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• AFRICA FORGES A NEW PATH

• HARARE ARCHDIOCESE CELEBRATES ORDINATION



More than the expression of ideas

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Editor's desk

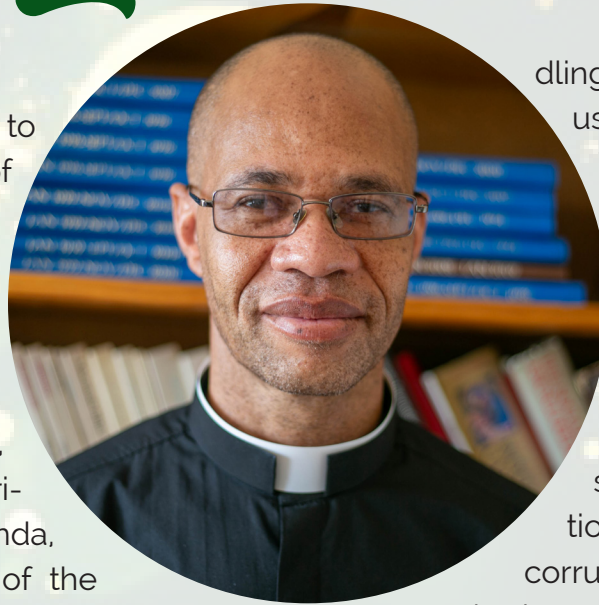
Dear Reader,

I am delighted to present to you the August edition of Catholic Church News. This has been a month filled with milestones for the Church in Africa and here at home in Zimbabwe.

At the continental level, bishops from across Africa gathered in Kigali, Rwanda, for the Plenary Assembly of the Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar (SECAM). Under the theme "Christ, Source of Hope, Reconciliation, and Peace," they unveiled a bold 25-year pastoral vision that will guide the Church until 2050. This vision is anchored on 12 pillars that touch every part of our mission—from evangelisation and family life to justice, peace, youth, leadership, and digital mission. It is a vision that says clearly: Africa is not looking backward; Africa is forging a new path.

Closer to home, we saw these same pillars come alive in different ways. Throughout August, women's associations and guilds across the country gathered for their feast days. These movements, often the heartbeat of parish life, embody the pillars of family, synodality, missionary discipleship, and service to the poor. In their prayer, service, and solidarity, they give us a living witness of what the new vision calls us to become as a Church.

The Archdiocese of Harare also celebrated a moment of hope with the ordination of 13 new priests at Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish in Kuzwadzana. In a world where vocations are dwin-



dling, these young men remind us that the Spirit is still calling. Their "yes" to God reflects the pillars of evangelisation, leadership, and youth renewal, and offers a beacon of courage for our time.

Of course, August also reminded us of the ongoing struggles we face as a nation—poverty, unemployment, corruption, drug abuse, gender-based violence, and environmental degradation. Here too the Church is called to be faithful to the pillars of justice, peace, and care for creation. These challenges demand that we become a people of hope, walking together as pilgrims, defending human dignity, and protecting God's gift of creation.

Dear reader, the 12 pillars of the new African vision are not distant concepts. They are alive in our communities, in our families, and in our parishes. They call us to renew our commitment to the Gospel and to ensure that the Church remains a home of hope, reconciliation, and peace for all.

As you go through this edition, may the celebrations of August inspire you to see yourself as part of this vision. From the vibrant witness of guilds and women's associations, to the new priests who will shepherd God's people, to the everyday faith of ordinary Christians—you and I together are helping to build the future of the Church in Africa.

Enjoy this edition, and may God bless you

Fr Johnston Mlambo

National catholic couples congress strengthens marriages and faith

By Tricia Mlambo



Participants capture the grace of the day with the Archbishop.

Bulawayo- The Archdiocese of Bulawayo was a hive of activity from 28–31 August as it hosted the National Catholic Couples Association Congress, drawing couples from across Zimbabwe for four days of prayer, reflection, and dialogue on marriage and family life. The gathering combined spiritual nourishment, practical teaching, and joyful celebration, reaffirming the vocation of marriage in the Catholic Church.

The congress opened on 28 August with a solemn Holy Mass, setting the tone for the days ahead. On the second day, the Charidza couple introduced the National Committee before Fr. Dr. Henry Wasosa delivered a thought-provoking presentation titled “Mental Health and Substance Abuse in a Catholic Family: Breaking the Silence.”

Fr. Wasosa stressed the vital role mental health plays in sustaining strong marriages, describing it as the state of emotional, psychological, and social well-being that influences daily life.

“When mental health is strong, couples can manage stress, resolve conflicts constructively, and nurture meaningful relationships,” he said. “But when it is weak, it often leads to anxiety, depression, and harmful coping mechanisms such

as substance abuse.”

He urged couples to build authentic friendships and support networks, reminding them:

“A friend is someone who comes in when the whole world walks out. Let us be that kind of friend to our spouses—lifting each other with encouragement and avoiding harmful words that wound rather than heal.”

In conclusion, he posed reflective questions for couples to consider, including how they handle stress, identify signs of emotional struggle, improve communication, and manage finances effectively.

The congress also featured the Guest of Honour, Deputy Judge President Hon. Justice Garaimesu Mawadze, who unpacked key provisions of Zimbabwe’s Marriage Act [Chapter 5:17], effective since September 2022. He explained that the law consolidates marriage regulations, recognises customary unions, and introduces civil partnerships. He emphasised that one cannot be married under both civil and customary law simultaneously and highlighted equal rights and obligations of spouses, including in divorce proceedings.

A vibrant modelling showcase added colour to the day, with couples displaying association



A couple renews their vows

regalia and prizes awarded for the best outfits. A photo contest followed, celebrating couples with the most radiant smiles.

The Munyaka couple gave a compelling presentation on conflict resolution, stressing the importance of mutual respect in marriage even when partners disagree. They reminded participants that husbands are called to love their wives deeply, while wives are called to offer respect—two virtues that complement each other. They challenged stereotypes by affirming that when husbands assist with household chores, it is not weakness but an act of love and partnership.

"Love each other deeply, because in the end, that is all you truly have—children will one day leave the home, but your love must remain," they said.

They also cautioned against biased parenting, noting that unequal treatment of children can breed resentment and weaken family unity.

