

# CATHOLIC CHURCH NEWS

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- POLITICS AS A VOCATION OF SERVICE
- STRIKING A DIGITAL BALANCE
- A CENTURY OF FAITH AND SERVICE
- MEN OF PURPOSE - ALL MEN CONGRESS
- THE SYNODAL PATH IN AFRICA



*More than the expression of ideas*

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# Editor's desk

## Dear Reader

October, the month of the Holy Rosary and of Mission, invites us to pause and reflect on our shared vocation as a missionary Church — a family on a journey of faith, prayer, and service. As Catholics around the world dedicate this month to the Blessed Virgin Mary and the universal mission of the Church, we are reminded that this mission is not confined to distant lands or heroic deeds, but lived daily in prayerful hearts, works of mercy, honest leadership, and the ordinary faithfulness of Christian life.

This spirit of mission and communion found deep expression in the many stories that fill this month's edition of Catholic Church News. Each reflects, in its own way, the living pulse of a Church that continues to walk with its people — teaching, listening, healing, and transforming society.

Although our cover story features the ZCBC Golf Tournament, the main story centres on the historic engagement meeting between the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops' Conference (ZCBC) and Catholic Members of Parliament — a rare and honest conversation about faith, governance, and moral responsibility. In an atmosphere of mutual respect, the bishops affirmed the good achieved by Parliament — for example, the abolition of the death penalty — while courageously calling for moral renewal, integrity, and compassion in public office.

The meeting reminded us that mission includes forming consciences, building bridges, and being “the moral compass when political structures fall silent.”

The bishops themselves entered a moment of learning during the training on mental health held recently in Harare. It was an experience the bishops described as edifying and enlightening, and one that will hopefully inspire pastoral responses in dioceses and seminaries.

The Church's care for the human person is part of her mission — to heal not only the soul but the whole person.

October is also the Month of Mission, and this year's celebrations carried a special resonance under Pope Leo XIV's theme: “Missionaries of Hope Among the Peoples.”

The World Mission Week reflections invite every baptised person to become a living sign of hope



in their family, parish, and community. This missionary spirit was also powerfully evident at the Continental Seminar for African Catholic Youth Leaders in Nairobi, where young delegates explored how to live out the Gospel in a fast-changing world marked by digital influence and moral complexity. Their energy and faith reaffirm the truth that the Church in Africa is not a Church of tomorrow, but of today — vibrant, youthful, and full of promise.

From Mutare Diocese comes an inspiring account of the All Men's Congress in Checheche, a powerful testimony of renewal under the theme “Men of Purpose — Nurturing Family Life and Church Community.” The gathering demonstrated that the mission field begins at home — in the family, the domestic Church, where men and women alike are called to live their baptismal vocation with love and integrity.

Meanwhile, in the Archdiocese of Harare, the faithful of St. Michael's Mission celebrated a century of grace — 100 years of faith, service, and witness. Their jubilee reminds us that the Church grows not through structures alone, but through living communities that pray, serve, and persevere in faith.

As we meditate on the Rosary this month, we walk with Mary through the mysteries of our salvation — from the joy of the Annunciation to the glory of the Resurrection. Mary reminds us that mission begins in listening and ends in service. She teaches us to carry Christ to the world with humility, courage, and joy.

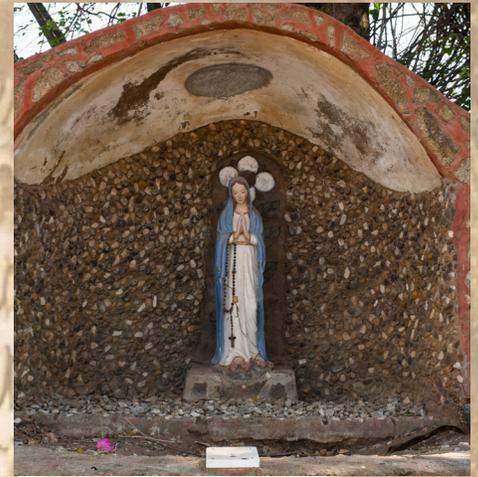
In every story told in this issue — from bishops engaging leaders, to men renewing family life, to youth shaping the Church of tomorrow — we see glimpses of a living Rosary: faith in action, prayer turned into mission, and mission sustained by prayer.

As the Church in Zimbabwe continues its synodal journey, may this October renew our commitment to be a people of hope — praying with Mary, working for justice, and proclaiming the Gospel with our lives.

“Mary, Queen of the Rosary, teach us to be missionaries of hope — in our homes, our parishes, and our nation.”

Fr Johnston Mlambo

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# Catholic bishops and parliamentarians in candid dialogue on moral renewal and governance

By Fr. Johnston Mlambo



*Bishops pose for a photo with parliamentarians, after a fruitful engagement meeting*

HARARE — In a rare and candid exchange on faith and politics, Catholic bishops and legislators met in Harare on 29 October 2025 at the Africa Synod House, reflecting together on how moral values can heal Zimbabwe's wounded political landscape and restore public trust in governance.

Convened by the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops' Conference (ZCBC) through the Catholic Parliamentary Liaison Office, the engagement sought to foster dialogue between the Church and Catholic Members of Parliament (MPs), affirming lawmakers for their positive contributions while challenging them to uphold integrity, compassion, and accountability in public office.

The dialogue came at a time when Parliament has enacted several laws hailed as moral milestones — including the abolition of the death penalty, the raising of the legal age of sexual consent from 16 to 18, and the Medical Services Amendment Bill, which guarantees all citizens access to essential healthcare, even without immediate payment.

Equally commendable — though the Bill attracted criticism from some human-rights advocates for potential overreach — is the Private

Voluntary Organisations (PVO) Amendment Act (2025) which promotes accountability and integrity in charitable work by prohibiting donations from illegal sources.

Legislators have also debated stronger penalties for gender-based violence and child abuse — measures that align with the Christian duty to protect human life and dignity.

Yet the political weather remains unsettled. The memory of 1 August 2018, when soldiers opened fire on post-election demonstrators calling for quicker results, continues to cast a long shadow — convincing many citizens that street protest can carry lethal risk even when constitutionally protected.

The recent bombing of the SAPES Trust offices in Belgravia on 28 October, just hours before opposition leaders were scheduled to hold a press conference on Zimbabwe's constitutional crisis, has done little to ease the atmosphere. The meeting was meant to challenge President Emmerson Mnangagwa's bid to extend his rule to 2030 — two years beyond his constitutional term.

Confidence in democracy was further shaken by the recall of opposition MPs and councillors

in 2023, a process widely seen as politically motivated and which fractured faith in both Parliament and the electoral system.

In recent months, the ruling ZANU–PF party has deepened its control. At its 2024 Bulawayo Conference — reaffirmed in Mutare in 2025 — it resolved to extend President Emmerson Mnangagwa's term from 2028 to 2030, directing its legal team to explore constitutional amendments. Though government officials insist the process will be transparent, critics fear an erosion of term limits.

Amid corruption scandals, economic hardship, and public frustration, the bishops' engagement with lawmakers was timely — a call to renew conscience and integrity in public service.

Opening the meeting, ZCBC President Bishop Paul Horan, O.Carm., set the moral tone:

"In an era marked by profound political polarisation and widespread citizen cynicism towards public institutions, there is an urgent need to reclaim a vision of politics that transcends the mere acquisition and exercise of power."

He explained that Catholic social teaching presents politics not as a "necessary evil," but as a noble vocation of service, rooted in the Scriptures and baptismal identity of every Christian.

"It is my hope," he said, "that such an approach provides an illuminance — a transformative path towards a politics worthy of the baptised members of Christ's body."

Bishop Horan urged Catholic legislators to ground their public duties in four guiding principles: the dignity of the human person, subsidiarity, solidarity, and the common good. "Any political project or institution," he said, "must be judged by its capacity to uphold the inherent dignity of the human person — a dignity that is not granted by the State but by the Creator."

Bishop Rudolf Nyandoro, Chairperson of the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace in Zimbabwe (CCJPZ), stressed that the Church and the State must work together for national development.

"Our meeting affords us a platform to discern ways together through which, as men and women of faith, drawing from our rich Catholic tradition, we can support each other and contribute towards the formation and development of our nation."

He commended the Government's support of religious freedom and the abolition of the death penalty, describing them as "signs of moral progress that cannot be taken for granted." He proposed regular 'conversations in the Spirit' — prayerful dialogues between bishops and legislators — to encourage mutual listening and discernment of God's will in public affairs.

He proposed that the meeting itself proceed in the spirit of "conversation in the Spirit" — a prayerful method of listening and discernment drawn from synodal practice, enabling bishops and legislators to reflect together on God's will in public life.

Indeed, after the key presentations, the discussions that followed embodied that very spirit — marked by honesty, mutual respect, and a shared desire to serve the nation faithfully.

Representing the Catholic Parliamentarians, Hon. Prisca Mupfumira stressed the need to "foster unity in a sometimes-rivalrous political environment."

Drawing from Pope Francis' *Evangelii Gaudium*, she said public leaders must exercise compassionate, inclusive, and just leadership, especially amid the country's economic hardship and growing inequality.

Hon. Mupfumira suggested that stronger liaison between the Church and Government could reduce misunderstandings, especially regarding pastoral letters that are sometimes viewed as political. She proposed collaboration in civic education and public hearings, noting that many citizens attend hearings without understanding their purpose — an area where the Church could help simplify information and encourage informed participation.

During the meeting, participants reflected on broader ethical questions confronting Parliament, including ongoing public debates about abortion law reform.

Some activists have called for a review of the Termination of Pregnancy Act, arguing that it limits access to reproductive health for vulnerable women and girls.

Proposed amendments have included provisions for cases such as rape within marriage and access to what they term "safe abortion."

