

CATHOLIC CHURCH NEWS

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- From Rwanda's wounds to Africa's Future
- **A trinitarian gift**
- **Celebrating vocations at the Sacred Heart Cathedral**
- **Faith in colour and song**



More than the expression of ideas

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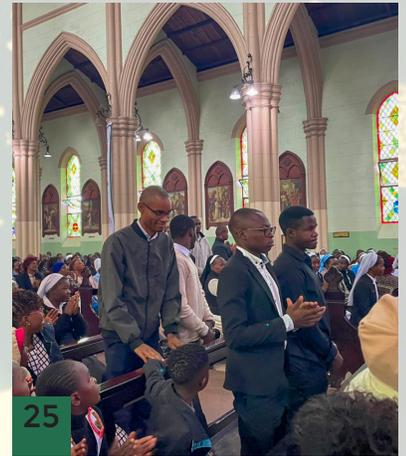
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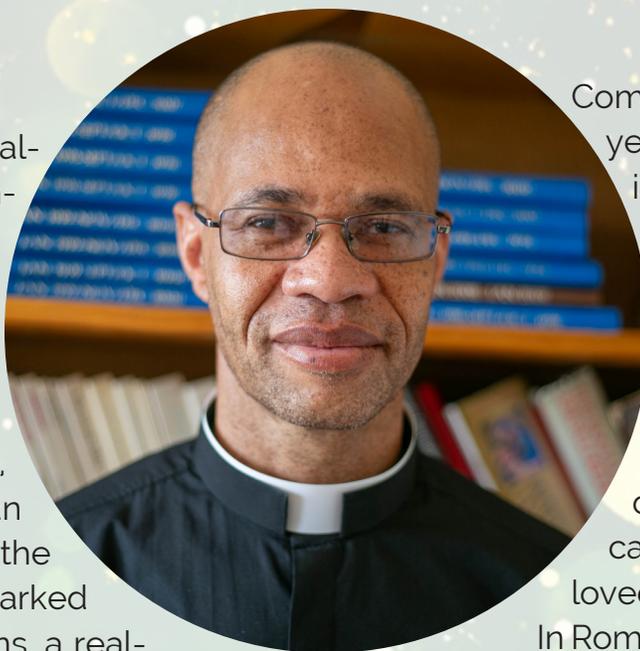
Dear Reader,

The month of July has always held a special meaning for the Church in Zimbabwe, as we dedicate it to prayer for vocations — imploring the Lord to send more labourers into His vineyard. This year, that prayer has taken on an even deeper urgency as the Church grapples with a marked decline in priestly vocations, a reality explored in one of this month's leading stories.

Yet, amidst these challenges, July has also been a month of renewed hope and energy for the Church, both at home and across the continent. From the 20th Plenary Assembly of SECAM in Kigali, African bishops have called for a new path rooted in reconciliation, peace, and solidarity, reminding us that our wounds can become the very places where Christ's hope is born anew.

Our young people have echoed this same hope on a global stage. Over eighty Zimbabwean youths joined tens of thousands from around the world for the Jubilee 2025 Pilgrimage in Rome, a life-changing encounter with Christ and His Church that has left them spiritually reawakened. Their testimonies are a moving reminder that the future of the Church lies in hearts that are open and enthusiastic for mission.

Closer to home, the Family and Marriage



Commission has been quietly yet powerfully transforming lives by empowering families of children with disabilities. Through training in practical skills and sustainable livelihoods, these families are discovering new dignity and a renewed capacity to care for their loved ones.

In Rome, Pope Leo XIV concluded his catechesis on the public ministry of Jesus with a profound reflection on the healing of a deaf man — an image that calls all of us to open our ears and hearts to one another, and to heal the wounds caused by poor or broken communication in our communities.

This issue, therefore, comes as an invitation: an invitation to pray for vocations, to walk the path of reconciliation, to support our families, and to become a Church that listens, heals, and renews.

As you turn these pages, may you find in each story the same encouragement that continues to animate our Church: that no matter the challenges we face, Christ is — and will always remain — the Source of our Hope.

In Christ,

Fr Johnston Mlambo

...
I lo you transite orer
menoit nrite kheyry
Lan t aur na intudo,
*ananced.



From Rwanda's wounds to Africa's future: bishops pledge a new path of hope

SECAM's 20th Plenary in Kigali calls for a renewed commitment to reconciliation, peace and solidarity across the continent.

By Fr Johnston Mlambo

Kigali, Rwanda – The Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar (SECAM) has officially opened its 20th Plenary Assembly in Kigali, Rwanda, under the theme: "Christ, Source of Hope, Reconciliation, and Peace."

This historic gathering, which brings together bishops, cardinals, and other Church leaders from across the continent, comes at a time when Africa faces deep challenges but also renewed hope for reconciliation and peace.

The Zimbabwean delegation is led by Bishop Paul Horan, President of the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops' Conference, accompanied by Bishop Eusebius Nyathi, Chair for Education and the Seminaries Board, and Fr Tryvis Moyo, ZCBC Secretary General.

The assembly opened with a Mass of Reconciliation at the iconic Church of Mary, Queen of Peace in Kigali – a deeply symbolic location in a country still healing from the wounds of the 1994 genocide.

Presiding over the Eucharistic celebration, Cardinal Peter Turkson delivered a homily that set the tone for the week:

"We gather here this morning... much like the disciples of Jesus, who, following the Lord's in-

struction, went up to Galilee to meet Him on the mountain He Himself had designated. Some bowed in worship before the Risen Lord. But, as the Gospel also recounts, some had doubts, some hearts hesitated.

Today, as we gather here... we do so in the same spirit: we come to meet the Risen Lord. And it is indeed the Risen Lord we shall encounter in the Holy Eucharist."

Cardinal Turkson reminded the bishops of their mission as successors of the Apostles:

"Like the Apostles, we have gathered here this morning to meet the Lord and to receive anew the charge to proclaim the message that brings salvation to the world. But what precisely is this message that the Risen Lord gives to us—bishops, pastors, and people of Africa?"

Holding up the programme booklet for the assembly, the Cardinal drew attention to its guiding vision for the next 25 years:

"Inside that magazine, two important things are highlighted: first, SECAM has formulated a new vision for the Church in Africa and its Islands for the period from 2025 to 2050 and beyond; and second, this vision is grounded in our shared identity as the Church-Family of God."

The Cardinal traced this vision back to the First African Synod in 1994, a year of both hope and heartbreak: the collapse of apartheid in South Africa and the genocide in Rwanda.

"To live as the Church-Family of God is to be in right relationship with God and with one another. It means recognizing God as our Father, the Church as our Mother, and each other as brothers and sisters. The image challenges us to live lives of communion, love, and mutual responsibility."

He also recalled the Second African Synod, convoked under Pope Benedict XVI, which urged the Church to serve reconciliation, justice, and peace:

"Reconciliation allows us to heal broken bonds, and through that healing, we are called to live justly and in peace. This is the vocation that comes to us from the Second Synod: to be servants of reconciliation, justice, and peace."

Referencing the bishops' visit to the Kigali Genocide Memorial the previous day, the Cardinal issued a challenge that resonated across the Church:

"We are in Rwanda, the land where we once failed God. May we never fail Him again."

Following the moving opening Mass on 31 July, the afternoon session was dedicated to reports from the various regional bodies of SECAM. These reports gave an account of the work done across Africa over the past three years, highlighting both achievements and pressing challenges.

In their presentations, the regional representatives outlined key pastoral and social projects that have been carried out, as well as the hurdles encountered in their implementation. A common thread running through nearly all the reports was the widespread instability and insecurity that continues to affect many parts of the continent.

"Peace seems to be elusive," Fr. Tryvis Moyo observed.

"Even in countries where there is no open war, many Africans live in very desperate situations, for even there, peace is not there," he said.