In his reflection on the congress theme, "Hope Does Not Disappoint," Fr. Crelly Benedict Ncube asked, "In difficult times, how can we maintain hope? For relationships to thrive, hope is crucial." He urged couples to root their hope in God rather than material things, reminding them that the Sacrament of Matrimony provides the grace to persevere in love.

"Even in the deepest moments of disappointment, hope does not fail—and this is where true love reveals itself," he said.

On 30 August, Archbishop Alex Thomas presided over Holy Mass, reminding couples of their

sacred duty:

"Of course, it is not easy to maintain holiness in love at all times. But as Catholic couples, your duty is to purify that love constantly... Holy Matrimony enables you to love each other with a holy love, as God's love is holy."

The congress concluded with a tour of Bulawayo attractions, including the Matobo Hills and Hillside. Couples renewed their vows, and the newly elected national executive was introduced. A closing Mass brought the gathering to an end, with the announcement that the next National Congress will be held in Chinhoyi Diocese in September 2027.

Gokwe Diocese recorded the highest participation, inspiring other dioceses to strengthen recruitment. In their closing remarks, the Madongorere couple encouraged all Catholic couples, regardless of guild affiliation, to join the association, which nurtures marital love and family life "the Catholic way."

Zvakanaka kudanana
Its nice to be loved



Clergy walk in unity during the procession



Partners share joyful moments in matching attires



Arrupe Jesuit University opens academic year with call to service and innovation

By Tricia P. Mlambo

Harare – 16 August 2025 – Arrupe Jesuit University (AJU) officially launched its 2025/2026 academic year with its annual assembly, marked by faith, reflection, and a renewed call for students to embrace learning as a service to others.

The event, held at the university campus in Harare, placed a special emphasis on welcoming first-year entrants into the Jesuit academic community.

The day began with Holy Mass, celebrated by Fr. Fidelis Mukonori SJ. Delivering the homily, Fr. Mukwato urged students to cultivate courage and creativity in the pursuit of social transformation.

"We must dare to introduce new ideas, to act for love of our brothers and sisters, even those we may never meet," he said.

He challenged the community not to reduce education to a pursuit of credentials, but to live out the Jesuit ethos of being "men and women for others."

Following Mass, the formal assembly opened

with prayers from Fr. Von Nidda and introductory remarks by Fr. Chioma, who warmly welcomed students, faculty, and guests. He highlighted the Ignatian vision underpinning the institution, emphasizing St. Ignatius' invitation to "see God in all things" and to nurture the link between Jesuit universities and the wider mission of the Society of Jesus.



Dr. C. G. D. Chiwenga makes a presentation



Fr Mukonori leads the doxology

Guest of Honour, Honourable Dr. C. G. D. Chiwenga, was introduced by the Director of the Jesuit University Community.

In his keynote address, Dr. Chiwenga commended AJU for its role in shaping morally grounded, intellectually rigorous graduates. "Your commitment to forming critical thinkers and well-rounded citizens, grounded in strong moral values, is invaluable," he said, encouraging students to align their personal ambitions with the broader national development agenda. The voices of students also took center stage. Student Representative Council president, Ms. Thelma Chiromba, welcomed her peers with heartfelt words: "I welcome you not just to a university, but to your home."

Sharing her own journey, she described AJU as a community that recognized her potential and nurtured her growth in leadership, service, and scholarship.

To female students, she stressed: "This is a



Students follow the solemn proceedings of the Holy Mass.

space where your voice is valued, your potential nurtured, and your dreams encouraged without limit."

Acting Vice Chancellor, Dr. Stephen Buckland, used the occasion to pay tribute to his predecessor, Fr. Ekwueme, and to remind students of the transformative journey ahead.

"What happens here in the next two, three, or four years will direct your future for good or for ill depending on how you embrace the opportunities for intellectual, moral, and spiritual growth," he said.

He urged students to view AJU not as a degree mill, but as a living community of scholars where both faculty and students are learners together.

The assembly culminated in a symbolic pledge by the first-year students, affirming their commitment to academic excellence and service.

Dr. Nyachowe then led the closing prayer, sealing the day as a celebration of new beginnings and collective purpose.

With its blend of spiritual grounding, academic challenge, and national vision, the event reinforced Arrupe Jesuit University's role as a key institution in shaping leaders committed to service, justice, and innovation.



First year students recite the pledge



Students reconvene in fellowship and purpose as the academic term resumes.

Women of St. Anne guild in Hwange hold diocesan congress at Marist high school, Dete

By Quegas Mutale in Hwange



Participants attentively follow the proceedings

The Women of St. Anne Guild in Hwange Diocese held their annual diocesan congress at Marist High School in Dete from 21–24 August 2025. The congress ran under the theme: “Catholic Women of St. Anne Walk by Faith, Not by Sight: Embracing Their Journey as Pilgrims of Hope,” inspired by 2 Corinthians 5:7.

Members of the St. Anne Guild from the seven deaneries of Hwange Diocese—Binga, Dete, Empumalanga, Hwange Urban, Lupane, Makwa, and Victoria Falls—were in attendance.

Also present was the National Executive Secretary of St. Anne, Mrs. Chipso Chimwaya, whose participation made members of Hwange feel accompanied and supported by the national leadership.

Throughout the congress, women received lessons, spiritual reflections, and engaged in social activities.

Priests took turns to offer teachings on different topics. In his address, Bishop Raphael Ncube gave women tips for preparing for the upcoming Jubilee Year.

Fr. Masimba Nyoni, Dean of Binga, delivered a lesson on “Forgiveness and Healing: A Faith Challenge,” while Fr. Pritchard Shoko spoke on “A Cultural and Spiritual Approach to Family Conflicts.”

Fr. Tendai Dube presented on “St. Anne Women as Mothers to the Family and Community,” and Fr. Bonesya Mwembe addressed “For a Synodal Church: A Special Message to Catholic Women.”

Additional sessions included “A Guide to the Sacrament of Healing” by Fr. Proud Muunga

and “A Catholic Mother and Wife in the Modern World” by Fr. Mwembe.

Mrs. Takawira Siphos, Diocesan Chairperson of St. Anne, expressed delight at the turnout of 400 women, noting that such a large attendance had not been anticipated.

The congress also addressed specific issues affecting women.

In an interview, Linah Mpala, Chairperson of the Empumalanga Deanery, expressed gratitude for the lessons received.

“We have learnt about forgiveness and healing. This will help us as mothers because we face many challenges in our families, workplaces, and even in the Church,” she said.