In this context, it is hoped that Catholic parliamentarians are well-grounded in the Church's

teaching that human life must be respected and protected from the moment of conception to natural death. Observing that some legislators appear uncertain about the Church's position, it becomes important to recall the distinction between pastoral care for victims of sexual violence and the moral prohibition against abortion.

The Church teaches that the unborn child conceived in rape is innocent and has a right to life just as any other human being.

During the plenary discussion, it emerged that the prevailing economic situation was unhealthy. On one hand, there is an opposition in disarray and therefore unable to perform its role of keeping those in power in check. On the other hand, there is a ruling party that appears to believe it can do anything and everything — even to the extent of butchering the Constitution.

It was noted that, in such a scenario, the Church should play an advocacy role to bridge the gap in the current political landscape. Participants also highlighted that legislators should serve as voices of conscience, guided by the principles of Catholic Social Teaching.

The issue of formation for parliamentarians was also discussed. It was recognised that the Church needs to reach out to them before elections, offering moral and spiritual formation so that, when they assume office, they are aware of the responsibilities of their noble vocation of service. As one participant observed, if the Church does not engage them early, "other forces may — and it is those voices parliamentarians remember when they are in Parliament."

"When power goes unquestioned, justice suffers," another participant remarked. "The Church must remain the moral compass when political structures fall silent."

Archbishop Alex Thomas of Bulawayo told SOCCOM that the engagement with Catholic parliamentarians was both timely and necessary.

"Such meetings need to be regular," he said. "We have a responsibility to form and educate their consciences. We need to listen to them, and they to us. The Church must take keen interest in the spiritual care of parliamentarians."

Reflecting on Zimbabwe's polarised political climate, Archbishop Thomas underscored the Church's continuing duty to be "the moral compass of the nation."

"We have to be actively present in every aspect of national life," he said. "We need to follow up and contribute to the legislative process at every step."

Despite the country's challenges, the Archbishop expressed hope grounded in the people's deep faith.

"Zimbabwe is a very religious country," he noted. "People are searching for correct moral and spiritual education. Where there are so many contrary and polarised teachings, the Church can stand for truth and principles. We have many genuine and honest people who want correct information and sound teaching."

Bishop Eusebius Nyathi of Gokwe also emphasised the need for continuous and constructive dialogue between the Church and political leaders.

"Healthy engagement between the Church and political leaders is always required, so as to provide moral and spiritual guidance," he said.

In his message to Catholic parliamentarians, Bishop Nyathi reminded them that faith must inform their public duties.

"In the current political climate — and at all times — Catholic parliamentarians are expected to act as Christians and stand for the values of love, human dignity, justice, and peace," he said.

He concluded with a pastoral appeal to all Zimbabweans:

"Pray for peace. Work towards building the Kingdom of Christ — the Kingdom of justice and peace — where all human beings are treated equally and resources are shared equitably, narrowing the gap between the rich and the poor."

The bishops' meeting with parliamentarians reflected a maturing relationship between faith and governance — one that praises moral progress but refuses to remain silent about corruption, injustice, or exclusion.

While Parliament has taken commendable steps in lawmaking, the bishops' message was clear: politics must recover its soul.

They called for integrity, dialogue, and the courage to place people before power — reminding Zimbabwe's leaders that true authority is service, and service is love in action.

"A politics worthy of our divine calling," Bishop Horan said, "is one that bows before God and seeks the good of humanity He created."

# Men of purpose: Mutare diocese holds inspiring congress in Checheche

By SOCCOM Reporter



*Participants burst into joyful dance.*

CHECHECHE — The Diocese of Mutare brought together hundreds of Catholic men from across the diocese for an extraordinary four-day All Men's Congress held from 18 to 21 October 2025 at St. Peter's Parish, Checheche, under the theme "Men of Purpose — Nurturing Family Life and Church Community."

The vibrant gathering sought to strengthen the spiritual, moral, and social commitment of men to their families, the Church, and society.

Throughout the congress, participants engaged in a series of enriching presentations covering a wide range of topics, including "Pilgrims of Hope," Men's Health, and Drugs and Substance Abuse. The sessions, marked by open dialogue and deep reflection, challenged men to rediscover their God-given roles as fathers, leaders, and witnesses of faith in a fast-changing society.

Between the talks, participants joined in lively musical interludes — joyful hymns and dance sessions that fostered camaraderie and rejuvenation. The atmosphere was one of unity, joy, and renewal.

The congress was marked by several Eucharistic celebrations led by Rt. Rev. Bishop Paul Horan, Bishop of Mutare, during the first two days of the gathering. His presence and prayerful leadership added solemnity and encouragement to the occasion, as men renewed their

spiritual commitment to family and Church.

During the Mass on Saturday 18 October, Bishop Horan expressed his admiration for the men gathered together for one purpose — to pray. He encouraged men to fully participate in Church activities.

"You should show your presence in the Church, show that you are there, you exist; be part of what is happening in the Christian communities, parishes, deaneries, and in the Diocese — not to sit back and watch," he said.

The bishop was impressed to see the men singing, dancing, and organising themselves.

He emphasised that their responsibility extends beyond the Church to their families, urging them to live exemplary lives like St. Joseph — praying for their families and demonstrating good morals to their children, especially in these challenging times.

Also speaking during the same Mass, Mr. Muguti, the National Chairperson of the St. Joseph's Guild, said he was impressed by the gathering.

"Let us deepen our thoughts and find purpose in what we have come to do. We have come here not because we know it all, but because God has called us to be sent. Let's ask God to be with us these special days, so that we go back home renewed and bring peace. We are the heads of our families and our value is seen in our

families. Let us be vigilant to protect our families. Let our presence be noticed in our families. Now is the time for us to shine — let us go back and bring change in our families and parishes.”

The closing Mass, however, was celebrated by Fr. James Nyanga, together with several priests. The liturgy was deeply moving — a spirited celebration marked by song, dance, and thanksgiving. Men of all ages participated with joy and reverence, visibly transformed by the experience of shared brotherhood and faith.

Videos from the entrance procession drew wide admiration online. The SOCCOM Mutare team, commenting on the scenes of men dancing joyfully, remarked that “gone are the days when only youths, women, and Missionary Childhood groups led entrance processions. Today, we celebrate a new era of active participation and leadership by men in our liturgical celebrations.”

In his homily during the closing Mass, Fr. Nyanga drew inspiration from *Ad Gentes*, the Second Vatican Council’s decree on missionary activity, which teaches that “the pilgrim Church is missionary by her very nature, since it is from the mission of the Son and the mission of the Holy Spirit that she draws her origin.”

Building on this foundation, Fr. Nyanga reminded participants that every baptised person is a missionary, called to proclaim the Gospel both in word and through a living Christian example.

*“Saka zvoreva kuti munhu umwe neumwe waka-zvarwa nemvura naMweya Mutsvene achiwanikwa ava nhengo yeSangano anogamuchira basa rekutumwa.*

*Tinotumwa kuti tigoparidza Dama Rakanaka nemuromo, tigotumwa kuti tiparidze Dama Rakanaka nehupenyu hwedu,”* he said.

He further encouraged the men to lead their families and communities in faith, rooted in a strong relationship with God:

*“Zvakaoma kuva baba vasina hukama naMwari. Kuva baba chipo chinobva kuna Mwari.”*

His message struck a chord with many participants, reminding them that true fatherhood is a divine calling — one that demands prayer, humility, and a deep sense of mission.

As the congress drew to a close, participants expressed heartfelt appreciation for the organisation, the insightful talks, and the sense of fraternity the event had fostered. Many described

the gathering as a transformative experience that renewed their faith and clarified their mission as Catholic men.

Among them was Mr. Misi from St. Paul’s Dangamvura, who said the congress was very enriching and the talks challenged him in many areas as a member of St. Joseph’s Guild and as a father.

“I was also impressed by the joy and participation of men at the congress. I wish it could continue when we go back to our parishes. I also wish these gatherings could continue so that men do not feel forgotten,” he said.

“This experience has been life-changing,” added another participant. “We are returning to our families and parishes ready to lead by example — in faith, love, and service.”

The congress was hailed as a milestone in promoting male participation in diocesan life, encouraging responsible fatherhood, and strengthening the role of men in evangelisation.

The Diocese of Mutare hopes that the energy and spirit of the Checheche congress will ripple across all parishes. Men are expected to take up active roles in parish ministries, promote family unity, and support social outreach initiatives.

As the final hymn echoed through St. Peter’s Checheche, the message was clear — the men of Mutare Diocese are ready to live as “Men of Purpose”: rooted in faith, committed to family, and dedicated to building vibrant Church communities.



Participants engage with focused attention.

# St Michael's Mission Mhondoro hits a century of faith and service

By SOCCOM Reporter



*A joyous moment for students*

The sky was clear, and the October sun had begun to blaze with its familiar intensity. Yet, despite the scorching heat, scores of people gathered with radiant faces at St Michael's Mission in Mhondoro.

For adult parishioners, the glow came from the anticipation of a historic celebration — a century of faith and service.

For high school students, it was the excitement of parents and guardians coming to visit, bringing love, encouragement, and, of course, a few treasured goodies.

For the organising team, it was a mixture of relief and anxiety — relief that the long-awaited day had finally arrived, and anxiety about whether everything would go according to plan.

The choir could be seen rehearsing one last time to ensure that the liturgy would be nothing short of perfect.

When SOCCOM arrived at St Michael's Mhondoro High School grounds, where the 100th anniversary of the Mission was being celebrated, the atmosphere was electric.

Missionary Childhood animators were busy organising children for the procession, while others were arranging final touches for the liturgi-

cal movements.

Three large tents had been erected to accommodate participants from all corners of the Archdiocese of Harare.

The date was Saturday, 4 October 2025. As priests processed majestically to the church entrance — where a fourth tent had been pitched for the clergy — melodious hymns filled the warm Mhondoro air.