The reports were followed by the official opening of the Plenary Assembly. Cardinal Fridolin Ambongo, President of SECAM, formally declared the assembly open in a speech that called on bishops to foster greater unity and synodality

in addressing Africa's pressing needs. The Cardinal's remarks were followed by an address from Rwanda's Prime Minister, who welcomed the delegates and commended the Church's efforts towards peace and reconciliation.

The major activity on Friday, 1 August, was a presentation by Bishop José Moko Ekanga, President of the Association of Episcopal Conferences of Central Africa (ACEAC), on the assembly's theme entitled:

"Christ, Source of Hope, Reconciliation and Peace: The Vision of the Church-Family of God in Africa for the Next 25 Years (2025-2050)."

Bishop Moko welcomed participants to Kigali, emphasising the symbolic nature of this gathering in a region marked by wars, forced migration, and political tensions.

He traced SECAM's history from its founding in 1969 in Kampala, inspired by Pope Paul VI's prophetic words: "You, Africans, are now your own missionaries... You can and must have an African Christianity."

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The bishop reminded the assembly that the African Church has walked a long journey:

- From the Golden Jubilee in 2019 in Uganda,
- Through the Synod on Synodality,
- Past the death of Pope Francis,
- And now under the guidance of Pope Leo XIV.

He described this plenary as a moment to renew commitment for the next 25 years, guided



Participants keenly follow the presentation

by Christ, "the ultimate end of our synodal journey."

Bishop Moko's address highlighted Africa's current reality: conflict, injustice, human trafficking, poverty, and marginalisation. Yet, he called the Church to respond with Christian hope:

"Rather than resign ourselves to despair or fatalism, the true antidote is the joyful proclamation of Christian hope."

He stressed that Christian hope is active, not passive:

"It urges us toward involvement and action for the transformation of the world."

The bishop linked this hope with the need for reconciliation, inspired by Pope Benedict XVI's *Africae Munus*, and the African value of Ubuntu, which expresses community, solidarity, and the idea that "I am because we are."

Building on the ecclesiology of the 1994 Synod for Africa, Bishop Moko reiterated that the Church in Africa is a Family of God:

"The Church is a family of people united by life, mutual acceptance, love, commitment, celebration of faith, forgiveness, joy, and sharing. It is a community built on justice, peace, solidarity, and brotherhood lived out in word and deed."

He explained that Ubuntu, when integrated into Christian theology, can help the Church build bridges rather than walls, foster collaboration, and speak out against injustices.

Looking ahead, Bishop Moko urged SECAM to engage the pressing realities that will shape the Church's mission between now and 2050, including:

- Reconciliation and peacebuilding
- Poverty eradication and equitable resource distribution
- Artificial intelligence and emerging technologies
- Climate change and environmental degradation
- The moral and spiritual challenges of postmodernity

Quoting Psalm 133:1, he said:

"How good and pleasant it is when brothers live together in unity!"

After the presentation by Bishop José Moko Ekanga, there was an in-depth session led by Fr Vitalis Anaehobi and Fr Rafael Simbine Juniour on the newly launched document: *The Vision of the Church, Family of God in Africa and its Islands for the Next 25 Years (2025–2050)*.

Fr Rafael provided the background to the document, while Fr Vitalis presented the twelve pillars.

This document covers a wide range of themes, including evangelisation, reconciliation, peacebuilding, youth formation, ecological stewardship, and the development of a self-reliant Church. It calls for the Church to be deeply synodal, missionary, and holistic in its response to Africa's challenges over the next quarter century.

Following extensive discussions among the delegates, six additional pillars were proposed and adopted, bringing the total to twelve pillars which will guide the implementation of this long-term vision across the continent.



Bishop Paul Horan and other bishops vote for the vision document

1. Evangelisation – A renewed commitment to deep evangelisation rooted in Gospel values, calling Africans to live and share their faith in a way that transforms culture and daily life.

2. A Self-Reliant Church – Building a mature Church that relies on local resources and initiatives rather than external dependency, with a strong sense of stewardship and responsibility for mission.

3. Ongoing Formation and Co-responsibility – Ensuring ongoing formation for clergy, religious and laity, encouraging shared responsibility in the mission of the Church as a family of God.

4. Justice, Peace and Integral Human Development – Promoting reconciliation, justice and human dignity, and addressing the root causes of poverty and conflict so that all may live in peace and fullness of life.

5. Climate and Environment – A call to ecological conversion: respecting creation and making responsible choices to care for Africa's environment and promote sustainable development.

6. Ecumenism and Interreligious Dialogue – Encouraging dialogue and collaboration with other Christian denominations and religions for peace, mutual understanding, and the common good.

7. Technology and Digital Evangelisation – Using modern digital tools and platforms for evangelisation, catechesis and formation, ensuring that the Church reaches people where they are.

8. Youth and Renewal of the Church – Placing young people at the centre of renewal, giving them leadership roles, listening to their realities, and engaging them as active agents of mission.

9. Women, Family and Life – Strengthening the role of women and families in the life of the Church and society, and affirming the dignity of all human life.

10. Good Governance and Church in Politics – Forming citizens and leaders who embody Gospel values, promoting transparent, ethical governance and encouraging Catholics to contribute to public life responsibly.

11. Liturgical Life – Fostering authentic, inculturated liturgies that integrate African traditions and spirituality, enabling deeper participation of the faithful.

12. Missionary Church as Family of God – Living fully as the Church-Family of God: a synodal, missionary Church that walks together, listens to

all, and is a prophetic sign of unity and service.

These pillars—born of deep consultation and reflection—will guide the Catholic Church in Africa as it journeys towards 2050, living ever more fully as a Church-Family of God, rooted in Christ and committed to hope, reconciliation, and peace.

"The Church in Africa," the document states, "must be a prophetic voice and a sanctuary of hope in a world scarred by conflict, injustice, poverty, and ecological crisis. Rooted in Christ, it is called to be missionary, synodal, self-reliant, and credible in all its works."

This presentation marked a key moment in the assembly, setting the tone for the discussions and actions to follow during the 20th Plenary Assembly as African bishops discern together how best to implement these priorities in their respective regions.

Following the presentation of the vision document, there was a discussion on a separate document addressing the pastoral care and accompaniment of people living in polygamous unions. This conversation builds on the deliberations of the first session of the Synod on Synodality, which highlighted the need for the Church in Africa to engage more deeply with this issue.

This Plenary Assembly demonstrates the African Church's commitment to walking together—synodally—towards a future of hope, reconciliation, and peace. It stands as a pivotal moment for reflection, renewal, and action as the Church-Family of God prepares for the next 25 years.

In the words of Cardinal Turkson, the challenge for Africa remains:

"We are in Rwanda, the land where we once failed God. May we never fail Him again."



The Bishops Reverently Participate in the Sacred Liturgy



Zimbabwean youth join the world in Rome for jubilee 2025 pilgrimage

By SOCCOM Reporter

Since the opening of the Jubilee Year 2025 on 24 December 2024 — running until 6 January 2026 — groups of pilgrims from around the world have been making their way to Rome for a once-in-a-lifetime spiritual experience. These pilgrimages are part of the universal Church's celebration of the Holy Year — a sacred time of renewal, reconciliation, and hope.

Pilgrims visiting Rome during the Jubilee Year participate in a wide array of spiritual and cultural events: walking through the Holy Doors of the major basilicas, attending Papal Masses and catecheses, receiving indulgences, and spending time in prayer and reflection focused on forgiveness and renewal.

The most recent chapter in this global journey of faith saw young people descend on the Eternal City for the Jubilee of Youth, held from 28 July to 3 August 2025. This event drew hundreds of thousands of young Catholics from all continents, including a delegation of around 80 youth from Zimbabwe.