Mpala added that despite differences in background and language, the congress had fostered unity among women in the diocese, while also helping them grow spiritually.

She encouraged wider participation in future congresses and urged women who attend to share feedback with those who could not, noting that visible changes in behaviour would be a sign of applying the lessons learned.

Empumalanga Deanery was commended for bringing at least 60 members despite financial constraints.

Social activities such as netball, sack races, egg races, modelling, and a uniform parade were also part of the programme.

“These activities encourage fitness and allow women to show the correct way of wearing the guild uniform,” Mrs. Takawira explained.

The congress was accompanied by Fr. Xolani Ndlovu, the Spiritual Director, and Sr. Flora Fuyana of Fatima Mission, the Spiritual Advisor, along with advisors from the deaneries.

Sr. Fuyana highlighted the importance of women coming together for encouragement and renewal:

“Women of St. Anne gathered to strengthen one another, receiving lessons in line with the Year of Pilgrims of Hope, striving to draw closer to the Lord. In difficult times, when women commit themselves to meet, share conversations, and listen to lessons, they grow spiritually and follow more closely the example of St. Anne,” she said.



Harare Archdiocese celebrates ordination of 13 new priests

By Fr. Johnston Mlambo

Harare- The global Catholic Church continues to grapple with declining vocations, and Zimbabwe has not been spared.

Two decades ago, the country's major seminaries—Chishawasha (for theology) and St. Augustine's in Bulawayo (for philosophy)—were so full that at times there were not enough rooms to house the students.

Today, however, the reality is starkly different. St. Augustine's closed due to low enrolment, and seminarians pursuing both philosophy and theology now study at Ss. John Fisher and Thomas More National Seminary in Chishawasha, where some rooms remain unoccupied.

Against this backdrop, the Archdiocese of Harare received a moment of grace on 2 August 2025, when 13 deacons were ordained to the priesthood at the Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish in Kuwadzana.

Of the newly ordained, eight are diocesan priests: Prosper Chakaunya (St. Michael's Parish, Mhondoro), Dereck Dirwai (Uganda Martyrs, Mufakose), Christopher Five (Uganda Martyrs, Mufakose), Simbarashe Daniel Gutu (St. Ignatius of Loyola, Chishawasha), Leo Kaliyati (St. Matia Kalemba, Norton), Nathan Albert Nyamucheta (Holy Cross, Budiriro), Ranganai Joseph Sekani (St. Matia Kalemba, Norton), and Zvikomborero

Chifamba (St. Alois, Chitungwiza).

The ordinations also included Claudious Kudakwashe Chitauro, a Franciscan Capuchin from St. Ignatius Loyola, Chishawasha; Patrick Zarynyika, a Franciscan from St. Peter Claver New Church, Mbare; two Jesuits, Paul Kanda (Holy Cross, Murewa) and Hebert Nharo Shoko (St. John's Cathedral, Gokwe); and Adrian Mutandwa, SVD, from St. Monica, Beatrice.

Preaching at the ordination, Fr. Owen Kudumba gave thanks to God for calling and sustaining the candidates to this decisive moment.

He reminded them that the priesthood is not attained by following blindly "*nevakaita gundamusaira*" but through perseverance and fidelity to vocation.

He cautioned the ordinands against being defined by the wrong things, saying: "*Hamuna kuda kuita seBronco yakagadzirirwa kurapa chikoso-ro asi nhasi ine mukurumbira kwete wekurapa asi wekudhaka nokuStikisa vanhu.*" Instead, he urged them to be recognised for their true calling; to know, love, and serve God.

Drawing from Scripture, he emphasised the importance of staying connected to Christ, the true source of ministry. Elisha, he said, received a "double portion" of Elijah's spirit because he walked with him, while Timothy drew strength



The Archbishop welcomes the newly ordained

from the faith passed down by his grandmother Lois and his mother Eunice.

Similarly, priests must love the Master more than the work.

As he explained: *"Tonderayi kuti paanodana vadzidzi vake... akavadana kuti vave naye ndoo kuzovatuma kundoparidza. Kuva naye first, then vozonoparidza. Musapakanganwa ipapa vanababa kuti Jeso anotanga ati, 'Come follow me' asati ati, 'go out to the whole world and proclaim the good news!'"*

Using vivid imagery, Fr. Kudumba compared priests who disconnect from Christ to a family member with a phone full of Ecocash but unable to use it because it is not linked to the owner "dying of hunger with riches in their hands."

He also warned against becoming like a traffic light fixed permanently downwards still working, but serving no one.

Priests, he insisted, must let their light shine (cf. Matthew 5:16) and preserve the value of their vocation: *"Vanin'ina, chengetedzai value yehu-*

Priste hwenyu musazonzi mave macoin imi muine chimiro chebepa."

The homily urged perseverance in trials, reminding the new priests to remain steadfast like Elisha, who refused to turn back even when discouraged.

They were counselled to ignore gossip and criticism: *"Zvimwe zvinhu itayi matsi... mashoko okushora nokutsoropodza achauya imi itayi matsi."*

Like Andrew and Philip, who brought others to Christ, they were called to be instruments of encounter: "Come follow me," before the Lord sends them, "Go out to the whole world and proclaim the good news."

In his closing remarks, the Archbishop expressed gratitude to the faithful who came to witness the ordinations.

He reminded the new priests that from the day of their ordination they had become public figures.

"Maona vanhu vese ava. Mave maPublic Figures kubva nhasi. Musazoti mangwana, 'I have my private life.' You don't have a private life. You have the life of people in your hands. Saka ngatieedzei kushandira vanhu nemwoyo wose."

He further encouraged them to carry themselves with dignity, including in their dress: *"Musapfeka maJean, pfekai sema fata vakugamuchirei sema fata. Ndoo zvavanotarisisira vatenderi."*

The ordination of 13 priests in a time of dwindling vocations stands as a beacon of hope, not only for the Archdiocese of Harare but for the entire Church in Zimbabwe.



The thirteen after vestiture



When faith meets youth: transformation at Musami feast days

By Michelle Chigura

Musami – From 28–31 August 2025, the serene grounds of St. Paul's Musami Mission came alive as the Simon Peter and Mary (SPM) Guild youths joined fellow Catholic young people from across the Archdiocese of Harare for the Musami Feast Days.