According to the historical account presented by the Local Responsible Authority, Fr. Sithembinkosi Matewu, the story of St Michael's Mission began in 1913 when the place was established as a Mass Centre of Chishawasha Mission.

The priest then in charge, Fr. Richartz, travelled from Chishawasha to minister to the community and would return afterwards.

However, the outbreak of World War I disrupted missionary movements, especially for German priests.

*"Fr [Richartz] vaiuya vachibva kuChishawasha vachidzokera. Nekuda kwehondo (World War I) iyo yakarambidza maGerman missionaries kufamba, muPrieste akambomira kuuya kuOutstation iyi. Mugore ra1916, Fr Burbridge vakazosimudzira kuuya kuOutstation yeMhondoro,"* said Fr.



Some of the priests attend the celebrations

Matewu.

He went on to explain that missionary work in Mhondoro is inseparable from the contribution of Mr. Michael Mhishi, a teacher and catechist who was instrumental in establishing the community of faith.

*"Mugore ra1922 kwakazoita mumwe murume ainzi Michael Mhishi akauya achibva kuChishawasha achiuya kuzotanga kugara kuno ari resident teacher and catechist.*

*"Michael Mhishi akanga azvarirwa munzvimbo yeChishawasha Mission uye zvinonzi akaramba kunogara kuvillage kumba namai vake.*

*"Akakura achichengetwa paMission yeChishawasha, akadzidziswa nemaMissionaries, akazova teacher and catechist."*

*"Pavakasvika kuno kuMhondoro nechipiyaniso, havana kutanga kuchigara pano asi vakatanga nekugara kuna Zvezve asi havana kunyanya kugarako nekuti kwakanga kune mosquito.*

*"Vakatama ndokuenda pachikomo chiri pedyo nemi mission ino asi vakabva zvekare nekuti paisa-vakika zvakanaka.*

*"Vakazotama ndokuuya pano patiri nhasi uno pava kuzivikanwa nekuti paGomo paFata,"* narrated Fr. Matewu.

At that time, a priest would only visit the mission once a year, leaving Mr. Mhishi to take care of its pastoral life throughout the rest of the year. This continued until 1925, when St Michael's received its first resident priest, Fr William Withnell.

*"Vachigara kuno kudaro sezvo vakanga vasiri muPrieste, Fr Burbridge vaiuya kamwechete pagore vachibva kuChishawasha. MuPrieste we-*

*kutanga kuuya kuzogara pano ainzi Fr William Withnell mugore ra1925.*

*"Saka tinoona kuti chitendero chakatanga kuuya kuno kunzvimbo yeMhondoro mugore ra1913 asi kuti izonzi Parish yakatanga mugore ra1925.*

*"Ndosaka tiri kupemberera makore zana gore rino 1925-2025,"* chronicled Fr. Matewu.

That same year, St Michael's Primary School was also founded. It would later grow into a boarding school, followed by the establishment of a hospital, a high school, and a children's home. The high school became a registered institution in 1982, though it had already begun operating in the 1970s.

Over the past century, the mission has produced abundant fruits, both spiritual and human.

*"Pamakore zana aya tiri kupemberera nemufaro nekuti mission ino yaburitsa zviberoko zvakananda zvinobatika.*

*"Ndichitaura kuside kwedu kwevapikiri vakabuda muno muMhondoro tinoona tiine first African bishop muZimbabwe, the late Archbishop Patrick Chakaipa, avo vaibva kwaGuvamombe muno muMhondoro,"* said Fr. Matewu.

In his homily during the centenary Mass, the Pastoral Director of the Archdiocese of Harare, Fr. Gordon Matiyenga, who represented Archbishop Robert Christopher Ndlovu, reflected deeply on what sustains a mission for a hundred years. He spoke about legacy, people, and prayer as the three pillars that ensure the Church's endurance.

"The first generation built a legacy for the next. They constructed not just a building, but a foundation of faith. The question now is: what legacy will this generation leave for the next?" he asked.



MC's dress for the occasion

"For this mission to still be here 100 years from now, it must remain Holy Spirit-led, not merely people-led. The foundation of every thriving community must be rooted in prayer," he added.

Fr. Matiyenga concluded by invoking the patron of the mission, St Michael the Archangel, reminding the faithful that the mission's century-long journey has been sustained by courage, prayer, and steadfast trust in God.

"St Michael, whose name means 'Who is like God?', is a defender of the Church and a reminder that good always triumphs over evil.

"We too are called to be spiritual warriors — to bring hope, justice, and healing to our world," he said.

To mark the centenary and leave a legacy for the next generation, the community announced the construction of a new Early Childhood Development (ECD) block at St Michael's Primary School.

After Mass, the guest of honour, Hon. Marian Chombo, Minister of State for Provincial Affairs and Devolution for Mashonaland West, together with Fr. Matiyenga, Mrs. Busi Chindove (Chairperson of the Archdiocesan Pastoral Council), officials from the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education, and other dignitaries, attended the ground-breaking ceremony. Clearing of the site has already begun.

To symbolise growth and renewal, several delegates also planted fruit trees at the primary school.

Speaking to SOCCOM, Fr. Sithembinkosi Matewu, the Local Responsible Authority, said the community was deeply grateful to have reached such a milestone and remained committed to the founding spirit of the mission.

"We are very happy because we continue to expand our infrastructure and modernise our facilities. Some buildings served their time well but are now outdated — we want to renew and uplift the mission," he said.

"We still have many Catholics that we minister to. In fact, the number of Catholics is growing. So yes, we are continuing the work of the missionaries."

He noted that the new ECD block will have modern furniture and equipment, enhancing both the school and the mission.

"Even the hospital is improving. As the Medical Superintendent mentioned, we are inviting specialists to visit our hospital and perform complicated surgeries instead of transferring patients to Harare," he said.

"From April to date, the specialist physicians have completed more than 200 hernia procedures," added the young mission superior proudly.

He also revealed plans to open a dental clinic, which will serve Mhondoro and neighbouring communities.

"This will help not only the Mhondoro community but those from other areas too. Our hope is to become the new Karanda. However, we can't say reaching Karanda's level is our goal — we want to go beyond Karanda," he said with a smile.

The high school also plans to increase student enrolment and build additional staff houses.

"We want to improve the quality of education at our schools so that we become the best school in the Archdiocese of Harare — if not in the country," said Fr. Matewu.

Over the years, St Michael's Mhondoro has grown to give birth to two other parishes: St Dominic's, Mubaira, and St Monica's, Beatrice.

Despite this, the original parish still serves 33 Mass centres, a testimony to its enduring vitality and missionary spirit.

Indeed, a hundred years on, St Michael's Mission Mhondoro stands as a living witness to faith, resilience, and service — a community firmly rooted in Christ and still growing strong under the protection of its heavenly patron, St Michael the



*Delegates cannot resist the melodious hymns*

# Families urged to reclaim real connection in a digital age

By Tricia P. Mlambo



A cross-section of the participants

Bikita, Masvingo — “What’s the first thing you do when you wake up — pray, greet your family, or check your phone?”

That simple but piercing question set the tone at St Mary’s Nyika Parish, where families gathered on 25 October for a workshop on “Social Media and Family: Finding Balance in a Digital Age.”

The day-long session, facilitated by Fr Johnston Mlambo, invited families to confront the growing tension between technology and togetherness — how constant online engagement shapes love, communication, and faith at home.

“Social media is not evil or holy; it becomes what we make of it,” Fr Mlambo told participants.

“The goal is to let technology serve relationships, not replace them.”

The workshop, organised under the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops’ Conference Family and Marriage Commission, drew parents, couples, and youth for honest reflection on the impact of digital habits.

Participants admitted that nearly 95 percent of them reach for their phones before greeting loved ones or praying each morning — a statistic that drew laughter but also deep self-examination.

Fr Mlambo anchored his teaching on *Communio et Progressio* (11):

“Communication is an act of communion.” He explained that true communication goes beyond words — it builds unity and mutual understanding.

“In African culture,” he noted, “the spoken word carries power to heal or to wound.”

The same applies online; every post or message shapes peace in the home.”

Participants discussed how social media can both connect and divide.

One man observed that privacy concerns and online jealousy often fuel conflict between spouses.

Another lamented learning of family news — like engagements or illnesses — through social



*Mr and Mrs Jazi give their presentation*

media rather than face-to-face.

"The message was clear," Fr Mlambo reflected. "True love listens and communicates; it does not broadcast its pain."

Families were encouraged to "think before you post" — asking whether a message is true, kind, and necessary. They were also advised to avoid posting private matters, to agree on photo-sharing boundaries, and to protect each other's dignity online.

The session delved into modern relationship dilemmas: should spouses have access to each other's phones? Is checking a partner's messages a sign of love or mistrust?

The discussion revealed that trust, respect, and openness remain the foundation of peace — not surveillance.



*Participants engage in a discussion*

Practical tips included addressing conflicts privately, pausing before reacting online, and using prayer and forgiveness to restore peace.

Families were reminded of Ephesians 4:32 — "Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you."

One couple shared their insight:

"A phone is just a vessel. We ought to be transparent with one another — it builds trust. But once trust is broken, it is difficult to mend."

The concept of digital discipline — managing technology wisely — was highlighted as key to restoring balance. Fr Mlambo encouraged families to establish "digital covenants" with simple commitments such as no phones during meals or prayer, and a "digital Sabbath" once a week.

He urged parents to model healthy online habits, reminding them that children learn more from what they see than what they are told.

"The family," he quoted from *Amoris Laetitia* (136), "is called to be a place where people learn to communicate with truth and love."

Despite its dangers, Fr Mlambo said, social media can become a force for evangelisation — sharing Scripture reflections, promoting charity drives, and strengthening family prayer online.

As the workshop closed, families committed to making technology their servant, not their master.

"When we bring faith, wisdom, and love into the digital world," Fr Mlambo concluded, "our homes become places of real connection — where technology serves love, not the other way around."