Seventy-three of the Zimbabwean pilgrims travelled under the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops' Conference (ZCBC) delegation, joined by participants from MAGIS and the Society of St Vincent de Paul (SSVP).

Of these, 43 were from the Archdiocese of Ha-

rare, led by Fr Ignatius Mhepo, Spiritual Director for Youth and Vocations, and Sr Kudzanayi Chidenga, Youth and Vocations Coordinator. Their group departed from Harare on 22 July 2025, travelling via France, where they spent time in spiritual reflection.

"Considering the economic challenges people are facing, it is a good number," Fr Mhepo said before departure. "They have been forthcoming in support of the pilgrimage and persistently checked on progress, showing great zeal to go."

He also shared how the group had prepared spiritually for the journey:

"We encouraged each other to say the Rosary during the month of May, and some have been saying novenas leading up to the departure Mass."

Fr Mhepo reflected on the broader impact of such pilgrimages on young Catholics:

"Nowadays, many of the youth are not so forthcoming when it comes to participating in parish events. They come to Mass and leave immediately after. Very few join guilds. But whenever there is mention of going out for a picnic or prayer, the numbers increase. It is at such outings that you capture them. Through these experiences, when they come back, even those who were not active in Church life begin to par-



Pilgrims gather for the opening mass in the St Peter's Square

ticipate."

He acknowledged that the cost of international pilgrimages is often a barrier:

"Not everyone is privileged to go because money is involved. So, as much as we focus on those who can travel, we also need to create time and opportunities for those who cannot afford to go."

The Zimbabwean youth travelled in two main groups.

The first group, led by Fr Mhepo, left on 21 July and went via France. Twenty of the pilgrims came from St Gerard's Parish, supported by their advisor Mr Shesby Chabaya, who explained how they managed the logistics:

"It wasn't easy to have 20 youths participate in this pilgrimage, but God intervened. We organised a fundraising dinner and managed to pay for this good number to go to Rome."

He continued:

"Such pilgrimages help the youth to connect with their faith and with God. They allow for introspection and help them build a personal relationship with God. Some of them told me, 'We never imagined we would go to the places where the big names we read about in the Bible, like Peter and Paul, were buried.'"

The second group, led by Fr Johannes Maseko, National Coordinator of the Zimbabwe Catholic Commission for the Laity, left Harare on 24 July and arrived in Rome on 25 July after a brief stop in Assisi. Both groups later reunited and stayed at Tivoli 3 School, near Rome.

Before their departure, the entire delegation celebrated Mass at Africa Synod House in Harare

and shared a meal with their families and friends.

Fr Maseko described the pilgrimage as profoundly enriching:

"Personally, it's been a very beautiful experience — a well of renewal, a well of joy. The enthusiasm the young people have, and the unity embraced, with people from different continents sharing a smile and calling each other brother and sister — it's something I would call a counter-world culture, in contrast to segregation."

Fr Mhepo echoed the sentiment:

"Setting foot in the Vatican has been a great moment for me. Witnessing the many youths from all over the world shouting praises at the Pope was also a high moment."

Fr Maseko also remarked on the positive attitude of the youth:

"One of the touching things has been their openness to learning, to making suggestions, their quest for growth, and their openness toward one another. Every evening, we've had prayer and shared our experiences — talking about the highs and lows, and what the day has taught us."

He added:

"The general sentiment from the participants is that we need to prepare deeper. They have marvelled at the beauty of our basilicas."

For many, the highlight of the pilgrimage was the Opening Jubilee Mass for Youth on 29 July in St Peter's Square.

Nkosiphile L.C. Mhlanga, one of the youth pilgrims, described the scene with awe:

"As we stood amidst the sea of devoted pil-

grims in St Peter's Square, we felt the weight of history and spirituality unfolding before us. The Opening Jubilee Mass was a testament to the enduring power of faith, as over 100,000 young pilgrims gathered from far and wide to celebrate this momentous occasion."

She recalled the atmosphere:

"The square was alive with an energy that words cannot fully capture. There was music, prayer, and song. We were struck by the diversity and unity of the pilgrims, each with their own story and devotion, yet all united in their love for Christ. The air was filled with the sweet scent of incense and the murmur of prayers, creating an atmosphere of reverence and awe."

The high point came with the arrival of Pope Leo XIV:

"Then came the surprise of a lifetime — Pope Leo XIV emerged to greet us, and the whole square erupted with applause and cheers. We watched in wonder as he smiled and waved, his eyes twinkling with warmth and kindness. In that moment, we felt a deep sense of connection to the global community of Catholics, united in our faith and pursuit of spiritual growth."

"As we looked around, we saw tears of joy, smiles of devotion, and eyes shining with hope. The Pope's message reminded us that we are the salt of the earth and the light of the world. We left St Peter's Square that day with our hearts full of gratitude and renewed purpose."

By the time of reporting, the Zimbabwean pilgrims had visited the four major basilicas in Rome — St Peter's, St John Lateran, St Paul Outside the Walls, and St Mary Major — as well as the Scala Santa, Assisi, and, for part of the group, the Notre-Dame Cathedral in Paris, the majestic Eiffel Tower, and Lourdes in France.

On Friday, 1 August, designated as the Day of Penitence, many of the Zimbabwean youth received the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

"The Zimbabweans studying in Rome made themselves available for confessions so that our young people could receive this blessing," said Fr Maseko. "Most of them have had that opportunity and they have appreciated it."

The journey was not without its difficulties.

"We were accommodated in a school, which was fine, but unfortunately there were no working showers, so we had to improvise with buck-

ets and hosepipes," Fr Maseko explained.

Another issue was the loss of registration cards: "Unfortunately, these cards cannot be replaced without buying the whole package, which costs around USD 260. I would suggest that organisers use serialised cards linked to individual pilgrims, so that a replacement can be issued."

Despite these challenges, Fr Maseko praised the pilgrims' discipline and sense of solidarity:

"Their sense of wonder at the basilicas, the Renaissance art of Michelangelo and Bernini, and the spirit of walking together has been inspiring. They have learned to appreciate the Church's beauty and to support one another."

While most pilgrims were from Harare, there were also participants from Bulawayo, Hwange, Mutare, Gweru, and Masvingo.

"This highlights the need to help other dioceses also participate," said Fr Maseko. "Synodality must not just be a word but a reality."

He expressed gratitude to the bishops and all who assisted in preparing for the pilgrimage:

"We especially thank Cinderella from the ZCPC Youth Office, Joshua from PMS, and the ZCPC Secretariat who worked tirelessly, as well as our Italian partners who helped make this pilgrimage a reality."

For Zimbabwe's youth, the Jubilee pilgrimage to Rome has been far more than a trip — it has been a transformative encounter with faith, history, and the universality of the Catholic Church. Their experiences of prayer, learning, and joy will continue to inspire their peers back home as the Jubilee Year 2025 continues to unfold.





A trinitarian gift: Bulawayo welcomes three new priests

By Nomanzi Tshuma

Bulawayo- Another momentous event unfolded at Our Lady of Fatima Parish in Pumula South on 26 July 2025, where three deacons were raised to the Order of Priesthood. The Most Rev. Archbishop Alex Thomas laid hands upon them and anointed their hands with Holy Chrism, ordaining Rev. Nkosana E. Siwela, Rev. Amon Matipedza of the Order of Friars Minor Capuchin in Zimbabwe (OFM Cap), and Rev. Lungisani M. Mhlanga, a diocesan priest. The journey of this trio, symbolising completeness and the Holy Trinity, was an inspiring testament to the truth that “hope does not disappoint”.

The ordination Mass drew a large and diverse congregation, with guests coming from as far as Ethiopia and Zambia, as well as from various dioceses of Zimbabwe. Priests and religious from different congregations came to offer spiritual support to the ordinands. The youth and children followed the proceedings with keen interest, while the elderly savoured the words of consecration in silent meditation.

