments will likely be scheduled on Saturdays or during school holidays to accommodate more youth and supporters.”

Feedback from both players and spectators affirmed the tournament’s impact.

Shannon, a young participant



Teams battle it out on the field.

from Norton, said:

"I enjoyed it so much. We need more activities like that."

Mrs. Munjoma from Glen Norah agreed, though she recommended future events be held on Saturdays for greater community participation.

Mr. Munyaradzi, from Immaculate Heart of Mary (Snake Park), applauded the initiative:

"The CCJP Youth Sports Tournament was a powerful experience. It brought youths together to interact and learn. The banners displayed key messages on drug abuse, gender-based violence, and human rights. This was not just football—it was formation."

The Sacred Heart Cathedral team emerged victorious in a nail-biting finale.

Vice-captain Russell Nyandoro shared a detailed account of their journey:

"We came in as underdogs, especially after losing our last tournament. But this time we were determined. After a group stage filled with tough matches and drama—including disallowed goals and red cards—we made it to the final and faced St. Paul's Musami in a tense penalty shootout. Thanks to our goalkeeper's heroic saves, we won."

Anthony Muringisi, Cathedral FC's goalkeeper also reflected on the intensity of the tournament: "As underdogs, we wanted to keep clean sheets. The defence was rock solid. Even though it was dark by the time of the final, our faith carried us through. This tournament showed us the power of unity and belief."

Justice Mtapunga, right-back for Cathedral,

emphasised the importance of such events:

"This initiative kept us busy and away from drugs. The Archdiocese's efforts through the Catholic Social League are making a difference. We just hope for more support, especially financial assistance for team logistics."

Another youth attendee and player for the Cathedral team, Simon Tsuru, added:

"It pains me to see so many unemployed youths, but the comfort is that they chose to spend their free time playing and learning, thanks to CCJP. We need more safe spaces like this to share our untold stories."

For Vimbai Chiweshe, the CCJP Programmes Officer, the event was an opportunity for the youths to network with other young people.

"Generally, they understood the purpose [of the tournament] and also saw it as an opportunity to connect and share their journeys with others," she said.

The CCJP Youth Soccer Tournament was more than a sports event—it was a dynamic response to youth unemployment, isolation, and vulnerability.

It channelled energy into teamwork, wellness, and education, reminding participants that they are seen, valued, and capable of changing their own narratives.

The Commission hopes to organise another, larger tournament before the end of the year, during the school holidays.

With support from partners like CAFOD and local parishes, CCJP Harare continues to stand with the youth, kicking despair to the curb—one goal at a time.



Hillary Nyandoro beams as he shows off the trophy his team earned.



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