*Fr James Munyanyi gives his remarks*

# Zimbabwe's Catholic Bishops receive training on mental health amid rising national crisis

By Fr. Johnston Mlambo



HARARE — Against a backdrop of rising mental health challenges in Zimbabwe, the country's Catholic bishops recently underwent specialised training to better understand, identify, and respond to mental health issues affecting clergy, parishioners, and society at large.

Recent studies by the Ministry of Health and Child Care and UN partners show that mental health-related morbidity and mortality are increasing across Zimbabwe.

UNICEF's report "Prevention and Management of Mental Health Conditions in Zimbabwe: The Case for Investment" warns that depression, anxiety, psychosis, bipolar disorder, and alcohol use disorder have become major causes of suffering and premature death.

Similarly, data from ReliefWeb highlights that mental, neurological, and substance-use conditions are highly prevalent among young adults — and may, in fact, be underestimated.

The report identifies poverty, political and economic instability, and natural disasters as aggravating factors, placing mental health "in the complex context of social and environmental

determinants."

UNICEF's study "Mental Health in Adolescents and Young People (AYP)" further notes that suicide is the second leading cause of death among 15–29-year-olds, making depression one of Zimbabwe's leading causes of disability.

These grim statistics define the environment in which the Church ministers today — one where priests and bishops alike encounter parishioners battling anxiety, trauma, or despair.

Recognising this reality, the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops' Conference (ZCBC) organised a training workshop on mental health to equip bishops with practical knowledge and pastoral sensitivity in dealing with such cases.

The training, led by Professor Melanie Abas, a Professor of Global Mental Health at the Institute of Psychiatry, Psychology and Neuroscience at King's College London and a practising consultant, focused on unpacking the concept of mental health, identifying symptoms, and offering guidance on care and prevention.

She was assisted by Mrs. Tari Bere and Dr. Walter Mangezi, who served as co-facilitators.

"We addressed how to screen for anxiety, depression, and alcohol use — particularly unhealthy alcohol use," said Dr. Bere. "There was also a planned session on common elements of therapy, though we could not complete it due to time."

Despite that, both facilitators expressed satisfaction with the outcome. "Yes, the meeting went well. On our end, we are happy," Dr. Mangezi affirmed.

The bishops described the session as both enlightening and necessary, noting that it broadened their understanding of the emotional and psychological struggles facing priests, religious, and the faithful.

Bishop Eusebius Nyathi of Gokwe Diocese said the workshop had a profound personal and pastoral impact on him.

"The mental health workshop brought up aspects that may be beneficial to my episcopal ministry, such as understanding, patience, and being sympathetic and empathetic to those go-

ing through depression," he said.

"It also helped me realise the need for self-care. Most of the time, we are busy helping others and forget to take care of ourselves. I am human — I need rest, holidays, and people I can freely share and open up with."

Asked how he planned to translate the lessons into action, Bishop Nyathi said he would promote balanced routines for priests and religious, ensuring adequate rest and emotional wellbeing.

"There must be a balance between work and rest. I will encourage priests and religious to prioritise self-care and have some clergy trained in psychosocial support and counselling. Our health ministry must also embrace mental health awareness within our communities," he added.

He also emphasised that priests should have basic pastoral counselling and psychology training in the seminary to help them identify and refer mental health cases.

For Archbishop Alex Thomas of Bulawayo, the training was "long overdue."

"The workshop was very beneficial and enlightening," he said.

"In our ministry as bishops dealing with clergy, there is a lot to explore in this field. Mental health has become a global challenge and is here to stay for a while. We must be proactive rather than reactive."

The Archbishop called for integrating mental health education into seminary formation, alongside human, spiritual, and intellectual formation.

"We need to deal with it at the root of formation," he stressed, "otherwise we will have clergy and religious who will become a disservice to the Church."

The bishops' engagement on mental health marks a growing recognition that effective ministry requires attentiveness not only to the spiritual but also to the psychological wellbeing of the people.

As mental health crises continue to claim young lives and strain communities, the Church's willingness to learn, listen, and adapt is a sign of pastoral maturity.

By fostering understanding and compassion — and by equipping clergy with the tools to respond — the Catholic Church in Zimbabwe is reaffirming its mission to be a healing presence in a society struggling with both visible and invisible wounds.



# St Peter's Kubatana Celebrates 494 Graduates at Colourful Ceremony

By Tricia P. Mlambo



*Graduands queue to be awarded their certificates*

Harare – St Peter's Kubatana (SPK) Industrial Training Centre came alive on Friday as the institution celebrated the graduation of 494 students who successfully completed their training under Zimbabwe's Heritage-Based Education 5.0 model.

The colourful ceremony, graced by Guest of Honour Professor Takaidza, showcased SPK's growing contribution to the country's industrial and entrepreneurial transformation through innovation and practical skills development.

In his address, the Principal, Mr Thomas Tichona Gatsi, urged graduates to face the future with courage and resilience, invoking the Shona proverb "Akanga nyimo avangarara" — loosely translated, "hard work brings results."

"We are here to prove that anyone can establish successful enterprises," said Mr Gatsi, noting that the college's production units and business ventures, housed under the St Peter's Kubatana Innovation Hub, demonstrate the strength of the Heritage-Based Education 5.0 philosophy.

He applauded the Carpentry Department for renovating the high school headmaster's house, refurbishing classrooms, and providing furniture for a parish in Waterfalls.

The Industrial Clothing Technology Department

was also commended for producing school uniforms, blazers, and tracksuits for several Jesuit schools.

In a major step forward, the department recently acquired a four-head CNC embroidery machine, a development expected to enhance local manufacturing capacity.

SPK's collaborative reach continues to grow, with active Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) in place with organisations such as William Bayne and Company, among others.

Mr Gatsi thanked the college's partners for recognising SPK as a "worthwhile collaborator in advancing innovation."

The Principal also highlighted a plastic recycling project that has created new business opportunities for residents who supply recyclable materials to the centre.

Of the 494 graduates, 206 were female and 288 male, including five students — three women and two men — enrolled under the work-for-fee programme, reflecting the institution's inclusive approach to education.

SPK has also begun training students with disabilities in disciplines such as hospitality, cosmetology, carpentry, and automotive technology.

To further broaden its academic offerings, the



*Prof Takaidza addresses the graduands*

college has introduced new programmes in Tourism and Hospitality Management and Solar Installation and Maintenance.

SPK is accredited by the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education's Quality Assurance Department to offer a wide range of certificate and diploma programmes, with more expected to follow.

In his keynote address, Professor Takaidza praised SPK for producing graduates who are contributing to national development. Of the graduating class, 85 per cent (421 students) were from STEM disciplines, while 15 per cent (73 students) came from non-STEM fields — a ratio that mirrors Zimbabwe's national emphasis on science, technology, engineering, and mathematics as key drivers of industrialisation.

The Professor revealed that the Government is working to revive the Development Grant Programme, first launched in 2016, to boost institutional capacity and community engagement.

Encouraging graduates to think beyond employment, he said: "You are free to form groups and submit business proposals to the Ministry. If your ideas are viable, we will help fund your projects. These are grants, not loans — they are meant to empower you."

He also announced that St Peter's Kubatana has been accredited to offer National Diploma programmes in Hospitality, Information Technology, and Mechanical Engineering, and urged the college to expand into other areas in line with industry demand.

Professor Takaidza further emphasised the im-

portance of aligning education with the National Development Strategy and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

"Our education system must drive Zimbabwe towards an upper-middle-income economy by 2030 through skills, innovation, and industrialisation," he said.

He encouraged lecturers to adopt semesterisation and modularisation, and to employ interactive teaching methods such as mentoring, coaching, and project-based learning to enhance student engagement.

The college's Spiritual Director, Fr Ashton, reminded guests that vocational training is not "a refuge for academic failures" but rather "a gateway to success" for those pursuing practical and technical skills.

He also commended the college's NMCS group for nurturing the spiritual growth of students.

Amid the jubilation, Lovejoy Magwaza, a Cosmetology graduate, expressed heartfelt appreciation for the support she received during her studies.

"I'm so grateful for all the help I got, especially the financial support and the encouragement from our lecturers," she said, smiling.

Her words captured the mood of the day as graduates danced, sang, and celebrated their hard-earned success.

In his closing remarks, Principal Gatsi shared his vision of transforming SPK into "Zimbabwe's own version of the Mumbai Institute of Technology."

"True success is not measured by the certificates you hold," he reminded graduates, "but by the positive impact you make in the world around you."



*A graduate receives her certificate*

# Understanding the 2025 State of the Nation Address: What It Means for Ordinary Zimbabweans

An explainer based on the address by President Emmerson Mnangagwa, presented on 28 October 2025, and subsequent analysis by economist Vince Musewe.



## 1. What Was the Address About?

On 28 October 2025, President Emmerson Mnangagwa officially opened the Third Session of the 10th Parliament and presented his State of the Nation Address (SONA). In his speech, the President gave an update on Zimbabwe's progress, challenges, and priorities for the year ahead.

He painted a picture of an economy on the rise — citing growth, job creation, and infrastructure development — while critics argued that many of the achievements remain “on paper” rather than visible in people's everyday lives.

Economist Vince Musewe described the address as “overly optimistic,” saying it presented statistics without acknowledging the lived realities of poverty, unemployment, and inequality facing many Zimbabweans.

## 2. Economic Growth and Jobs

The President said Zimbabwe's economy is expected to grow by 6.6% in 2025, driven by agriculture, mining, and construction. He also mentioned that inflation is stabilising and that the government is focused on creating jobs, especially for young people.

“Our economy continues to show resilience, with growth projected at 6.6% in 2025,” he said. However, Musewe noted that such growth

figures often don't reflect what people experience in real life. A growing economy, he argued, should translate into better-paying jobs, affordable prices, and improved livelihoods — which are still missing for many.