The success of the day was attributed to the collaborative efforts of the Archdiocesan Pastoral Council, the generosity and teamwork of the town deaneries, associations, various ministries, as well as individual Catholics who contributed in cash and in kind.

In his brotherly message during the homily, Rev. Fr Tendai Dube from Fatima Mission of Hwange Diocese emphasised that ordination to the priesthood “marks the start of a lifelong journey, unlike graduation, which marks an achievement”. He urged the newly ordained priests to remain rooted in Christ, to fearlessly embrace their ministry in the midst of so much destruction, and to minister to all in a collaborative spirit. Fr Tendai stressed that priests are there to witness to the presence of Christ because “Priesthood is a gift from God... It is God’s work. Show Christ all the time. Take us away from our comfort zones.”

Mr Sam Dzvimbo, the Chairperson of Soweto Deanery, explained that “Ordination to the priesthood is a ceremony that signifies the birth and growth of the Church through the sending of the apostles to various places to evangelise.” His Grace, Archbishop Thomas, thanked the families of the three new priests for the generous support they have rendered to their sons.

Mrs Siphwiwe Nkomo, a close family member of Fr Lungisani, expressed her wish that all the recently ordained priests “be a reflection of Christ’s love and compassion, and bring all people closer to God”. One of the youth shared that she was touched by the level of devotion during



In a spirit of joy and brotherhood, Archbishop Alex Thomas honours the new priests

the liturgy—something that was also commended by the Archbishop in his concluding remarks. Sharing her experience, Mrs Matukudure from St Mary's Minor Basilica said:

"I was touched when parents accompanied the candidates for ordination and handed them over to the Archbishop. That reminded me that children are a gift from God, and to Him we ought to be generous with our children too."

The newly ordained Rev. Fr Nkosana Siwela shared:

"I have already been assigned to work in the formation house as a Director of Students, and I will work hand in hand with the Archdiocesan Vocation Promotion Team to promote vocations to religious life."

Expressing his hopes, Rev. Fr Lungisani said:
"As a Legionary, I wish to be devoted to our Mother Mary, to offer guidance to the People of God... and to be closer to the vulnerable members of our community."

We pray for our priests to remain committed to the priesthood – a life of dedicated service and deep love for God and humanity.



The congregation listens intently as the Mass unfolds



With rhythmic grace, MCA members offer a joyful dance



The faithful celebrate through song



Empowering families, restoring dignity

ZCBC Family and Marriage Commission equips parents of children with disabilities with skills and hope for a brighter future.

By SOCCOM Reporter

In its ongoing commitment to promote pro-life and pro-family values, the Family and Marriage Commission of the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops' Conference (ZCBC) is empowering families raising children with disabilities through education, medical support, and sustainable livelihood initiatives.

Currently, the Commission is assisting 300 families across the dioceses of Gokwe and Mutare, focusing particularly on equipping parents and caregivers with income-generating skills that enable them to care for their children while improving their quality of life.

As part of this programme, families are being trained to produce detergents such as toilet cleaners, dishwashing liquid, and floor polish, providing them with practical skills to establish small-scale businesses.

In Mutare Diocese alone, 15 families from St Joseph's Parish and 28 families from St Killian's Parish have already undergone training.

The trainer, Mr Majiri, who runs a detergent manufacturing business, has gone a step further

by offering to hand over his existing customers in St Joseph's catchment area to the newly trained families.

Speaking to SOCCOM, Sr Anuarite, the National Coordinator of the Family and Marriage Commission, said the initiative is being implemented through a group model:

"The families pick a product they want to start with, and the Commission assists them by providing the necessary ingredients," said Sr Anuarite.

"Currently, they do not have the capacity to run these businesses as individuals. Making detergents is a demanding process, so as a team they will assist each other and help one another to recall the taught methods. We also gave them training manuals to guide them."

She expressed satisfaction with the training and the dedication of the trainer:

"One thing I like about Mr Majiri is that he does not just train people and leave them. He is willing to journey with them until they are established. He is determined to see them form their own



Families learn to produce detergents for a sustainable livelihood

company. Already, he has created a WhatsApp group where participants can ask questions and get support."

Some families at St Joseph's Parish, instead of making detergents, have expressed an interest in doing a poultry project, and the Commission will facilitate further training through Gain.

Sr Anuarite stressed that the initiative is particularly tailored for families raising children with disabilities, noting that these parents often face unique challenges.

"Raising a child with a disability is not easy, so we want to help these families find something that does not interfere too much with their caregiving responsibilities, while at the same time enabling them to earn a decent living," she explained.

"Our goal is to enable these families to become financially independent and provide for their children's basic needs, allowing them to live like their peers."

She added that she was encouraged by the enthusiasm and commitment shown by the participants during the training sessions.

Participants expressed heartfelt gratitude for the initiative, contrasting it with other programmes that have failed to deliver tangible results.

One participant from St Joseph's said:

"Tanzwa nema empty promises. Tichingonyore-swa nekutorwa mapictures pasina chatinoona.

"This is the first time we have something tangible." ("We were tired of empty promises, of being made to register and pose for pictures without ever seeing results. This is the first time we are getting something tangible.")

Another mother from St Killian's added:

"Zvirongwa zvechechi zvakatosiyana nema NGO anoita kutsvaga zita asi pasina rubatsiro. Chechi inoita zvinhu ichikoshesa vanhu vavanoshanda navo."

"(The Church's programmes are different from some NGOs that just seek publicity without real assistance. The Church values the people it serves.)"

Through this initiative, the ZCBC Family and Marriage Commission is not only improving livelihoods but also restoring dignity and hope to families who, for too long, have felt left behind.



A cross-section of participants engage in hands-on detergent training



From learners to producers, families proudly showcase their handmade detergents



Building bridges for better formation: national workshop unites seminary formators and vocations directors

By Fr Johnston Mlambo

Harare- Seminary formation is one of the most delicate and demanding responsibilities in the life of the Church.

When a seminarian misbehaves or a priest later exhibits questionable traits, attention often turns to seminary training and those responsible for formation.

On the other hand, seminary formators frequently observe that, while progress is made during the academic year, much of that progress can be undone when a seminarian returns to his diocese during holidays.

This tension can sometimes lead to a mutual exchange of blame between seminary formators and diocesan vocations directors—two key partners whose unity is essential in shaping future priests.

To address these challenges and foster closer collaboration, a historic national workshop was convened at Ss. John Fisher and Thomas More National Seminary, Chishawasha, from 7 to 9 July 2025.

The gathering brought together diocesan vocations promoters from all eight dioceses of Zimbabwe, the Bishop Chair of the Seminary Commission, His Lordship Bishop Eusebius Nyathi, and formators from both Chishawasha

and Mazowe seminaries.

The workshop tackled a series of key areas aimed at strengthening the priestly formation process:

- 1.Holistic Priestly Formation – facilitated by Bishop Eusebius Nyathi
- 2.Recruitment and Admission Criteria, and the Roles of Vocations Directors and Bishops – presented by Fr Bernard Mukwewa
- 3.Accompaniment of Seminarians by Formators and Vocations Directors – led by Fr Joseph Mugara
- 4.Holiday Accompaniment, Parish Exposure, and Evaluations – presented by Fr Ferdinand Mubvigwi
- 5.Communication Pathways and Data Coordination between Seminaries and Dioceses – by Fr Rongai Chasarira
- 6.Joint Formation Opportunities for Bishops, Formators, and Vocations Promoters – by Fr Caanan Dumbura

This first-of-its-kind meeting, organised by the Bishop Chair, opened with a strong call for a renewed commitment to holistic priestly formation.

