

CATHOLIC CHURCH NEWS

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5



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17



- **"The song encourages us to have hope ..."**
- **New custody launched**
- **Pastoral directors confront rising liturgical abuses**
- **Strength in every woman's story**
- **Arrupe cultural night celebrates Africa's heritage**



More than the expression of ideas

Africa Synod House
29/31 John L. Nkomo Avenue (Corner Simon V. Muzenda Street),
Harare, Zimbabwe
P. O. Box CY2220 Causeway, Harare

Tel:+263 242 796298,
Mobile:+263 733863521,
E-mail:directorsoccom@zcbc.co.zw

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Editor	Fr. Johnston Mlambo
Proofreader	Fr. Tadios Mandava
Layout and Design	Tricia P Mlambo
Advertisements	+263 77 960 0372

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CONTENTS



ii	Editorial
1	Zimbabwe steps into synod implementation phase
3	A new chapter of service as Franciscans
5	Building a synodal Church without losing Catholic identity
6	Strength in every woman's story
8	Fr Tryvis Moyo warns seminarians against distorted forms of faith
11	Missionary Daughters of Calvary mark 75 years of dedicated service
13	Hwange youth makes history with first Tonga set-piece
17	Arrupe cultural night celebrates Africa's heritage
19	Becoming one: a historic union of Congregatio Jesu and IBVM
21	From pilgrimages to pastoral pressures
23	Advent message
26	News in Pictures
30	Youth Corner
35	News from the Continent
40	Opinion pieces
47	Poetry corner

Editor's desk

Dear Reader

In November we wind down and draw our liturgical year to a close. The month begins with our celebration of those who were once like us—ordinary men and women who have now made it, who are with God, the final destiny of every human being. Their example encourages us. We also remember those who were among us and like us, but who, for a time, undergo purification in the fires of purgatory.

For them, we offer prayers and suffrages, confident in the mercy of God.

Yet November is not merely a time for remembering the dead; it is also a moment for reflecting on our own end.

The month invites us to pause, to think about life, its meaning, and its conclusion. We think about the end of things—the end of the world, the end of time.

In doing so, we come face-to-face with our own finitude, and perhaps, as Qoheleth teaches, we realise that many things we pursue with such anxiety are but vanity.

It is fitting, then, that on the last Sunday of Ordinary Time, we celebrate Christ the King of the Universe. Only Christ makes the world intelligible to us; only He gives meaning and purpose to life.

And this is so because of His Resurrection. Christ's victory over death is our assurance that life does not end at the grave.

Our destiny is not decay but communion with God. Indeed, we must ask ourselves: If there were no resurrection, what would be the meaning of life—of our efforts, our struggles, our sufferings, and even the existence of all things?

Thus, we begin November contemplating death, and we end it filled with anticipation and hope. We look forward to Christ's return and trust that He will lead us to the Father. This movement from sober reflection to joyful expectation ushers us into Advent—the beginning of a new liturgical year. In this edition, we share the Advent Pastoral Message from our bishops as a guide for our journey of renewal.

As we think of the dead this month, we also cannot ignore signs of the death of morality creeping into our nation.

Parliament is currently debating the Medical Services Amendment Bill, a proposal that aims to expand abortion access across the country.

In this edition of Catholic Church News, we report

on this development. Zimbabwe has never had a culture of promoting death, and we pray that respect for life will prevail in the national debate.

Speaking of death, there is also a death of sanity lurking in our liturgical celebrations. Numerous liturgical abuses have crept into parish worship across the country. We report on the Zimbabwean bishops' concern over this troubling trend.

However, there are also signs of hope. Pastoral Directors from all eight dioceses in Zimbabwe have expressed a strong desire not only to address liturgical abuses but also to begin implementing synodality in concrete ways in their dioceses.

They emphasised that the Church must strive to "leave no one behind" while ensuring faithful and orthodox liturgical practice.

We carry a full story on their recent meeting, during which they reminded one another that the time for implementation has truly begun.

Speaking of synodality, our young people continue to show that they are not merely the Church of tomorrow—they are the Church of today. From 27–30 November 2025, the Jesuit Youth Office (SAP), together with the Zimbabwe Young Christian Students (ZYCS), held a leadership and advocacy training at Makumbi Pastoral Centre, gathering 45 young leaders from six high schools. The event offered an energetic space for formation, reflection, and empowerment.

Also, on 25 November 2025, the University of Zimbabwe Catholic Society hosted an impactful health awareness event addressing two critical yet often neglected issues among young adults: prostate cancer and mental health. Both stories appear in this edition.

The beloved St Cecilia Festival—a highlight for many Zimbabwean Catholics—was held this year in Bulawayo on 15 November, preceded by a jubilee celebration for choirs. The quality of singing continues to grow each year, as does the level of competition. We share the details in this issue.