Most job opportunities are in the informal sector, where there is little security or benefits. Official unemployment remains high, and many graduates still struggle to find meaningful work.

## 3. Inflation, Prices and the ZiG Currency

The President praised the introduction of the ZiG (Zimbabwe Gold) currency in April 2024, saying it has brought stability and confidence to the economy.

“The ZiG currency, backed by gold and foreign reserves, has restored confidence and stabilised prices,” he said.

While it is true that the ZiG initially slowed down inflation, Musewe and other analysts warn that price stability has been fragile. Many shops still quote goods in US dollars, and some workers are paid in ZiG while expenses remain in foreign currency.

The risk, Musewe added, is that without strict fiscal discipline and trust in government institutions, the ZiG could face the same fate as previous local currencies. For most Zimbabweans, daily life is still shaped by exchange rate fluctuations and rising costs.

## 4. Agriculture and Food Security

The President celebrated the “success” of the Pfumvudza/Intwasa programme and said Zimbabwe had achieved a maize surplus. He also promised further investment in irrigation, livestock production, and rural development.

“Our agriculture transformation agenda is bearing fruit, ensuring household and national food security,” he declared.

However, observers say this picture is uneven. Some areas have indeed benefited from better input distribution and good rains, but others — especially in drought-prone provinces — still face hunger.

Musewe observed that genuine food security will depend on climate-resilient policies, trans-

parent management of inputs, and fair pricing for farmers. Without this, rural households remain vulnerable to hunger and debt.

### **5. Mining and Natural Resources**

Mining continues to be a key pillar of the economy. The President said the sector will surpass US\$12 billion in annual revenue by year's end, driven by lithium, gold, and platinum exports.

"Our mining sector remains the cornerstone of our economy and a major source of export earnings," he said.

Yet, as Musewe noted, many mining operations — particularly foreign-owned or joint ventures — have little benefit for local communities. Environmental destruction, land degradation, and poor labour practices remain major issues.

Economists argue that to truly benefit citizens, Zimbabwe must enforce transparency in mining contracts and ensure that revenue is used to improve public services like schools, hospitals, and roads — not to enrich a few elites.

### **6. Industry and Manufacturing**

The President pointed to signs of industrial revival, saying more factories are reopening and local production is increasing under the "Buy Zimbabwe" campaign.

"Industrial capacity utilisation has improved significantly, with more local products now on supermarket shelves," he said.

Musewe, however, cautioned that the real test of industrial growth lies in competitiveness and export value. Many local companies still face power shortages, high import costs, and limited access to foreign currency.

He argued that without lower production costs and fair trade policies, Zimbabwean industries will continue to struggle against cheaper imports.

### **7. Energy and Electricity Supply**

Energy supply has been one of the biggest frustrations for households and businesses. The President said Zimbabwe has made progress, with new solar and hydro projects boosting power generation.

"The completion of Unit 7 and 8 at Hwange and ongoing renewable projects demonstrate our commitment to energy security," he noted.

While these developments are welcome, Musewe pointed out that power outages remain

frequent, especially in rural areas. He stressed that energy planning must include community-based renewable systems to ensure equitable access and reduce dependence on fossil fuels.

### **8. Infrastructure and Transport**

The President listed several major infrastructure projects, including the ongoing rehabilitation of the Harare–Beitbridge Highway, airport upgrades, and new housing developments.

"Infrastructure development remains a key driver of our growth and modernisation," he said.

While some progress is visible, Musewe observed that infrastructure projects have often been plagued by corruption, inflated costs, and poor workmanship. He noted that roads may look new but deteriorate quickly due to low-quality materials and lack of maintenance.

For ordinary citizens, he said, true development means safe roads, clean water, and functioning health centres — not just ribbon-cutting ceremonies.

### **9. Social Services: Health and Education**

The President said the government is committed to improving access to healthcare and education.

"We continue to prioritise quality healthcare delivery and the construction of new schools and hospitals," he affirmed.

Yet the situation on the ground tells a different story. Public hospitals are still under-equipped, doctors and nurses frequently go on strike over poor salaries, and many rural clinics lack medicine.

Musewe warned that without better pay and investment in infrastructure, the exodus of healthcare workers to other countries will continue.

In education, the government has expanded digital learning programmes, but many rural schools lack internet access or computers. Parents still bear high costs in fees and uniforms.

### **10. Youth, Drugs and Unemployment**

The President acknowledged the rise in drug and substance abuse among young people, calling it a national crisis.

"We must fight the scourge of drugs that is destroying the future of our youth," he said.

Musewe agreed but stressed that fighting drug abuse requires addressing its root causes — mainly unemployment, hopelessness, and lack

of recreational opportunities.

He added that youth empowerment must move beyond rhetoric to actual support — funding startups, vocational training, and creative industries.

### **11. Governance, Corruption and Rule of Law**

The President reiterated his administration's "zero tolerance" stance on corruption.

"We continue to fight corruption in all its forms," he said.

However, Musewe argued that anti-corruption rhetoric has become a repeated slogan without tangible results.

Many high-profile cases remain unresolved, and public confidence in the Zimbabwe Anti-Corruption Commission (ZACC) is low.

He added that real accountability requires political will — meaning those in power must also face consequences when found guilty of misconduct.

Musewe further warned that the recent moves to extend the presidential term to 2030 and the suppression of dissenting voices have deepened public mistrust and damaged faith in institutions.

### **12. The Big Picture: Progress or Propaganda?**

Vince Musewe concluded that the 2025 SONA presented "a polished story of progress" but failed to address the deeper issues that ordinary people face daily — the rising cost of living, the

shortage of decent jobs, and the widening gap between the powerful and the poor.

He urged Zimbabweans to judge development not by statistics but by visible change — cleaner cities, reliable services, fair wages, and equal opportunities.

"It is not GDP figures that matter," he said, "but the quality of life of our citizens."

### **13. Conclusion: Hope and Responsibility**

The 2025 State of the Nation Address was filled with promises and pride in achievements — some of which are real and others still distant dreams.

It highlighted Zimbabwe's resilience and potential but also exposed a widening gap between government optimism and everyday hardship.

As Musewe concluded, rebuilding Zimbabwe will require not just policy announcements but honesty, hard work, and accountability at all levels of society.

The President's call for unity and perseverance will only bear fruit if citizens see tangible improvements in their lives — in the price of mealie meal, in the reliability of electricity, and in the dignity of work.

In simple terms: The government says Zimbabwe is moving forward, but most people still feel stuck. Progress will only be real when growth statistics are matched by hope on the ground.

## **NEWS IN PICTURES**

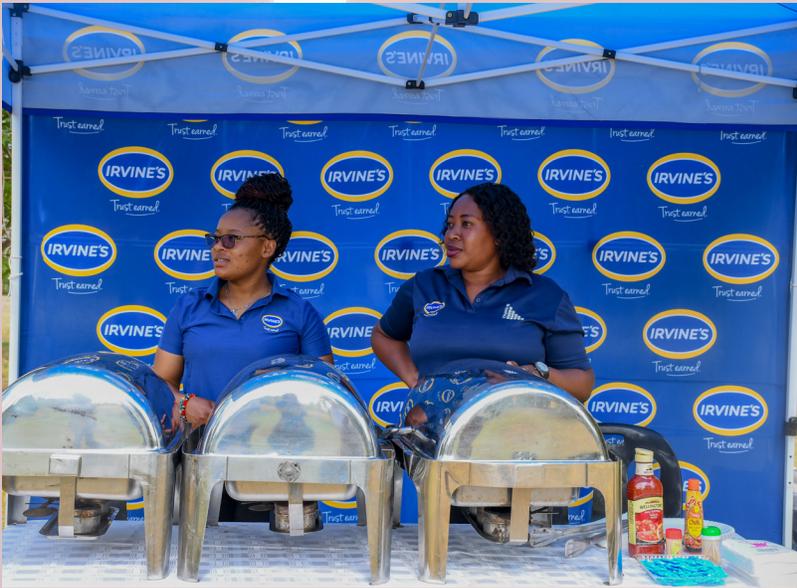




**SCENES FROM THE GRADUATION**







## SECAM hosts continental seminar for African Catholic youth leaders in Nairobi

By SECAM Communication Office



*A worthwhile seminar deserves a photo*

The Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar (SECAM) held a Seminar for African Regional Catholic Youth Leaders from October 23 to 27, 2025, in Nairobi, Kenya, under the theme "Youth Apostolate and the Vision of the Church in Africa."

This gathering formed part of SECAM's ongoing commitment to strengthen the structures of the Catholic Youth Apostolate across Africa.

The seminar aimed to empower youth executives from the various SECAM regions and build a credible, inclusive, and sustainable continental youth leadership structure in line with the Church's vision and the Synod on Synodality's call to listen attentively to the voices of Africa's young people.

About 50 youth delegates representing SECAM's regional bodies participated.

Each region was encouraged to nominate three delegates from different countries to ensure diversity and broad representation. In his opening remarks, Rev. Fr. Alfred Bebody, Administrative Secretary of SECAM, welcomed the participants and outlined the objectives of the seminar, emphasizing the Church's commitment to strengthening youth structures across Africa.

The keynote address was delivered by Rev. Fr. Zéphirin Moubé, Deputy Secretary General of SECAM and Head of the Evangelisation Com-

mission, on the topic "Youth Apostolate in the SECAM Vision 2025-2050."

Fr. Moubé underscored the importance of building a dynamic and mission-oriented youth apostolate that aligned with SECAM's long-term vision and the Synod on Synodality's call for greater listening and participation of young people in the life of the Church.

Participants engaged in group discussions on youth priorities for the next five years and attended presentations on key topics including: "Digital Evangelization for African Youth" presented by Rev. Fr. Andrew Kaufa, Director of Communications for the Association of Member Episcopal Conferences in Eastern Africa (AMECEA); "Biblical Apostolate for Youth" presented by Rev. Fr. Anselm Kamuyu, Director of the Catholic Biblical Centre for Africa and Madagascar (BICAM).