Speaking to SOCCOM, Fr Henry Wasosa, a formator at Ss. John Fisher National Seminary, de-

scribed the workshop as both timely and fruitful.

"Sometimes we blame each other over the behaviour of seminarians because we have different expectations," he said.

"If we are on the same page, we can complement each other in their formation instead of working in isolation."

His views were echoed by fellow formator, Fr Vitalis Gotami, who stressed the importance of collaboration between the seminary and diocesan structures.

"The meeting was very good, and everybody took it positively. At the end there was no blame game—we were all on the same page," Fr Gotami said.

One significant issue raised during the workshop was the lack of structured feedback from dioceses regarding seminarians during their holiday pastoral placements.

"Currently, feedback from dioceses, if any, is very informal, and this affects the holistic and accurate assessment of a seminarian," Fr Gotami explained.

To address these concerns, the seminary is preparing a formal document to outline clear expectations and collaborative responsibilities.

This framework will define the roles of diocesan vocations directors, indicate the kinds of assignments that may be entrusted to seminarians during pastoral exposure, and guide priests who supervise seminarians during their holiday placements.

It is hoped that once implemented, this framework will greatly enhance the quality of seminary formation and ensure that future priests are nurtured through a unified and consistent process.

This landmark workshop has been widely welcomed as an important step towards stronger partnership between seminaries and dioceses in Zimbabwe.

By working together more closely, the Church aims to form priests who are not only academically and pastorally competent, but also deeply rooted in the values of service, discipline, and holiness.



Bishop Nyathi and Fr Mukwewa follow the discussion with keen interest

Gweru diocese enriched with six new priests

By Fr Methuli Lanele Moyo



The newly ordained participate in the sacred rites

Gweru- On a bright and joy-filled day, 12 July 2025, at the Diocesan Pastoral Centre, history was made as six deacons were ordained to the sacred priesthood. The sacred celebration was presided over by His Lordship Bishop Rudolf Nyandoro, Bishop of Gweru, joined by Bishop Raymond Mupandasekwa of the Diocese of Masvingo.

The ceremony drew a vibrant congregation of clergy, religious and lay faithful, all gathered in unity to witness the birth of new shepherds for the Church.

In a heartfelt gesture of support for the Church, the Vice President of the Republic of Zimbabwe, Honourable Constantino Dominic Guvheya Nyikadzino Chiwenga, together with his wife, Colonel Francesca Chiwenga, graced the ordination ceremony with their presence.

Their attendance reflected a deep respect for the Church's mission and its enduring role in nurturing faith, community and spiritual leadership.

The liturgy was made particularly memorable by its rich cultural and linguistic blend. The directors of ceremonies, Fr Henry Kudzai led in Ndebele, while Fr Ephraim Matingwina directed in Shona—a beautiful display of the Church's embrace of the diocese's linguistic diversity. Marimba instruments accompanied the music, adding a distinctive rhythm to the liturgical celebration and creating an atmosphere of cultural pride rarely seen in the diocese.

In his homily, Bishop Mupandasekwa delivered a powerful message to the ordinands, calling them not just to be priests, but to become priests of Jesus Christ—men who reflect Christ's

identity and fully embrace His mission.

His words resonated deeply with the gathered faithful, as he emphasised the spiritual weight and beauty of the priestly vocation.

The event also marked the official opening of the Diocesan Pastoral Centre, a long-awaited milestone in the life of the diocese.

This project is especially dear to Bishop Nyandoro, who generously directed all gifts and donations he received during his 25th priestly anniversary in December 2024 towards the construction of the centre.

Still under development, the centre already speaks of the diocese's transformation in the pastoral care of its children.

Vice President Chiwenga and his wife officiated at the commissioning of several completed facilities, commending the diocese for its commitment to growth and service.

In his remarks, the Vice President lauded the visionary leadership of Bishop Nyandoro and urged the faithful to contribute to the work of the Church.

"Gone are the days when we relied solely on overseas funding," he stated. "No contribution is too small when it comes to building the house of God."

He captivated the audience with his deep knowledge of Church history, recounting the early days of the Diocese of Gweru with clarity and passion.

His recent public appearances—most notably during the centenary celebrations of the Cathedral of Harare just a month ago—further reflect a man deeply rooted in, and devoted to, his Catholic faith.

Before their departure, the Vice President and his wife humbly knelt before the newly ordained priests, seeking their blessings in a moving gesture of faith and reverence.

As the newly ordained priests begin their ministry, this day stands as a testament to the Church's dynamic future in Zimbabwe—one built on faith, cultural unity and the shared responsibility of all believers.

With leadership from both the altar and the laity, the Diocese of Gweru has indeed taken a bold step forward.



MCCB condemns abuse of the elderly in Malawi

By Watipaso Mzungu

The Malawi Conference of the Catholic Bishops (MCCB) has condemned the abuse of the elderly in the name of cleansing them from witchcraft practices.

MCCB National Pastoral Coordinator and Deputy Secretary General (DSG), Father Joseph Sikwese, said the Church will always defend the dignity of the elderly by demystifying misconceptions and myths surrounding old age.

Fr. Sikwese made the remarks on Sunday, July 27, 2025, during the commemoration of this year's World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly at Holy Family Bembeke Cathedral Parish in Dedza.

His condemnation comes at a time when Malawi continues to witness an unprecedented surge in violation of the rights of the elderly, with others suffering serious physical injuries, long-term psychological consequences and, in worst scenarios, death.

There are several factors driving this abuse, including pover-

ty, disruptive cultural and social changes, and deeply ingrained superstitions. Additionally, the breakdown of traditional family structures and support systems, coupled with accusations of witchcraft, exacerbate the vulnerability of older individuals.

These accusations, often fuelled by unexplained circumstances or traditional healers, can lead to violence, harassment, and even death.

But while quoting from the message of Pope Leo XIV for the World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly, Father Sikwese condemned the tendency by the youth generation and some churches to perpetrate violence against the elderly on the pretext of exorcising them from witchcraft.

"The Pope's message is in two parts. The first part is addressed to the elderly and grandparents, asking them to always be aware of themselves as beacons of hope. The Pope is also encouraging grandparents and the elder-

ly to deepen their love and faith, as well as a life of prayer. These will help them become beacons of hope among people. He also asks every Christian to always take care of grandparents and the elderly, and stop associating them with witchcraft," he proclaimed.

Speaking on behalf of grandparents and the elderly, Samuel Anastazio thanked the Catholic Church in Malawi for endeavouring to protect and promote the rights and welfare of the elderly, observing that the church has been forthcoming to denounce assault on them.

Anastazio appealed to his peers to lead a prayerful life in their old age.

"We need to dedicate our lives to God as we wait for our last day on earth. We should live in peace and harmony with others," he said.

To cap it all, a team of trained exorcists also presented gifts to grandparents and the elderly.

Caritas Zambia strengthens capacity in mental health and psychosocial support

By Sandra Kunda

Lusaka- Caritas Zambia, in partnership with the Regional Psychosocial Support Initiative (REPSSI), successfully concluded a two-day Basic Mental Health and Psychosocial Counselling Training held from 17 to 18 July 2025 at the Urban Hotel in Lusaka.

The training was aimed at strengthening the capacity of project staff who work closely with refugees and host communities.

In his opening remarks, Caritas Zambia's Unit Head of Programmes, Mr Edmond Kangamunganzi, welcomed participants and commended their dedication to serving vulnerable populations.

"Your presence here is not only appreciated, but it reflects a deep commitment to the well-being of those we serve," he said.

He underscored the emotional, psychological, and social pressures faced by both refugees and host communities. Refugees, he said, often bear "invisible wounds" resulting from conflict, loss, and displacement, while host communities experience strain as they share limited resources and adjust to shifting social dynamics.