Over four days, the gathering became a powerful blend of prayer, learning, celebration, and community — leaving participants deeply inspired to live courageously for Christ.

For the SPM youths, the Feast Days were not simply another Catholic event. They were, in the words of many participants, “a life-changing experience” that opened doors to spiritual renewal, fellowship, and personal growth.

The Feast Days opened on Thursday evening with Holy Mass, led by Fr. Kudakwashe Ignatius Mhepo.

He warmly commended the youths for their decision to dedicate four full days to God.

Preaching on the feast of St. Augustine, he urged them to rise above worldly distractions and to let their lives reflect their professed faith.

His words set a tone of seriousness and hope for the days that lay ahead.

The participants, still arriving and settling in, felt

a palpable sense of expectation.

Many later described that first night as the moment they knew something profound was about to unfold.

Friday's liturgy, celebrated by Fr. Majuta, was centred on the Martyrdom of John the Baptist.

In a homily described by participants as both “striking and unforgettable”, he challenged young people never to compromise their values.

“Truth must be spoken at all times,” he emphasised, “even if it leads to rejection or persecution.”

This message, grounded in the Gospel, resonated deeply with the youths.

It became a recurring theme in conversations that followed, as many reflected on the courage required to be Catholic in a rapidly changing world.

Beyond Mass, the Feast Days offered a range of talks and workshops that left lasting impressions. Participants explored themes of holiness, resilience, and purpose.

One of the strongest lessons came from Fr. Alex, who reminded the Guild: “Every person should have a principal foundation in life – to praise, to reverence, to serve God.”

His challenge invited the youths to re-examine their personal foundations and realign them with God's purpose.

Equally moving was the message from Sr Anna, who spoke about finding "light in darkness."

Her words reassured participants that even in moments of trial — academic pressure, financial challenges, or personal struggles — God's light always breaks through.

The sessions also addressed the realities of modern temptations. A practical message that stood out was: "Know the trending sins and stay away from them."

From online distractions to peer pressure, the call to discipline and focus was both timely and relevant.

Participant Ashley Chirambwi described the impact of these sessions:

"The talks were quite insightful, very spiritual, and I have learnt a lot. I encourage youths who are not in guilds to join, because they can learn from others and even become better people as they are exposed to different perspectives."

Friday evening's bonfire gathering was one of the most memorable highlights.

The flames symbolized warmth and unity as youths shared testimonies, struggles, and encouragement. Laughter mixed with song, and the spirit of openness deepened bonds within the Guild.

Sister Anna closed the evening with a powerful reminder: as SPM youths, they are called to prayer, holy living, and mutual support.

Saturday was dedicated to fun and fellowship.

Sports competitions between deaneries filled the mission grounds with energy, as young people cheered one another on.

The day concluded with the much-anticipated Vintage Dinner and Awards Night, a colourful celebration where participants dressed in classic attire, danced to old-school music, and applauded one another's efforts.

It was a moment that reminded everyone that Christian life is also about joy, friendship, and celebration.

Yet not all experiences were without challenges. Some participants pointed to issues in organization and discipline.

Tanatswa Windiasi was candid about sleeping arrangements:

"We even ended up sleeping on tables. That part was disorganized, though everything else was fine."

Others shared constructive reflections. Ruvimbo Maguranduma remarked:

"I enjoyed the feasts and appreciate the efforts by the executive.

However, they need to improve on discipline, especially when it comes to language in the Chitungwiza Deanery and also the executive should not be involved in cooking but rather just give a hand."

Such voices highlighted the need for improvement while affirming the overall success of the event.

The Feast Days concluded on Sunday with a solemn and joyful closing Mass, celebrated by Fr. Upenyu.

His homily focused on humility as the defining character of Christ and a key to salvation. Contrasting humility with pride, he warned against selfishness and disobedience while urging the youths to remain teachable and open to correction.

The message brought the gathering full circle — from the call to dedication on the first day to the reminder of humility on the last.

By the end of the Feast Days, the Simon Peter Mary youths left Musami renewed and deeply reflective. Their takeaways included:

- i. Live with holiness and virtue as foundations of Christian life.
- ii. Seek light in darkness, trusting God's constant presence.
- iii. Stay disciplined, focused, and purposeful in all pursuits.
- iv. Uphold truth and values with courage, even when challenged.

As Sister Anna urged, "May we be true and courageous, live a transparent life, and guard our lives jealously."

For the Simon Peter Mary Guild, Musami 2025 was not just another youth gathering. It was, in the words of one participant, "a movement of faith" — a time of joy, growth, and renewal.

Despite some challenges in logistics, the overarching sentiment was one of gratitude and transformation. When faith meets youth, as the Musami Feast Days so clearly showed, transformation truly happens.



Africa forges a new path

The Church's 12 pillars told through Zimbabwe's story

By Fr. Johnston Z. Mlambo

The Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar (SECAM), the Association of African Bishops, held its Plenary Assembly from 30 July to 4 August 2025 in Kigali, Rwanda.

The meeting, under the theme "Christ, Source of Hope, Reconciliation, and Peace," marked a decisive moment in the life of the Church in Africa.

Discussions centred on renewing the Church as a Family of God, strengthening youth, family, and lay leadership, committing to reconciliation and peacebuilding, and addressing urgent issues such as conflict, poverty, climate change, and emerging technologies.

A major highlight of the assembly was the presentation of SECAM's new 25-year pastoral vision by Fr. Rafael Simbine Junior and Fr. Vitalis Anaehobi from the SECAM Secretariat.

This vision, which will guide the Church in Africa until 2050, is built around 12 pillars that encompass every dimension of the Church's mission and future.

For Zimbabwe, this vision comes at a critical moment. The nation finds itself at a turning point: families are torn apart by migration as parents leave for South Africa or Europe in search of work, often leaving children to grow up on their

own or in the care of relatives who may not always protect them.

Drugs such as crystal meth and marijuana creep into schools and neighbourhoods, pulling young people into cycles of addiction.

Many communities do not even know where to report abuse, and a culture of silence leaves children vulnerable.

Churches and schools remain trusted anchors, yet they too are being tested and must strengthen their capacity to provide guidance and protection in the face of new pressures.

Into this reality, the 12-pillar vision offers more than aspirations—it provides a lifeline.

It shows that another path is possible, one where faith, justice, solidarity, and renewal come together to build a society that protects the vulnerable and empowers the young.