A highlight of the meeting was the Plenary Session and Elections, aimed at establishing a Continental Youth Executive Structure, subject to final approval by SECAM's Standing Committee in January 2026.

This initiative underscored SECAM's dedication to foster Youth leadership rooted in faith, service, and synodal collaboration, ensuring that young Catholics played an active role in shaping the future of the Church in Africa.

# Looking back at World Mission Week 2025: missionaries of hope among the peoples

By Rev. Fr. Zéphirin Moubé



## 1. World Mission Week in brief

The entire month of October is dedicated to mission, culminating in World Mission Week, which ends on Mission Sunday. This year, the week runs from Sunday 12 October to Sunday 19 October 2025.

Pope Leo XIV has chosen the theme 'Missionaries of Hope Among the Peoples' for this week. Through this theme, he invites us to pray for and support the mission of the universal Church and local churches. Indeed, World Mission Week calls on all Catholics to pray and share in order to support the life and mission of local churches around the world. To this end, a collection is organised on Mission Sunday. It was established by Pope Pius XI in 1926 and is devoted to the Pontifical Mission Societies.

## 2. History of Mission Week

World Mission Week has existed since 1926. It was established by Pope Pius XI. Blessed Pauline Jaricot (1799-1862) was its inspiration. At the age of 17, she turned her back on her worldly life and joined forces with young female workers in

her father's factories to collaborate in spreading the Gospel through prayer and missionary work.

After three years, realising the material needs in the so-called mission countries, the young Pauline invented an ingenious system of collecting funds for the mission. A collection to spread the Gospel through missionary activity. The practice spread throughout Europe and inspired the commitment of thousands of people.

Pauline Jaricot's financial and spiritual chain officially became the Association for the Propagation of the Faith on 3 May 1822. The rapid growth of this organisation throughout Europe finally attracted the attention of the Holy See, which asked to welcome it. The Society for the Propagation of the Faith, along with two others (the Missionary Childhood Association founded by Charles de Forbin in 1843 in Paris and the Society of St. Peter the Apostle founded in 1889 by the Bigard sisters in Caen), which were established later, became pontifical on 3 May 1922. The Pontifical Missionary Union, founded in Italy by Father Paolo Manna in 1916, was declared pontifical in

1956. These various works are grouped under the name Pontifical Missionary Works, whose common and principal objective is to "promote the universal missionary spirit among the people of God" (Redemptoris Missio n. 84).

To achieve this, the above-mentioned works, as bodies of the Holy See, provide information on the life and needs of the universal mission, encourage the Churches to pray for one another, and work to promote mutual exchange, communion and sharing. They have the primary task of promoting cooperation to harmonise missionary forces and ensure the equitable distribution of resources for the mission, with particular attention to the most needy countries.

World Mission Week is celebrated with fervour in dioceses and parishes around the world, and all the faithful of Christ are invited to evaluate their missionary commitment on this occasion. So what can we say about the Church, the Family of God, in Africa?

### 3. Missionaries of hope among the peoples. The mission of SCEAM

Pope Leo XIV has chosen to place this 99th World Mission Week under the theme 'Missionaries of hope among the peoples.' This motto proposed by the Pope in this jubilee year 'reminds every Christian and the Church, the community of the baptised, of their fundamental vocation to be, in the footsteps of Christ, messengers and builders of hope' (Leo XIV). May every baptised person, disciple and missionary of Christ, make hope shine around them and in every place! This is the wish expressed by Pope Leo XIV in his message.

It should be remembered that 1969 was a special year for the Church in Africa and its islands in terms of intracontinental mission. Indeed, a few years after the close of the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965), the African continent had the privilege of welcoming for the first time a visit by a Supreme Pontiff, Pope Paul VI, to Kampala, Uganda. In his address to the peoples of Africa, he uttered these prophetic and engaging words: 'You Africans have become your own missionaries. You can and must have an African Christianity.'

This visit marked the official launch of the Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar (SECAM), which is the driving

force behind evangelisation in Africa and its islands. May our prayers during this Mission Week strengthen the dynamism of this structure of communion and consultation, for a synergy that fulfils its mission and, in turn, the very mission of the Church, the family of God, which is in Africa!

### 4. Highlights of the Message for this 99th World Mission Week signed by Pope Francis

#### a) In the footsteps of Christ, our hope

- As we celebrate the first ordinary Jubilee of the Third Millennium, after that of the year 2000, we keep our eyes fixed on Christ, who is at the centre of history, 'the same yesterday, today and forever' (Heb 13:8). In the synagogue of Nazareth, he declared the fulfilment of Scripture in the 'today' of his historical presence. He thus revealed himself as the One sent by the Father, with the anointing of the Holy Spirit, to bring the Good News of the Kingdom of God and to inaugurate 'the year of the Lord's favour' for all humanity (cf. Lk 4:16-21).

- In this mystical 'today' that lasts until the end of the world, Christ is the fulfilment of salvation for all, especially for those whose only hope is God. In his earthly life, he 'went about doing good and healing all' from evil and the Evil One (cf. Acts 10:38), restoring hope in God to the needy and to the people.

- Moreover, he experienced all human frailties, except sin, even going through critical moments that could have led to despair, as in his agony in Gethsemane and on the cross. He thus became the divine Missionary of hope, the supreme model for those who, throughout the centuries, carry forward the mission received from God, even in extreme trials.

- Through his disciples, sent to all peoples and mystically accompanied by him, the Lord Jesus continues his ministry of hope for humanity. He still bends over every poor, afflicted, desperate and evil-ridden person, to pour "the oil of consolation and the wine of hope upon their wounds" (Preface 'Jesus the Good Samaritan').

- Obeying her Lord and Master and with the same spirit of service, the Church, the community of Christ's missionary disciples, continues this mission, offering her life for all among the peoples. While having to face, on the one hand, persecutions, tribulations and difficulties and, on the other hand, its own imperfections and failures

due to the weaknesses of each of its members, it is constantly driven by the love of Christ to move forward united with Him on this missionary path and to take on, like Him and with Him, the cry of humanity, and even the groaning of every creature awaiting final redemption.

- Let us therefore feel inspired to set out in the footsteps of the Lord Jesus to become, with Him and in Him, signs and messengers of hope for all, in every place and in every circumstance that God gives us to live. May all the baptised, missionary disciples of Christ, make his hope shine in every corner of the earth!

b) Christians, bearers and builders of hope among peoples

- In following Christ the Lord, Christians are called to transmit the Good News by sharing the concrete living conditions of those they encounter and thus becoming bearers and builders of hope. Indeed, 'the joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the people of this age, especially those who are poor or in any way afflicted, are also the joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the followers of Christ. Nothing genuinely human fails to find an echo in their hearts' (Gaudium et spes, n. 1).

- The horizon of this hope goes beyond the passing realities of this world and opens up to the divine realities that we already foresee in the present. Indeed, as Saint Paul VI reminded us, the salvation in Christ that the Church offers to all as a gift of God's mercy is not only "immanent, commensurate with material or even spiritual needs ... identifying itself totally with desires, hopes, affairs and struggles, but a salvation that overflows all these limits to be fulfilled in communion with the one Absolute, that of God: a transcendent, eschatological salvation, which certainly has its beginning in this life, but which is fulfilled in eternity" (Apostolic Exhortation Evangelii nuntiandi, n. 27).

c) Renewing the mission of hope

- Faced with the urgency of the mission of hope today, Christ's disciples are called first and foremost to train themselves to become 'artisans' of hope and restorers of a humanity that is often distracted and unhappy.

- Missionaries of hope are men and women of prayer, because 'the person who hopes is a person who prays,' as the venerable Cardinal Van

Thuan emphasised. He kept hope alive during his long tribulation in prison thanks to the strength he received from his persevering prayer and the Eucharist (cf. *F.X. Nguyen Van Thuan, The Way of Hope*, Rome 2001, n. 963).

- Let us not forget that prayer is the first missionary action and at the same time 'the first force of hope' (Catechesis, 20 May 2020).

- Finally, evangelisation is always a communal process, like the character of Christian hope (cf. Benedict XVI, *Encyclical Letter Spe Salvi*, n. 14). This process does not end with the first proclamation or with baptism, but continues with the building of Christian communities through the accompaniment of each baptised person on the path of the Gospel.

- I emphasise once again this missionary synodality of the Church, as well as the service of the Pontifical Mission Societies in promoting the missionary responsibility of the baptised and supporting new particular Churches. And I urge all of you, children, young people, adults, elderly people, to participate actively in the common mission of evangelisation through the witness of your lives and through prayer, through your sacrifices and your generosity. Thank you very much for all this!

- Dear sisters and brothers, let us turn to Mary, Mother of Jesus Christ, our hope. Let us entrust to her this wish for the Jubilee and for the years to come: 'May the light of Christian hope reach everyone as a message of God's love addressed to all! May the Church be a faithful witness to this proclamation in every part of the world!' (*Bull Spes non confundit*, n. 6).

Accra (Ghana), 15 October 2025



# The synodal path in Africa

By Rev. Fr. Rafael Simbine Junior

A panoramic snapshot of how the Church in Africa is living the synodal path, of how, from listening to mission, the local Churches are weaving Synodality into daily pastoral life, of how, what began as a process is becoming a culture.

First, clarity of direction. After the Celebratory Stage, we are widely disseminating the Final Document and translating it into a practical vademecum for implementation at local levels. This simple compass, adapted in dioceses, parishes, movements, and associations, is helping communities to move from aspiration to action with steps they could really take.

Second, capacity for accompaniment. Across parishes, dioceses, and episcopal conferences, synodal teams were formed and trained to animate listening, facilitate discernment, and support implementation. These teams are catalysts of co-responsibility, helping clergy, religious, and laity walk together with a new attentiveness to the Holy Spirit.