"These challenges cannot be ignored," he noted. "This training gives us the opportunity to re-

spond more effectively and compassionately."

The workshop brought together staff from Caritas Mansa working under the project Gender Specific Strengthening of the Psychosocial and Economic Resilience of Refugee Children and Young People at Mantapala Refugee Settlement, as well as representatives from Caritas Zambia, Caritas Czech Republic, UNHCR, and the Office of the Commissioner for Refugees.

Facilitators guided participants through key topics including psychosocial counselling, trauma care, case management, culturally sensitive approaches, and community-level mental health support.

On the second day, the focus shifted to practical areas such as counselling skills, peer-based interventions, self-care and burnout prevention, as well as evaluation and action planning.

Mr Kangamunganzi expressed gratitude to REPSSI, facilitators, and partners for making the workshop possible.

He encouraged participants to use the skills and insights gained during the training to strengthen collaboration and enhance support to refugees and host communities.



Members engage in meaningful dialogue

“Be opened”: Pope Leo XIV concludes catechesis on Jesus’ public ministry with a call to heal communication wounds

By Fr. Johnston Mlambo

Vatican News - In Saint Peter’s Square on Wednesday – 30 July 2025, Pope Leo XIV brought to a close his reflections on the public life of Jesus during the weekly General Audience, drawing thousands of pilgrims into a deeply human meditation on healing, communication, and hope in a world marked by division.

Centred on the Gospel account of the healing of a deaf man with a speech impediment (Mk 7:31–37), the Holy Father invited the faithful to contemplate how the scene speaks directly to modern experience.

“In this time in which we live,” he began, “our world is marked by a climate of violence and hatred that demeans human dignity.

We live in a society that is becoming ill due to a kind of ‘bulimia’ of social media connections: we are hyperconnected, bombarded by images, sometimes false or distorted.

We are overwhelmed by countless messages that stir within us a storm of contradictory emotions.”

The Pope observed that such a context often leads to withdrawal, a refusal to speak for fear of being misunderstood.

This, he explained, is mirrored in the Gospel story where others, not the man himself, bring him to Jesus.

“Perhaps,” the Pope reflected, “this man chose not to speak anymore because he did not feel understood; he chose to shut off every voice because he had been disappointed and wounded by what he had heard.”

Pope Leo highlighted the significance of Jesus leading the man away from the crowd.

“Jesus offers him silent closeness,” he said, “through gestures that speak of a profound encounter: He touches this man’s ears and tongue. He says only what is necessary in that moment: ‘Be opened!’”

The Holy Father stressed that the Aramaic word Ephphatha is not only a physical healing but an invitation:

“Be opened to this world that frightens you! Be opened to the relationships that have dis-

appointed you! Be opened to the life you have given up facing! Closing in on oneself is never a solution.”

Following the healing, the man not only speaks again but speaks plainly.

This, the Pope explained, suggests that the wounds of being misunderstood had silenced him; now Jesus’ touch restores both his voice and his confidence.

Pope Leo underlined the role of those who bring the deaf man to Jesus. They represent the Church, he said: a community that leads others to encounter the Lord.

“Just as the deaf man’s friends brought him to Jesus, so we too are called to become witnesses of Jesus’ healing power and to bring others to Him, so that they can listen to His words, experience His touch, be filled with hope, and be healed.”

Looking out over the pilgrims gathered in Saint Peter’s Square, Pope Leo offered a challenge that transcends time and culture:

“Let us ask the Lord that we may learn to communicate with honesty and prudence. Let us pray for all those who have been wounded by the words of others. Let us pray for the Church, that she may never fail in her mission to lead people to Jesus, so that they may hear His Word, be healed by it, and in turn become bearers of His message of salvation.”

The catechesis concluded the cycle of reflections on the public ministry of Jesus, which will give way in the coming weeks to further meditations on His Passion as part of the Jubilee 2025 theme, Jesus Christ Our Hope.

At the conclusion of the audience, Pope Leo made an emotional appeal following a brutal terrorist attack that took place on the night of 26–27 July in Komanda, eastern DRC, in which over 40 Christians were killed during a prayer vigil and in their homes.

“I entrust the victims to God’s loving mercy,” the Pope said, “and I pray for the injured and for Christians around the world who continue to suffer violence and persecution, urging all those

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with local and international responsibility to collaborate in order to prevent such tragedies.”

Pope Leo also recalled that 1 August marks the 50th anniversary of the signing of the Helsinki Final Act, which promoted dialogue and human rights during the Cold War.

“Today, more than ever,” he emphasised, “it is essential to safeguard the spirit of Helsinki: to persevere in dialogue, strengthen cooperation, and make diplomacy the preferred path to prevent and resolve conflicts.”

In his special greetings to English-speaking pilgrims, including groups from England, Scotland, Ireland, Sweden, South Africa, New Zealand,

Hong Kong, India, Japan, Malaysia, South Korea, the United Arab Emirates, Canada, and the United States, the Holy Father addressed the young people participating in the Jubilee of Youth:

“Open your hearts to God’s healing love,” he said, “so that you can become even brighter beacons of hope in the world. God bless you all!”

As the sun set over Saint Peter’s Square, the image of Jesus speaking the word Ephphatha remained at the heart of Pope Leo XIV’s message: a call for every believer—and indeed the whole Church—to allow Christ to open ears, lips, and hearts in a fractured and noisy world.

NEWS IN PICTURES



NEWS IN PICTURES



NEWS IN PICTURES



Faith in colour and song: Bulawayo Archdiocese marks jubilee of artists and musicians

By Thenjiwe Ngwenya



Youths captivate the audience with rhythmic marimba displays

Bulawayo- On 5 July 2025, the Archdiocese of Bulawayo's Music Committee hosted a vibrant Jubilee Festival that brought together artists, musicians, poets, sculptors and choirs from across the Archdiocese. The event, aptly themed to showcase diverse talents, was held at Our Lady of Fatima Parish in Pumula South.

As one participant attested, "The event was a testament to the power of talent, gifts, creativity and faith... The festival served as a beacon of joy, inspiring all who attended."

The festival attracted an impressive thirty-seven individuals and groups who registered to showcase their talents, with 84% successfully taking to the stage.

The diversity of gifts on display was remarkable: from intricate beadwork and woodcrafts to captivating performances of poetry, storytelling and music.

Musical presentations ranged from solo and duet performances to group and choral singing, accompanied by instruments such as the mbira, hosho, guitars and marimba.

What struck a chord with many in attendance was the overwhelming presence and participa-

tion of children, youth and young adults.

In his vote of thanks, the Pastoral Director, Rev. Fr Limukani Ndlovu, applauded the enthusiasm of the young people: "Your dedication and commitment to music and art was inspiring and a sign that the Catholic Church has talent," he said.

The art exhibition that accompanied the festival added another layer of depth to the event, showcasing the creative prowess of the participants.

The love and motivation that went into each piece were evident, reflecting the beauty of God's creation and the boundless potential that lies within each individual.

This festival was a testament to the transformative power of faith and creativity. As pilgrims of hope, the event "reminded us that our journey is not just about reaching a destination but about the people we meet, the talents we discover, and the love we share along the way," as remarked by Fr Alex Ndlovu, the Spiritual Director for music and art.

The success of the festival would not have been possible without the tireless efforts of the Diocesan Pastoral Planning Team, the Diocesan Pastoral Council, the Music Committee, the



Young performers take the stage to share their gifts

joint subcommittees and all those who worked behind the scenes to bring this vision to life. His Grace, Archbishop Alex Thomas, extended heartfelt gratitude and appreciation to everyone who participated in the event. He made special mention of those who travelled from Gwanda and Ekusileni Missions.

As we look to the future, let us continue to nurture and support the talents that lie within our midst. Let us provide opportunities for our young people to grow and develop their gifts.