These pillars are not abstract concepts; they touch real lives in Zimbabwe and across Africa. They point to a future where children are safe, families are strong, and faith builds the common good.

Let us walk through them and see how they speak directly to our situation.

1. Evangelisation

For Zimbabwe, evangelisation must mean more than Sunday preaching. It is about taking



the Gospel into the wounds of society, into homes torn apart by migration, schools battling drug abuse, and streets where young people search for meaning.

Evangelisation becomes powerful when it speaks to these struggles, bringing hope where despair is strongest.

2. Self-reliance

Economic uncertainty has taught hard lessons, leaving Zimbabweans heavily dependent on outside help.

The pillar of self-reliance calls the Church to use its own gifts well: transparent stewardship of resources, communities supporting each other, and parishes learning to sustain their own mission. It's a call to grow stronger together, not to wait for others.

3. The Family

The family is the first school of faith and protection. In Zimbabwe, however, child-headed households and children left in the care of relatives are becoming increasingly common.

This pillar calls the Church to be a guardian of families—supporting parents, protecting children, and making every parish feel like home.

Where parents migrate, the Church accompanies child-headed households and guardians, strengthens resilience, and fosters a culture in which every child is known, safe, and guided.

4. Missionary Discipleship

Mission isn't a project; it's our identity.

The Church is not meant to be passive; every

Christian is a missionary disciple.

For Zimbabwe, this means priests, religious, and lay people stepping into the public square with courage—speaking against corruption, defending the weak, and showing by their lives that the Gospel is alive and active.

5. Synodality

The Synod process has reminded us that the Church is strongest when everyone has a voice. It makes space for voices that are often missed.

In Zimbabwe, where young people often feel excluded and women overlooked, synodality means listening more, sharing responsibility, and walking together as a true family of God.

Parish circles, school groups, and diocesan consultations become places of shared discernment and co-responsibility.

6. Justice, Peace, and Integral Development

Communities are weary of political polarisation, corruption, and mistrust—yet these forces do not have the final word.

The Church's prophetic mission calls for dialogue, tolerance, reconciliation, and policies that serve the common good.

Justice and peace are not luxuries—they are the foundation for a stable and hopeful future.

7. Care for Creation

Zimbabwe's land is rich, yet it is scarred by mining pits, deforestation, and drying rivers.

The ecological pillar invites us to see creation not as a resource to exploit but as a gift to care for.

Protecting wetlands, forests, and rivers is part





of protecting people, because without nature, there is no future.

Ecological conversion in Zimbabwe means caring for water, soil, and forests; teaching stewardship in schools; and linking livelihood choices to the wellbeing of people and planet.

8. Youth Renewal

Young people are often told they are the future, but the truth is—they are the present.

In Zimbabwe, youth face unemployment, drugs, and despair, but they are also bursting with creativity and courage.

This pillar challenges the Church to give them platforms, trust them with leadership, and show them that they are the heartbeat of renewal.

When the Church backs youth leadership, safe spaces, peer advocacy, and media literacy, it releases courage, talent, and faith.

9. Service to the Poor

Service to the poor means more than giving handouts. Charity with dignity asks not only, 'How do we help?' but also, 'How do we empower?'

From parish outreach to school support, service aims to strengthen families, keep children learning, and restore dignity so that no one feels invisible in the family of God.

10. Governance and Leadership

Good governance is the backbone of both nations and the Church.

In Zimbabwe, where corruption undermines trust, this pillar calls leaders—secular and ecclesial—to be transparent, accountable, and servant-hearted.

Leadership in the Church must mirror Christ: humble, firm in truth, and close to the people.

11. Ecumenism and Interreligious Dialogue

Zimbabwe's religious landscape is diverse. The country is a land of many faiths—Catholics, Pentecostals, VaPositori, and those who follow traditional religions.

Too often, competition divides. This pillar invites us to walk a new path of dialogue, working together for peace and respect.

The witness of unity is itself a powerful form of evangelisation.

The Zimbabwe Heads of Christian Denominations (ZHOCD), through joint statements and programmes, have shown that dialogue with Pentecostal communities, VaPositori, and traditional leaders can turn potential rivalry into shared work for peace, the protection of children, and community wellbeing.

12. Digital Mission

Today's mission field includes the smartphone and the screen.

If young people are online, the Church is there too—sharing trustworthy messages, promoting safeguarding awareness, and elevating youth-generated content that inspires rather than harms. Screens become spaces of encounter, not isolation.

This pillar encourages us to use social media to spread hope and accompany young people where they are most present.

These 12 pillars are not abstract concepts. They are a vision rooted in Africa's soil, shaped by Zimbabwe's struggles, and alive in the Church's mission. Africa is forging a new path, and Zimbabwe is part of that story. The 12 pillars are a compass—practical, pastoral, and deeply Christian. They point to a society where children are safe, families are supported, young people are empowered, creation is cared for, and the Church walks with all as a sign of God's nearness.



Because of you (walking together in hope)

By Consolata Nyengeterai Gasva

Believe me, I have encountered individuals who make things happen—not just ordinary things, but awesome, marvellous, mind-blowing things. Their very presence radiates a pleasant aura, bringing joy and peace to troubled souls. They are truly a breath of fresh air.

Sacred Scripture gives us an example in the story of King Jehoshaphat and King Joram. The latter faced a fearsome battle with the King of Moab and required divine intervention.

The prophet Elisha was summoned and declared openly that it was solely because of King Jehoshaphat, a morally upright man who sought the Lord and strove for excellence, that he even considered assisting King Joram.

It was the presence of a righteous man that drew God's favour and blessing into a desperate situation.

You too can decide, even now, to be the light-bearer in your family.

What your family becomes can be the fruit of the divine encounters into which you immerse yourself. Be that person whose grace and perseverance in prayer illuminates the darkness.

When you storm heaven with intercession on behalf of your family, you create room for God's transforming power. James Dobson recounts in his book *When God Doesn't Make Sense* how his great-grandfather dedicated himself to praying daily between 11 p.m. and midnight for the spiritual welfare of his family.

Because of those prayers, the entire family's faith life was radically changed: ministers and pastors were raised up, while even those in professional fields remained anchored in God's service.

Because of the prayer of one faithful ancestor—a pacesetter and trailblazer—the generations after him experienced God's grace. In the same way, because of you, and because of your prayers, your family's spiritual welfare can be lifted from strength to strength, from glory to glory.