Third, formation that endures. We have begun to integrate Synodality into the ordinary curriculum of the Church; seminaries and houses of formation, catechetical institutes, Catholic schools, and ongoing formation for pastoral workers.

This is crucial. Synodality is not a campaign with a deadline; it is a way of being Church that must be learned, practiced, and handed on.

To sustain this movement, we have built a listening architecture that is simple and replicable. Dioceses are using structured questionnaires ahead of pastoral letters so that episcopal teaching would emerge from the *sensus fidei* of the People of God. Meeting spaces, forums, symposiums, and days of reflection on education, communication, youth, family life, and social engagement are being expanded, making participation visible and meaningful. The tent is being enlarged through ecumenical and interfaith encounters. Listening to others purifies our language and sharpens our discernment, teaching us to recognise the Spirit beyond our familiar boundaries.

Synodality in Africa also moves into the public square. In many contexts, channels of engage-

ment with civil society, traditional leaders and public authorities are being strengthened, especially around peacebuilding, governance, education and care for our common home. This is not a parallel track; it is the outward movement of a listening Church. We discern together, and then we walk with society for the common good. What fruits are already visible? We see genuine co-responsibility emerging where formation takes root. In parishes and dioceses where synodal teams have been trained, decision-making has become more participatory, and discernment is truly shared rather than concentrated in the hands of a few.

Pastoral priorities and plans gain credibility when it reflects the real concerns of God's people. When bishops consult widely before writing pastoral letters, the faithful recognize their own questions and hopes in the Church's words. This recognition opens hearts to conversion and deepens communion.

Dialogue with other Christians, Muslims, and civic leaders builds trust and opens paths to collaborative peacebuilding. In contexts marked by tension and fragility, the Church is becoming a bridge.

Through regularized encounters, we reduce suspicion, create spaces for common witness, and work together for the common good. Three lessons guide our way forward: formation must come first, because hearts change before structures; listening tools must stay simple to remain sustainable; and bridges to society must be maintained, for the synodal Church serves both communion and mission.

We are learning that synodality is a spirituality of communion, an obedience to the Spirit speaking through all the baptized. Africa's gift to the synodal journey is a living sense of family, resilience, and hope: the conviction that the Church grows by walking together, listening deeply, and serving boldly.

Together, may we continue to learn this synodal style, so that Africa's Church listens deeply, walks humbly, and witnesses boldly.

# Politics as a vocation of service: Bishop Paul Horan calls for a moral renewal in Zimbabwe's leadership

By Fr. Johnston Mlambo



Bishop Paul Horan

HARARE — In a nation struggling to reconcile political ambition with moral integrity, the words of Bishop Paul Horan, O.Carm., President of the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops' Conference (ZCBC), offered a refreshing counterpoint: politics, he said, must never be reduced to the ruthless contest for power, but reclaimed as "a noble vocation of service."

Delivering a deeply theological address to Catholic Members of Parliament during an engagement with the bishops on 29 October 2025, Bishop Horan situated Zimbabwe's political crisis within a broader moral and spiritual framework. His reflection, steeped in Catholic Social Teaching and Scripture, challenged both leaders and citizens to rediscover the divine purpose of public life.

"In an era marked by profound political polarisation and widespread citizen cynicism towards public institutions," he began, "there is an urgent need to reclaim a vision of politics that transcends the mere acquisition and exercise of power."

He reminded parliamentarians that the Catholic tradition does not see politics as a necessary evil, but as a sacred duty — "a noble vocation of service, anchored in the Scriptures and in the foundational principles of the Catholic Social Teachings of the Church."

At the heart of Bishop Horan's address was a

bold claim: the Christian vocation to politics begins at baptism.

"Through baptism," he said, "a Christian is incorporated into Christ and shares in his three-fold office as priest, prophet, and king. It is this baptismal character that is lived out explicitly in the political sphere."

For him, politics must therefore be understood as a vocation — "a specific call from God to cooperate in the work of creation and redemption, not merely a career or a path to personal influence."

He described political engagement as "a distinct and demanding path to holiness," requiring the daily exercise of the cardinal virtues: prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance.

"The prudence to discern the common good in complex situations," he explained. "Justice to enact laws and policies that foster right relationships with God, with humanity, and with creation. The fortitude to withstand political pressure or public opinion for the sake of truth. And the temperance to exercise power with moderation and for service, not for self-advancement."

He added that this Christian witness must manifest in a "clear rejection of corruption, a relentless commitment to transparency, and an unwavering defence of the vulnerable — the unborn, the poor, the migrant, the elderly, and all those in the peripheries of society."

Such an approach, he said, "fosters a sacramental vision of politics — to see the political realm not as a profane or hopelessly corrupt space, but as a field for grace and transformation."

Bishop Horan built his argument upon four foundational principles of Catholic social thought: the dignity of the human person, subsidiarity, solidarity, and the common good — "the compass that should orient all political action."

"The dignity of each human person," he said, "is not a secular humanist invention, but one radically rooted in the Genesis revelation of the *imago Dei* — that every human being, without exception, is created in the image and likeness of God (Genesis 1:27). Therefore, the whole of humanity shares the same origin and destiny."

Because of this divine origin, human dignity is

"inherent, inviolable, and universal — not a right granted by the State which can be revoked, but a gift from the Creator that forms the basis of all inalienable rights and duties."

"Any political project, policy, or institution must be judged by its efficacy in upholding this inherent dignity," he continued.

He named the "modern assaults on human dignity" — poverty, war, discrimination, and the reduction of the human person to a mere consumer — as evidence of moral decay.

"A just society," he said, "is one that systematically recognises and protects the dignity of every person from the moment of conception to natural death."

This vision directly confronts some of Zimbabwe's most pressing realities — persistent inequality, corruption, and the erosion of trust in public institutions — framing them as spiritual and moral failures rather than merely political ones.

In one of the address's most insightful moments, Bishop Horan described subsidiarity and solidarity as "twin principles in creative tension," essential for a just society.

"Subsidiarity insists on the priority of the local," he said. "A higher body should not assume tasks that can be carried out efficiently by a lower, more local one. It protects individual freedoms and initiatives from being usurped by distant, impersonal bureaucracies, and it champions the family, local communities, and civil societies as

the primary agents of human action."

Yet subsidiarity, he warned, must always be balanced by solidarity:

"Solidarity corrects the advent of parochialism, affirming that we are all responsible for one another. It is the moral virtue that binds the human family together. It answers the ancient question, 'Am I my brother's keeper?' with a resounding yes."

He invoked St. John Paul II, who defined solidarity not as vague compassion but as "a firm and persevering determination to commit oneself to the common good."

"In an increasingly globalised world," Bishop Horan added, "this virtue demands concrete political action in areas such as economic justice, migration, and ecological stewardship — recognising that the fates of nations are inextricably linked."

His words echoed strongly in a Zimbabwean context marked by centralisation of power, regional inequalities, and economic exclusion — urging leaders to decentralise responsibly while remaining united in the pursuit of shared humanity.

Bishop Horan described the common good as the ultimate goal of politics — "the sum total of social conditions which allow people, either as groups or as individuals, to reach their fulfilment more fully and more easily," citing *Gaudium et Spes* (26).

"The common good," he said, "requires the es-



establishment of peace, justice, access to essential resources and services like education, health-care, and the opportunity for all to participate in public life.”

He stressed that the common good “finds its ultimate justification in human dignity” and that a society that marginalises the poor, the unborn, the migrant, or the elderly “has by definition failed to serve the common good.”

Turning to the history of papal social teaching, Bishop Horan situated his reflections within the evolving magisterial tradition.

“So we have seen the compass — now we see the map,” he said.

He recalled how Pope Leo XIII’s *Rerum Novarum* (1891) first presented politics as a moral and social duty, insisting on the State’s responsibility to protect workers and uphold the rights of families.

“This tradition was continued by Pope Pius XI, who elaborated on the need for a social order balancing capital and labour, and by Pope Pius XII, who amid the turmoil of World War II emphasised the non-negotiable nature of human rights and the role of a well-formed conscience in political life.”

Later, Pope St. John XXIII in *Pacem in Terris* (1963) defined politics as a structure built on “truth, justice, charity and freedom,” while Pope Paul VI in *Populorum Progressio* (1967) expanded the vision to global justice and “integral human development.”

“St. John Paul II argued that a free and virtuous political life cannot be sustained without a foundation in objective moral truth and a steadfast commitment to human dignity,” Bishop Horan added.

He cited Pope Benedict XVI’s *Caritas in Veritate* (2009) — “politics without love is cold and calculating; love without truth is sentimental and directionless” — and Pope Francis’ *Fratelli Tutti* (2020), which defines politics as “one of the highest forms of charity.”

“For the Catholic believer,” he said, “this rich tradition is not merely an intellectual framework, but a personal call to mission — a vocation that flows directly from the sacrament of baptism.”

Bishop Horan’s conclusion was both pastoral and prophetic:

“Illumined by the wisdom of the Social Teach-

ings and animated by the grace of baptism, the Christian is called to engage in politics as a vocational service. Such politics bows before God, the source and summit of all human aspirations. It seeks to serve the human person created in God’s image and likeness and puts humanity at the centre. It is, in the final analysis, a politics worthy of our divine calling and worthy of the humanity it seeks to serve.”

He insisted that “the task is not simply to win arguments or elections, but to infuse the temporal order with the love of Christ — thereby participating in the great project that St. John Paul II termed the building of a civilisation of love.”

In a country still scarred by economic hardship, political polarisation, and corruption, Bishop Horan’s address offered both a theological roadmap and a moral mirror.

His appeal for politics as a vocation — grounded in human dignity, subsidiarity, solidarity, and the common good — directly challenges the prevailing culture of power for its own sake.

His message was not partisan; it was pastoral. He did not condemn, but invited conversion — calling Zimbabwe’s leaders to rediscover service over self, vocation over ambition, and humanity over ideology.