Let us come together as a community to celebrate our diversity and shared humanity. And let us never forget the power of faith and creativity to transform lives and bring hope to a world in need.

The festival served as a reminder of the beauty and potential that lie within families, communities, parishes, deaneries and the diocese as a whole.

The Art and Music Committee of the Archdiocese remains committed to providing a platform for spontaneity and creativity among Christ's faithful.

The Jubilee Festival was indeed a resounding success, even though the turnout was below expectation.

It showcased the best of our community's talents and creativity.

We thank all participants, organisers and attendees for making it a memorable event, and we pray that the Lord continues to bless our endeavours and grant us the strength to keep nurturing our gifts.



The gleaming symbols of victory



Competition winners hold their trophy aloft in celebration

Caritas Zimbabwe undergoes rigorous four-year international standards assessment

By Fr Johnston Mlambo



Sr Linda Bagayang of Caritas Africa leads a comprehensive on-site review of Caritas Zimbabwe's structures and programmes, aiming to align the organisation with the Caritas Internationalis Management Standards that strengthen governance, transparency, and professional service delivery.

Harare- Caritas Zimbabwe is undergoing a rigorous four-yearly assessment by Caritas Internationalis, a process aimed at aligning its structures and programmes with global standards of governance, transparency and professional service delivery.

While the assessment has involved a week of intensive engagements, Archbishop Alex Thomas, Bishop President of Caritas Zimbabwe, has described it as a vital opportunity for the organisation to grow, learn and position itself credibly among international humanitarian agencies.

Speaking after meeting with Sr Linda Bagayang, the Institutional Development and Capacity Strengthening Officer for Caritas Africa, Archbishop Thomas highlighted the purpose of this exercise.

"It is required by Caritas Internationalis that every member organisation be assessed internally and externally," he said.

"It enables Caritas to grow and to fulfil its operations in the very competitive world we are in."

The assessment, carried out by Sr Linda—who is also an external assessor for Caritas Interna-

tionalis—looks at governance, management systems and the impact of Caritas Zimbabwe's projects. The process includes a self-assessment, followed by an external on-site review, the signing of an assessment report and the development of an improvement plan.

Archbishop Thomas acknowledged that this was not the first time Caritas Zimbabwe had been evaluated. However, he noted that the current process is much more thorough:

"This is not the first time that we are having this; we have had it before. We are doing it more intensely so that we can be a credible organisation, competing with all the other international NGOs," he explained.

"Our effort is to grow and take Caritas forward in a very systematic and professional way."

The Archbishop admitted that while the process is demanding, it is also necessary:

"I am very happy with the assessment we are doing, but it is very tough because we have a lot to learn, a lot to grow and a lot to implement."

Expressing confidence in the outcome, Archbishop Thomas added:



Sr Linda captures the interest of the assembled members

"I am very courageous and confident that, as Caritas Zimbabwe, we are able to do this with the help of Sr Linda and the report we are expecting from Caritas Internationalis."

He emphasised the need for swift action after the assessment:

"As I said, it's not easy, but we need to be prompt to take the corrective measures so that we take Caritas forward to make our Church credible and acceptable to others for internationally ac-

cepted standards."

The assessment began soon after Sr Linda's arrival in Zimbabwe on 28 July 2025. Over the following days, she toured the commissions and departments of the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops' Conference, conducted a field visit to a Caritas Chinhoyi project—a dam constructed with support from Catholic Relief Services—and held meetings with management and leadership.

National Coordinator Mr Harrington Chuma said that the review was timely and would help Caritas Zimbabwe meet the high expectations of its partners and beneficiaries:

"We, as Caritas Zimbabwe, requested that this be an on-site assessment, with the hope that we are able to align with the requirements of Caritas Internationalis."

"Implementation of the CIMS will help in improving the quality of programmes of Caritas Zimbabwe and earn funding."

The findings of this assessment will result in a comprehensive improvement plan for Caritas Zimbabwe, ensuring that its humanitarian work remains accountable and effective.

For Archbishop Alex Thomas, this exercise is about more than compliance:

"Our effort is to grow and take Caritas forward in a very systematic and professional way."



Sr Linda Bagayang assesses the site

Celebrating vocations at the Sacred Heart Cathedral

By Sr Grace CJ



Consecrated lives at the forefront of the procession

Harare- On the 20th of July 2025, the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart hosted a vibrant celebration of Vocations during the 8 am Mass.

The event featured a procession of dedicated religious priests, brothers, and sisters, highlighting the richness of religious life within the community.

The Mass was celebrated by three esteemed priests: Fr. Muguti, the Cathedral administrator; Fr. Dumbura; and the main celebrant, Fr. Mhepo.

The atmosphere was uplifting, with spirited singing that resonated throughout the cathedral.

The day's Scripture readings were brought to life by Sr. Florence OP and Sr. Grace CJ, whose contributions set a profound tone for the liturgy.

A key moment came when Sr. Agnes OP addressed the congregation, shedding light on the various categories of religious life. She passionately explained the roles of monks, nuns, and contemplative sisters. Monks, she noted, are male religious who devote their lives to prayer within monasteries, exemplified by the Benedictine fathers residing in Macheke.

In contrast, nuns lead a contemplative life, praying for various intentions. Sr. highlighted the Poor Clares of Waterfalls and the Carmelite nuns as prominent examples.

She also introduced the concept of "contemplatives in action," referring to religious sisters

who actively engage with the world while living out their faith. Many of these sisters serve as doctors, teachers, nurses, social workers, accountants, journalists, and lawyers, demonstrating how faith can intersect with professional life.

Among those present were the Little Children of Our Blessed Lady (LCBL), Sisters of the Child Jesus (SJI), Handmaids of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel (Carmelite sisters), Dominican sisters (OP), Mary Ward sisters (CJ), and Daughters of Calvary sisters. In her closing remarks, Sr. Agnes invited the young people in attendance to seek guidance from the sisters if they felt touched to a life of religious life.

Following Sr. Agnes's insightful presentation, Fr.



Sr Agnes gives her presentation



Fr. Mhepo delivers the homily

Mhepo delivered a powerful homily that deeply resonated with the congregation.

He spoke on the theme of hospitality, referencing Abraham's welcoming of visitors in the first reading. Emphasising the importance of community, Fr noted that Abraham addressed his guests collectively, symbolising the unity of the Trinity.

Fr. Mhepo emphasised the diminishing spirit of hospitality in contemporary society.

He pointed out that what was once shared among neighbours like the traditional drink of maheu has now been commodified, with people opting to buy rather than share.

He challenged the congregation to reflect on where they turn in times of trials and difficulties and pointed to Abraham, who sought God earnestly when he longed for the gift of a child, ultimately receiving an answer to his prayers.

"What about us?" he asked, urging the faithful to cultivate a deep trust in the Lord amid life's

challenges.

He reminded everyone that, regardless of the circumstances, we must turn to God, finding solace and strength in our faith.

Fr. urged the congregation to embrace their chosen lives without complaint and reflected on the Gospel passage where Martha expressed frustration toward Mary.

While acknowledging that Martha's tasks were necessary, he emphasised that her complaints detracted from the joy of service.

His message served as a call for gratitude and appreciation, reminding the faithful that whether in marriage or religious life, we should cherish our paths.

As the Mass concluded, Fr. Mhepo expressed heartfelt gratitude to all religious priests, brothers, and sisters for their dedication in preparing for and participating in the celebration.

He encouraged continued active involvement beyond July, inviting the religious to join the parish choir and deepen their engagement within the community.

The Eucharistic celebration culminated in a moving procession, with the choir singing "Makateketerwa kuna Mwari," a composition by Fr. Majuta.