I also recall the remarkable story of Richard Sigmund (1941–2014), the preacher who began proclaiming the Word at the age of four. He was mentored by the world-renowned evangelist

A.A.

Allen and held countless revivals that drew thousands to Christ. Yet his vocation was itself the fruit of prayer.

His great-grandfather, a Spirit-filled preacher during the American Civil War, was in prayer at the time of Richard's birth and received assurance from God that the child would serve Him mightily.

Richard went on to preach the Gospel faithfully, without prejudice or denominational boundaries, through tent meetings, radio, television, and countless speaking engagements.

All this was possible because of the intercession of one ancestor who prayed. In the same way, because of you, your family can be immersed in God's favour and grace.

I feel moved also to echo Ernest Hemingway's words:

"In our darkest moments, we don't need solutions or advice. What we may yearn for is simply human connection, a quiet presence, and a gentle touch."

These small yet profound gestures steady us when life feels overwhelming.

Sometimes what matters most is not fixing another's situation but making it known that they are not alone.

This human presence—sadly lacking in today's world—can prevent despair and even save lives in the face of the rising tide of suicide.

The absence of reassurance often deepens despair. Companionship is vital; it reminds us that we are loved.

When we are troubled, it may be enough simply to have our hand held until dawn.

I remember watching an American man earn the golden buzzer in a competition with a song he dedicated to his brother.

While he had suffered imprisonment for a crime he did not commit, his brother's love and unwavering support kept him from sinking into madness or taking his own life.

Because of you, people facing rejection can instead encounter love and acceptance.

Many live under shame, ridicule, or disability—sometimes visible, sometimes hidden.

From Previous Page

In today's digital culture, cyberbullying and body shaming intensify wounds that already exist.

Yet none of these struggles diminish the truth that each human person is created in God's image and likeness.

As George MacDonald so beautifully wrote:

"We are the most glorious creatures—for to have been thought about, born in God's thought, and then made by God, is the dearest, grandest, and most precious thing in all thinking."

Because of your simple acts of kindness and acceptance, even towards those different from

yourself, you can help build a world where every person knows they are God's beloved.

As we walk together in hope in this imperfect world, may you strive to be that presence of light and consolation, a reflection of God's tenderness for others.

The glory of God is revealed when we live with deep charity and affection that captivates and heals those around us.

May your story be one of hope and mercy as we journey together, with hearts burning with love, towards the fullness of life in Christ.

NEWS IN PICTURES



NEWS IN PICTURES







NEWS FROM THE REGION

Marians Zim/SA honour Mary at historic pilgrimage to Mother of Mercy Shrine

By Christine Dawn Nzwere



Pilgrims pose for a photo

The Zimbabwe–South Africa Marian community (Marians Zim/SA) gathered from 22–24 August 2025 for their annual Zuvaguru/Ilanga Lethu celebrations, honouring the Blessed Virgin Mary, Queen of Heaven.

The event, held under the theme “Trust in the God of Hope and He Will Fill You with All Joy and Peace” and the motto “Maria: Be There, See, and Inspire Hope”, drew more than 600 pilgrims to the newly built Mary Mother of Mercy Shrine in the tranquil Witwatersrand mountains of Magaliesburg, South Africa.

Marians Zim/SA is made up of four guilds whose roots and constitutions are deeply embedded in Zimbabwe.

These include Maria Hosi Yedenga, Maria Munyaradzi Wevatamburi, Our Lady of Mount Carmel, and the Sodality of Our Lady—the latter being limited to Johannesburg, while the others are active in both the Archdiocese of Pretoria and the Archdiocese of Johannesburg.

Each guild operates under its own leadership

structure, the Topboard, answerable to parish priests, the Zimbabwean Community Chaplaincy, and ultimately to the local Archbishop.

Annually, these guilds converge for Zuvaguru/Ilanga Lethu, celebrating their shared devotion to Mary.

This year’s celebrations were particularly significant as 264 pilgrims travelled from Zimbabwe, representing the Archdioceses of Harare and Bulawayo, and the Dioceses of Hwange, Chinhoyi, Gweru, and Mutare.

They were accompanied by spiritual directors including Fr. Kennedy Muguti (Vicar General, Archdiocese of Harare), Fr. Chetse, Fr. Mufakose, and Fr. Nyoni.

Local Marian pilgrims were supported by Fr. M. Mwale, Chaplain and Spiritual Director of the Archdiocese of Johannesburg, and Fr. T.C. Ledwaba, Chaplain and Spiritual Director of the Archdiocese of Pretoria.

To deepen reflection on the theme, a series of teachings were delivered by approved facil-

itators. The main facilitator, Fr. Methuli Lanele Moyo, addressed Romans 8:28 and Forgiveness and Reconciliation: The Beacons of Hope in a Hopeless World. Other presentations included:

1. Mary as the Church's Model of Faith, Hope, and Charity – Fr. Kennedy Muguti
2. Psalm 23:4: Even Though I Walk Through the Darkest Valley, I Will Fear No Evil – Fr. T.C. Ledwaba
3. Joy and Hope in Surrendering to the Holy Spirit – Fr. S. Chetse

The highlight of the pilgrimage was High Mass celebrated by Emeritus Archbishop Buti Tlhagale, on behalf of Cardinal Stephen Brislin, who was away on duty.

Archbishop Tlhagale commended the Marians for honouring Mary at the shrine in such a dignified manner, recalling his words at the shrine's official opening in 2024:

"This shrine will be made holy by the gathering of pilgrims who seek to experience God's presence... a place of reconciliation, of mending broken hearts, a place of deep-seated peace, of spiritual healing, where small miracles will take place.

A warm, welcoming home away from home."

He reminded pilgrims that with Mary's intercession, the shrine would remain a place of renewal:

"Mary was intimately involved in the mystery of our redemption, and there is no doubt that she continues to be involved in the challenges of our daily lives."

Marians Zim/SA continue to embody their devotion through charitable works.

Their operational model emphasises integration with local guilds such as Kemolo YaMaria Ladies, Mary Immaculate Guilds, and the Catholic Women's League, with devotions beginning at parish level and extending to the Zimbabwean Chaplaincy.

Their works of mercy include at least three charity drives annually.

In 2024, Marians joined the Chaplaincy in supporting Sizanani Disabled and Orphanage Home in Bronkhorstspuit, which cares for people with a range of disabilities.