By rooting political responsibility in baptism, Bishop Horan reminded the nation that faith and governance cannot be separated.

In his words, Zimbabwe’s political renewal must begin not in party manifestos but in moral conscience — in the recognition that all authority, rightly understood, flows from God and exists for the good of His people.



*Politics as a vocation of service*

# Miniyothabo “Minie” Baloyi Chiwenga urges fellow Pilgrims to imitate Mother Mary

By Thandeka Ndlovu



*Honorable Col Miniyothabo Chiwenga joins other congregants in prayer*

**B**ulawayo- The Archdiocese of Bulawayo joined the entire Catholic family in celebrating the Jubilee of Marian Spirituality on the 11th of October. All lay Movements that have devotion to Our Lady, the women and male Religious congregations working in the diocese converged for a day of prayer and reflection in honour of the Blessed Mother Mary.

The pilgrimage shrine of Our Lady of Fatima hosted a multitude of pilgrims who came from the length and breadth of the Archdiocese of Bulawayo with one chorus “We fly to thy protection O Holy Mother of God”. Congregations and Guilds which were represented at the grace filled event included the Oblates of Mary Immaculate (OMI), Congregation of Mariannahill Missionaries(CMM), the Society of the Divine Word (SVD), the Missionary Sisters of the Precious Blood (CPS), the Franciscan Missionaries of the Divine Motherhood (FMDM), the Servants of Mary the Queen (AMR), Legion of Mary, the Sodality of our Lady. Also in attendance were some representatives of other Associations. Amongst the pilgrims was

Honorable Col Miniyothabo Baloyi – Mrs Chiwenga who attended as a fellow pilgrim of hope to pray. As guest speaker, she relayed a message of hope to the pilgrims. She encouraged fellow pilgrims to live prayerfully and to be at service of each other, to embrace humility and always trust in the divine will. She passionately shared her personal devotion to Our Lady, “She inspires me to be a good wife to my husband



*A soothing musical interlude*



*Archbishop Alex lifts the bible*

and to be a good mother. I am sure we can follow her by submitting to God, by rejoicing in God and by praying without ceasing".

The Holy Mass was gracefully presided over by Archbishop Alex Thomas and concelebrated by several priests. In his homily, the Archbishop challenged the pilgrims to live Marian spirituality in which they should imitate Mary in her life and her journey of faith where "You should live in total openness to God's will, contemplative listening and compassionate service in union with Christ".

Marian topics were presented by different facilitators as well as music concert by the Marimba band of Holy Family Parish, Marian Melodies Mix of Rev. Fr. Francis Boka of St. Teresa – Plumtree. The group of young Sisters also entertained the pilgrims with their melodious songs. Marians were invited to walk in Mary's footsteps- to live

with purpose, prayer and trust. Noxy, the young and promising poet from St. Bernard's High School delivered a captivating poem on Mother Mary.

Commenting on the jubilee day, Fr. Stuart Vukai (CMM) said, "Congratulations to all those who worked towards the day. May our Mother Mary intercede for you all and may God bless you for the love which was put into the event". Fr. Themba Chipembere and Sr. Blessing Ujah (FMDA) described the day as a grace filled day. On her part, Mrs Teclar Ndlovu of Our Lady of Fatima testified that "The Holy Spirit was present among the pilgrims". Mrs Agnes Nare, the leader of the organizing team poured out her heart in gratitude. She thanked the Religious and Priests, her fellow members of the Association of our Lady and all other Marian Movements which participated. In her own profound words, "We listened as the organizing committee and everything fell into place. Every move was truly for the love of Our Blessed Mother Mary. The planning was great from day one. I am joyful!"



*The clergy keenly follow proceedings*



*Some of the participants stand in attendance*



*What is a celebration without song*

# ZCBC Golf tournament scores big for solarisation of Africa Synod House

By Fr. Johnston Mlambo



*A time to interact with the shepherds*

The Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops' Conference (ZCBC) held a highly successful Golf Tournament on Friday, 25 October 2025, at Chapman Golf Club in Harare.

The event aimed at fundraising for the solarisation of the Africa Synod House — the headquarters of the Catholic Church in Zimbabwe.

This year's tournament saw an impressive turnout, with 26 teams participating, nearly double the number from last year. Among them were two teams led by bishops: Bishop Rudolf Nyandoro of Gweru and Bishop Paul Horan of Mutare, both of whom brought energy and enthusiasm to the course.

Bishop Nyandoro's team drew special attention for their high level of preparedness, proudly wearing branded golf shirts that reflected their diocesan spirit.

A team of volunteers from various parishes diligently registered participants and ensured the day ran smoothly.

Speaking to SOCCOM, the Secretary General of the ZCBC, Rev. Fr. Tryvis Moyo, expressed deep gratitude for the overwhelming support and participation.

"The participation has been very good. We are well supported, and the mood and spirit are excellent,"

said Fr. Moyo with evident joy.

Zimbabwe has faced prolonged power shortages, and the need for sustainable energy solutions such as solar power is widely understood. Fr. Moyo noted that this shared awareness contributed to the success of the event:

"I think people identify with the cause," he added.

On the question of the next tournament, Fr. Moyo said the location would be decided based on diocesan capacity and participation levels.

"It depends on other dioceses' capacity to mobilise teams. We may have one tournament in Harare and another elsewhere — the decision will be made in due course."

Bishop Raymond Mupandasekwa of Chinhoyi, who attended in solidarity, applauded the organisation and purpose of the event.

"It's been well organised and well supported. We are very grateful to our sponsors and all who took time to come and support the cause — particularly our effort to install a solar system at ZCBC," he said.

He underlined that the Africa Synod House is the operational heart of the Church's work in education, health, social services, justice, and peace, adding that supporting its solarisation benefits the Church's mission across all dioceses.

Bishop Mupandasekwa also viewed the success of the tournament as a milestone in the Church's

journey toward self-reliance.

"Historically, our Church was supported by partners overseas — which was necessary at the time. But growth and maturity in faith mean taking responsibility for sustaining and developing the Church ourselves. This tournament is a sign of that maturity," he said.

He added that the Church must continue to strengthen its capacity not only to support itself but eventually to assist others:

"This initiative is part of our drive to become a self-supporting Church — one that may, in time, extend support to smaller communities still growing in faith."

The tournament's chief organiser, Mr. Lionel Wood, expressed satisfaction with both the turnout and the backing from corporate sponsors.

"We've received tremendous support from corporates and participants — much more than last year. The atmosphere has been great, and we're very grateful," he said.

He noted that the participation of clergy added a special touch to this year's event:

"We're motivated by the number of priests and bishops who took part. It's very encouraging and uplifting," he added.

Mr. Wood was optimistic about reaching the fundraising target:

"Given the strong participation and sponsorship, I'm confident we will achieve our goals."

Volunteers also shared in the day's joy. Vee Chibanda, a member of the organising team, said the growth from last year's event was remarkable.

"We've seen a great improvement in the number of teams. Everyone is happy, the exhibitions are lively, and it's been a wonderful day for a worthy cause," she said.

One of the sponsors, Robert Root Property Consultancy, expressed satisfaction with the event and the networking opportunities it offered.

"We're pleased with how the day has gone and look forward to engaging with more people during the dinner," said Kudzai Mazhindu, the company's Sales and Marketing Manager.

The St. Clement Ladies Team, among the participants, also described the event as "very good and exciting," appreciating the blend of sport, fellowship, and faith-inspired purpose.

The tournament featured 104 players competing across various categories. The winners were as follows:

#### Nearest the Pin

- Hole 3 – J. Dondo
- Hole 7 – S. Kambashe
- Hole 12 – P. Mudzikisi
- Hole 16 – A. Katembenuka

#### Longest Drive

- Men (Hole 9) – M. Mugabe
- Ladies – D. Zimondi

#### Main Prizes

1. T. Mudzonga & S. Matuzula – 76 pts
2. T. Makuvatsine & T. Humbira – 74 pts
3. Dr. R. Mutasa & K. Muchenje – 70 pts
4. L.J. Mupanga & H. Gwerekwere – 69 pts
5. A. Bako & Chikumba – 68 pts
6. F. Nyambira & Thandiwe – 68 pts
7. D. Mashava & T. Bachi – 67 pts
8. E. Chakanyuka & C. Mandiopera – 66 pts
9. L. Mupanga & Eng. J. Maenzanise – 65 pts
10. S. Masendu & N. Makiwa – 64 pts

#### Most Golfed Player: Mombeshora

By the time of publication, the tournament had recorded a profit of approximately US\$12,000, which will go directly toward the solarisation of the Africa Synod House.

The ZCBC Golf Tournament once again proved that faith, fellowship, and fun can work hand in hand for a noble cause. Through this initiative, the Church continues to champion sustainability and self-reliance, lighting the path — quite literally — toward a brighter, solar-powered future for the Africa Synod House and the Church's mission in Zimbabwe.



*A posture of contentment after a great shot.*

# Poetry Corner

## BEHIND THE MASK

A smile on my face, a heart that's broke  
Pain hidden deep, in every step I invoke  
The world sees a facade, a disguise so  
bright  
But no one looks beyond, the cracks in the  
night

They say "You're strong," but strength is  
just a guise  
For the weight I carry, the tears I've cried  
No one asks what's wrong, or why I hide  
The truth remains locked, deep inside

Some voices whisper, "We're here for you"  
A gentle touch, a listening view  
But even kindness, can't mend the pain  
A heart that's shattered, in vain

The show goes on, a performance grand  
Hiding the truth, of this heartbroken land  
Tears fall at night, when darkness de-  
scends

A smile in the light, a heart that contends

Perhaps someday, someone will see  
The real me, behind this mask I'll be  
Until then, the charade continues on  
A heart that's breaking, beneath the sur-  
face gone.

Marion Munkuli



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