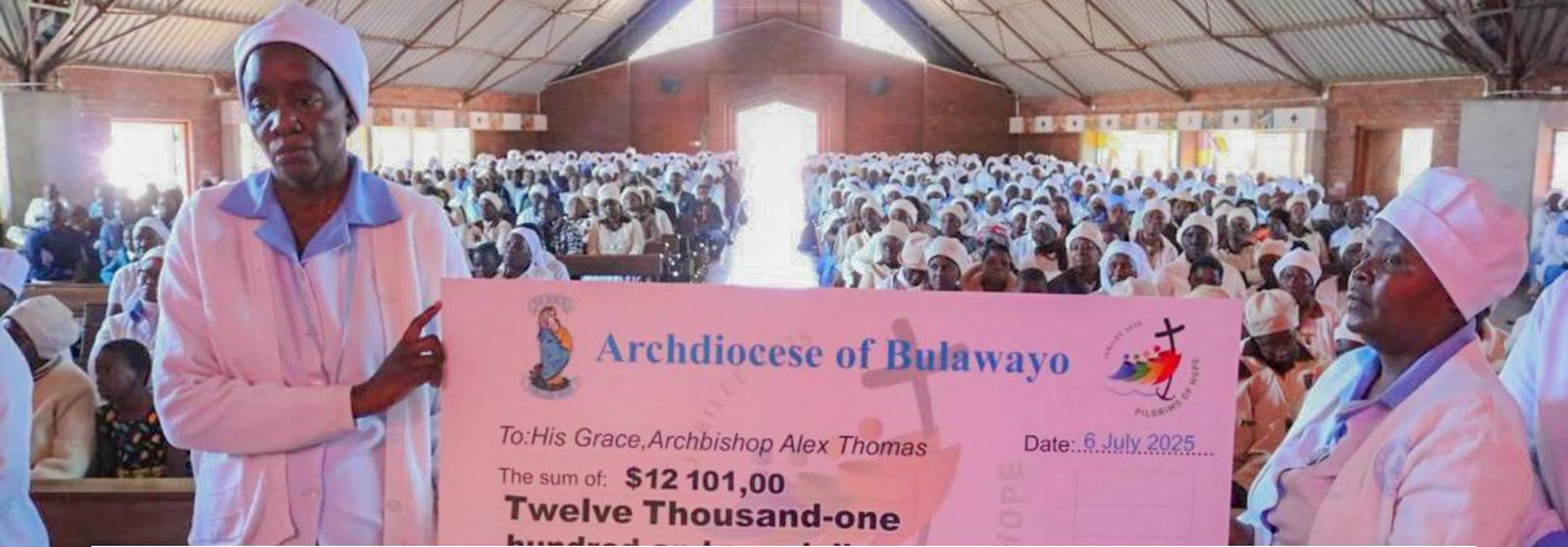
This powerful anthem echoed the spirit of the gathering, reinforcing the collective commitment to prayer and service.

As we continue through July, let us remember to pray for an abundance of vocations and for those already labouring in the vineyard of the Lord.

May they be strengthened and blessed in their noble endeavours, exemplifying the love and dedication at the heart of religious life.



Parishioners listen intently during the homily



A dream becomes a reality, as the sodality of Our Lady raises and hands over funds

By SOCCOM Reporter

Sunday, 6 July was the day a dream came true, as members of the Sodality of Our Lady witnessed the handing over of a cheque for US\$12,101 to their shepherd, the Most Rev. Archbishop Alex Thomas.

As she and her leadership team handed over the ceremonial cheque, the chairlady of the Association, Mrs Agnes Nare, said:

"It is with deep gratitude and joy that the Sodality of Our Lady members share this testimony of what faith, unity, and dedication can accomplish when Christians come together in the service of God."

She expressed that she was deeply humbled and honoured to lead a recent fundraising initiative towards the construction of a multi-purpose hall at the Emthonjeni Pastoral Centre—an experience that inspired her to propose a fundraising drive within her Association for the construction of a shade at the Archdiocesan Shrine of Our Lady of Fatima. She described the brief, yet successful, campaign as "truly a grace-filled journey."

When the idea to embark on the project was mooted to the membership during last year's Feast of the Immaculate Conception, the response was astoundingly overwhelming.

The Marians rose to the occasion with a spirit of synodality, generosity, and commitment. Mrs Nare also attributed the positive response to what she described as mutual trust among members, as well as transparency and accountability on the part of her treasurer, Ms Gift Ncube, who, she said,

"Accounted for the funds with integrity and care, and ensured that the process remained transparent and well-organised."

The funds raised attest to the fact that it is indeed possible for the local Church to be self-reliant and self-sustaining, especially in supporting mission and development initiatives.

As St. Paul taught, a lot can happen when faith is put into action (cf. 2 Cor 9:7–8).

In his words of appreciation, the Archbishop thanked members for their commitment and trust in God's providence. He expressed gratitude to the Marians who contributed, prayed, and supported the idea, saying:

"Your cheerful giving has made a dream come true and a reality."

The Archbishop went on to encourage the hopeful and joyous members, saying that if they remained united and trusting in the care of the Blessed Virgin Mother, they would build a Church that is vibrant, generous, and alive in the Spirit.

During her speech, the Spiritual Advisor, Sr N Robert Phiri, urged all Sodality of Our Lady members who had gathered at St. Pius Parish to continue supporting the project until its final completion. As His Grace alluded,

"You are there to promote devotion to Our Lady."

Asked how she felt as the donation was presented, Ms Lindiwe Ncube of St. Martin of Tours Parish said:

"I felt grateful and wished we could be able to clear the outstanding balance in the next few months – then that would be most gratifying."

Poetry Corner

Sleepless nights

Darkness falls, yet I remain,
Wide awake, with restless brain.
The world outside is calm and still,
But in my mind, a stormy chill.

The clock ticks on, the hours slip away,
As I lie here, night's weary sway.
My eyes, they burn, my body weak,
From the weight of wakefulness
unique.

I try to calm my racing mind,
But thoughts keep swirling, hard to
unwind.

I reach for my phone, a glowing
screen,
A distraction from this wakeful dream.

I scroll through feeds, an endless sea,
Of updates, likes, and comments from
humanity.

But even this, a fleeting peace,
Can't calm the storm that troubles my
release.

The city sleeps, its noise and
fray,
But in my room, I'm wide awake to stay.
The shadows dance, the moon's pale
light,
Illuminates my sleepless night.

My thoughts, they race, a jumbled
mess,
As I try to calm my restless stress.
But like a ghost, it haunts me still,
This wakefulness that refuses to chill.

The night wears on, the darkness
deep,
And I'm trapped here, in this wakeful
sleep.
So, I'll lie here, and stare at the ceiling
high,
And hope that soon, I'll drift away to
the sky.

By
Marion Munkuli

Ordained Then Called Home

*A tribute to Rev Fr. Brighton Munkuli,
gone too soon*

We share a name, you and I,
Rooted in soil our fathers tilled,
A name carved deep in village dust -
Now whispered softly on the wind.

Eight moons ago, your hands were
anointed,
Oil still fresh on your folded palms,
You rose with the chalice,
Heart young, robe new, eyes lit like
Easter flame.

You are the first-
Not to rise, but to fall,
Not in failure,
But in Christ.

The diocese stands still today,
A hush beneath cathedral arches.
Your cassock draped in sorrow's
thread,
Your stole now folded in silence.

They said, "He is the first local son
To die in holy orders here."
A seed buried in sacred ground,
A martyr of promise, not of blood.

And I-
I say your name like mine,
As though it might bring you back,
Or send you forward with strength.

The chalice is heavy now,
For all of us who share this call.
But we lift it still-
For you, with you, beyond you.

Sleep, brother priest,
In the arms of the High Priest.
Your sacrifice has been offered.
Your Amen echoes in the heavens.

*By
Fr. Kelvin Munkuli SJ*



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