In 2025, their projects expanded:

- Supporting the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops' Conference by contributing to the purchase of laboratory equipment for the new St. August-

tine's School.

- Responding to the Albino Association of Zimbabwe's plea by donating more than 350 bottles of SPF-50 lotion, 150 sun hats, and lip balm.

- Donating a life-sized statue of Our Mother of Graces in 2024 for use at all Zimbabwe Marian gatherings, followed in 2025 by a gift of an Adoration Monstrance to the shrine—symbolising Mary's unceasing intercession.

"Whenever and wherever Mary visits, she does not come empty-handed but brings a lasting reminder of her love and graces," noted the organisers, expressing gratitude to the National Marian Leadership for their generous support of these initiatives.

The 2025 Zuvaguru/Ilanga Lethu celebrations at the Mary Mother of Mercy Shrine affirmed the unity of Marian guilds across borders, their commitment to works of mercy, and their devotion to Mary as the Mother of Hope.

For Marians Zim/SA, the weekend was not only a spiritual renewal but also a visible witness of faith in action—one that continues to bind together communities in Zimbabwe and South Africa under the maternal care of the Blessed Virgin Mary.



Participants pose with their cake



Participants observe each moment with prayerful presence

Malawi's first national eucharistic congress: "eucharist: source and summit of pilgrims of hope"

By. Fr.Methuli Lanele Moyo



The Holy Eucharist: the Source and Summit of Catholic worship and prayer.

The Catholic Church in Malawi reached a historic milestone from August 5th to 9th, 2025, when it celebrated its First National Eucharistic Congress at Our Lady of Africa Maula Cathedral, Archdiocese of Lilongwe. This momentous gathering, held under the theme "Eucharist: Source and Summit of Pilgrims of Hope," marked a profound step in deepening Eucharistic devotion and renewing the faith of God's people in the Catholic Church of Malawi.

The Congress brought together bishops, priests, religious sisters and brothers, and lay faithful from every stretch of Malawi. United in prayer and song, they assembled to reflect upon the mystery of the Eucharist, the Sacrament of Christ's Real Presence, which is the very heart of Catholic life.

The liturgy, adorned with traditional dance and music led by parish choirs, reflected the beauty of faith enculturated in the Malawian Church. At the heart of the Congress was the daily celebration of the Holy Mass, with the official Mass celebrated by Archbishop Gian Luca Perici, Apostolic Nuncio to Malawi and Zambia.

In his message, read on behalf of the Holy

Father Pope Leo XIV, the Nuncio exhorted the Church in Malawi to allow the Eucharist to transform hearts and communities, making the faithful 'Witnesses of unity, love, and missionary zeal.'

Each day of the Congress was marked by spiritual and catechetical talks from bishops, priests, and religious sisters, reflecting on various dimensions of Eucharistic life: Christ's abiding presence in the Church, the Eucharist as the Source of Unity and Mission, the place of the Eucharist in family life and in Small Christian Communities, Consecrated life and Devotion to the Blessed Sacrament, and Reconciliation and Penance as preparation for Holy Communion.

In addition to these teachings, the Main Chapel hosted perpetual Eucharistic Adoration, a treasured moment where the faithful, like the disciples before the Lord, remained in silence and prayer before the Blessed Sacrament.

Many testified that these hours of prayer became the deepest encounter with Christ during the Congress.

The liturgies of the Congress were celebrated with profound solemnity. Song and dance, deeply rooted in the Malawian cultural expres-



Bishop Martin Anwel Mtumbuka gives his homily

sion of faith, raised hearts to God. Each day, a different choir from selected parishes led the singing, weaving beauty and devotion into the Eucharistic celebration.

There was a procession of the Blessed Sacrament through the streets of Lilongwe, from Maula Cathedral to St. Patricks, a parish situated about 5 and a half Kilometres away. The procession served as a visible proclamation that Christ is truly present in the Eucharist, walking with His people.

At the close of the Congress, the Malawi Conference of Catholic Bishops (MCCB) issued a communique with resolutions designed to strengthen Eucharistic devotion across the Church in Malawi. Among these were the call for the faithful to show profound reverence for the Real Presence of Christ in the Blessed Sacrament, the promotion of Eucharistic Adoration and Benediction in every parish, not merely as private devotions but as obligations of love for all Christians, and the requirement that liturgical celebrations be well-prepared, with choirs selecting hymns known by the faithful to encourage active participation. The bishops also strongly recommended the reception of Holy Communion on the tongue, as a sign of reverence and continuity with tradition. Priests were urged to teach and catechize on the Eucharist more frequently, guiding especially those estranged from the sacraments back into full communion with the Church. In these resolutions,

the bishops of Malawi echoed the words of the Church throughout the centuries: 'The Eucharist is truly the source and summit of Christian life'.

As the faithful dispersed to their dioceses and parishes, the spirit of the Congress continued to resound in their good-byes. The bishops have committed themselves to ensure that the resolutions are implemented at every level of ecclesial life, so that Malawi may become a nation ever more rooted in Eucharistic faith and witness.



Mass in the Our Lady of Africa Maula Cathedral, in Lilongwe



A procession in honour of the Blessed Sacrament



A lively procession

Women of valour walk by faith, not by sight

By Duduzile Sikosana



Known for their vibrant witness, the St Anne members embraces the liturgy with heartfelt participation

Bulawayo- As a witness to their faith, the Catholic Women of St. Anne's Association celebrated their Archdiocesan Congress at Regina Mundi Mission in Gwayi, under Tsholotsho Deanery.

"This had been a long-awaited and deeply meaningful gathering," testified Mrs. Irene Nyathi of Empandeni Deanery.

The excitement and anticipation surrounding the congress, held from the 28th to the 31st of August 2025, had been building steadily since the annual program was released at the beginning of the year.

Around 500 women from various parishes and missions travelled to reunite, praise, pray, and learn together.

The congress was themed "Catholic Women of St. Anne's Walk by Faith, Not by Sight, Embracing Their Journey as Pilgrims of Hope," based on 2 Corinthians 5:7.

Unveiling the theme, Fr. Claudius Luphahla powerfully emphasized the importance of truth, integrity, and trust in God amidst today's societal pressures.

He urged the women to "immerse yourselves in the Word of God and resist the temptation to rely solely on worldly logic... rekindle your com-

mitment to the Church and hunger for spiritual renewal."

Indeed, these women of valour embarked on their journey in hired buses to attend what was described as "a well-organized and spiritually uplifting congress," according to Mrs. Cornelia Sengayi from Zim-Catholic St. Anne's.

The event offered an invitation to "introspection, evaluation, and action," as expressed by the Spiritual Director, Fr. Limukani Ndlovu.

Participants commended the hospitality team and the host community, led by Mr. Nzura, the headmaster of Regina Mundi Secondary School, for their excellent organization and warm reception.

Fr. Musawenkosi Moyo delivered an enriching talk on "The Eucharist, Source of Our Hope."

He explored various biblical moments where God provided food for His people, demonstrating His presence and care.

He reiterated the teachings of the Second Vatican Council that the Eucharist builds up the Church, inspires hope, and sanctifies believers.

Addressing the topic of mental health, Fr. Limukani Ndlovu encouraged the women to make time for rest and relaxation, emphasizing that caring for the body, mind, and soul—all inter-



A moment of Profound sharing

connected human dimensions—is essential.

Reflecting on Luke 2:40–52 and the growth of Jesus, he challenged members to consider how their involvement in the association can foster one another's mental well-being.

Sr. Hillary Nyathi delivered a thought-provoking presentation on the Blessed Virgin Mary as a model of faith, hope, and love. She highlighted Mary's obedience, compassion, and discipleship, encouraging women to emulate her in their daily lives.

Sr. Hillary also challenged participants to be more present in their homes and warned against over-delegating household responsibilities to domestic workers, "oSisi," saying, "Be present to each other, build mutual trust, and nurture connection among family members."

Representing the Zimbabwean Catholic Women of St. Anne's based in South Africa, Mrs. Corneliiah shared the history and evolution of the Zim community abroad.

"At present, 388 members of the St. Anne's Chapter have affiliated and subscribe to the National Council of St. Anne's here in Zimbabwe," she reported. Her fellow pilgrim, Mrs. Mpala, spoke on the joys and challenges faced by Zimbabwean migrants in South Africa and urged parents to remain concerned about their families' spiritual lives, even in the diaspora.

A penitential service and opportunity for individual confession was led by Fr. Marko Mkandla.

The long, winding queues of penitents were a clear sign of the people's openness to the Holy Spirit and belief in the transformative power of the sacrament of reconciliation—especially during this jubilee year.

Offering words of encouragement, Fr. Mkandla said, "I urge you all to be humble, to do self-examination, and to receive the transformative power of sincere repentance."

The congress also featured a jubilee talent show, which included modelling, poetry, drama, and music.

These joyful and creative displays brought laughter, uplifted spirits, and added colour to the event.

The gathering proved truly empowering. The journey of faith grows stronger when it is walked together—and the next chapter of St. Anne's begins with every woman who dares to invite another along the path.

In his message of gratitude, Fr. Claudius Luphahla expressed heartfelt thanks:

"Thank you so much for the pastoral visit. I know your visit brought hope and new energy, strengthened our faith, and was a blessing in many ways."



St Anne members engage fully in the liturgy,

Poetry Corner

Pain

In the shadows, it lurks and hides
A silent stalker, that never subsides
It seeps into my bones, like winter's chill
A heavy heart, that's hard to still

It's the ache of memories, that refuse to
fade
The sting of sorrow, that's never fully paid
The weight of wounds, that never fully
heal
A pain that's always there, like a ghost
that's real

It's the echo of laughter, that's now but a
sigh
The whisper of what's lost, that can never
be replied
The tears that fall, like autumn's rain
A pain that's always there, like a heart in
vain

But even in the darkness, there's a light
that gleams
A chance to heal, to mend, to overcome
the dreams
That pain can be a teacher, that guides us
through the night
And though it's hard to bear, it can make
us stronger in the fight

So, I'll face this pain, with courage in my
heart
And though it may forever leave its mark
I'll learn to live with it, to find a way to
thrive
And in time, may the pain subside, and
my heart revive.

By Marion Munkuli

Fiat into Glory

A Poem for the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Even from a very young age,
when others drifted in childish
dreams,
seeing life as fleeting mirage,
you already knew—
what you wanted,
and whom you belonged to.

Betrothed,
yet vowed to no mortal embrace,
your body already spoken for—
sealed for the Eternal One.

So you asked,
with innocence fierce as fire:
“How can this be,
since I do not know any man?”

Your covenant with Joseph was
pure,
a bond of love without possession,
a union consecrated to God.
Already your path was carved:
virgin for ever,
bride of the Immortal.

Thus His proposal came,
and you did not tremble.

Stones,
shame,

a cross of disgrace—
none could silence your Yes.

With love burning,
with resolve unbroken,
you uttered the word
that split the world in two:
“Let it be done.”

Bearer of joy,
you could not keep silence.
You hastened to your kin,
and from your greeting
rose a hymn of triumph—
a prayer still bruising serpents,
still binding the adversary.

But tell me,
did you know then
the blade of Simeon's prophecy?
Did you taste already
the iron of those words:
“A sword will pierce your heart”?

When you thought Him lost in the
Temple,
what storm of thoughts
tore through your soul?

At Cana,
your faith blazed daringly,
your plea echoing eternity.
And He answered—
as He always does to you.

When they said He was mad,
did grief pierce deeper than
scorn?

Still you believed.
Still you stood.

And on the road to Calvary—
what crushed you more?
The beam on His shoulders,
or the blade in your chest?

Yet you walked.
Yet you endured.
At the foot of the shameful tree
you became Mother of all,
while others fled.

And then—
His lifeless body in your lap,
limbs heavy,
blood clinging,
hope extinguished.
Did you know
that Yes could be so jagged,
so cruel,
yet still holy?

Still you remained.
Still you trusted
amid mist and blur.
Your Yes became our school.

And then—
the dawn of August.
God vindicated you.
He would not let incorrupt flesh
return to dust.
He drew you upward,
wrapped in fire,
clothed in light.

In you we see
what waits for us.
In you,
we touch incorruptible dawn.
In you,
we glimpse our own rising.

Hail, Immaculate One—
Virgin before birth,
Virgin in birth,
Virgin after birth.
Crowned in splendour,
lifted in glory,
forever Mother,
forever Assumed.

By Fr. Johnston Z. Mlambo



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