Across the continent, the African Church was reminded that it "must not be silent" in the digital sphere.

We hope you find the stories in this edition informative, engaging, and enriching, each contributing in its own way to the spiritual renewal that should mark the Advent season. And once renewed, may you enter a joyful and blessed Christmas.

Fr Johnston Mlambo



Zimbabwe steps into synod implementation phase

Pastoral Directors challenged to revive synodal teams and promote Pathways document

By Fr. Johnston Mlambo



The Zimbabwean pastoral team engages in synodal deliberations.

Masvingo- The Catholic Church in Zimbabwe has been called to intensify its commitment to the implementation phase of the Synod on Synodality, as pastoral directors and pastoral vicars met at Gokomere Training Centre in Masvingo from 12–13 November 2025. The gathering marked a decisive moment as the universal Church shifts from consultation to concrete implementation, with Zimbabwe expected to move in step with the global process.

At the start of the meeting, Bishop Raphael Ncube addressed participants virtually, reminding them that the universal Church has now transitioned into the implementation phase of the Synod and that Zimbabwean pastoral leaders "carry a critical responsibility in making synodality a lived reality."

The Vatican document Pathways for the Implementation Phase of the Synod 2025–2028 was then read out paragraph by paragraph, ensuring a common understanding of the Church's new pastoral direction.

Pastoral directors were urged to circulate, teach, and embed the document in diocesan structures, as it defines the spiritual, structural, and missionary orientation of the synodal Church.

A significant concern highlighted during the

meeting was the collapse of synodal teams across most dioceses once the consultation phase concluded.

Only the Archdiocese of Bulawayo has its founding synodal team still active.

Pastoral directors were therefore tasked with urgently reviving and strengthening synodal teams, ensuring that parish and diocesan pastoral councils function effectively, and normalising synodal practices such as Conversation in the Spirit in pastoral life.

A brief note was also made regarding concerns about irregularities and abuses in the liturgy, an issue to be explored in a separate story.

The meeting also received rich reflections from the Zimbabwean delegation that took part in the Jubilee of Synodal Bodies in Rome.

The Jubilee event, added to the global calendar specifically to strengthen and prepare synodal structures for the implementation phase, offered deep formation and spiritual renewal.

Reflecting on the pilgrimage, Fr. Xolani Ndlovu described it as profoundly moving and spiritually affirming.

"One of my best moments was our encounter with the Pope in the opening session," he said.

"He came in after various speakers had given re-

ports. Each continent presented its report and asked the Pope a question, and he responded." The African report—delivered by Fr. Rafael Simbine, the Secretary General of SECAM, —was particularly memorable.

"Commenting on Africa, the Pope encouraged us to be open to the promptings of the Holy Spirit, to be a listening Church that gives everyone a chance to be heard," Fr. Ndlovu said.

"He praised the vitality of African family life, urged us to build bridges across cultures and religions, and reminded us to care for creation." Fr. Xolani also noted that the American report raised a concern familiar to Zimbabwe—that bishops and priests feared synodality was "taking away their power."

"In response, the Pope spoke beautifully about the goodness of shared responsibility," he explained.

"He reminded us that sharing power helps us do the will of God, and reassured us that some dimensions of priestly authority cannot be taken away."

The Pope's response to the Oceania report emphasised poverty, ecological stewardship and the spirit of *Laudato Si'*.

Fr. Xolani described concelebrating Mass with the Holy Father as a deeply humbling highlight: "It was a dream come true. A very simple Mass, simple altar, simple liturgy—this is proper liturgy."

Adding to this reflection, Fr. Mgcini Moyo, National Coordinator of the Pastoral Centre, said the Jubilee experience offered "excellent formation for synodal leadership."

"We had an opportunity to do Conversation in the Spirit as a group," he said.

"It was beautiful. Some sharings echoed our own experiences, and we were challenged to attend to similar issues back home."

Fr. Mgcini added that the workshops and seminars in Rome were designed around topics that "speak to the very heart of synodality — its content, its mission, and the practical challenges of living it out."

He explained that Bishop Nyathi attended the seminar on Youth and Synodality, as well as another on Ecclesial Discernment and Polarity Management, which focused on how to address

potential conflicts within dioceses and parishes, especially situations in which groups remain fixed in their positions and are resistant to listening or change.

Meanwhile, Fr. Xolani and Fr. Mgcini themselves attended the seminar on Designing Participatory Processes, which equipped them with tools to help dioceses build more inclusive structures and strengthen co-responsibility.

"We hope that as we prepare for the 2026 plenary, we will have the opportunity to deepen our engagement with these topics," Fr. Mgcini said. Participants expressed disappointment that many more Zimbabwean pastoral leaders could not attend these enriching workshops due to financial constraints.

The meeting also raised alarm about environmental destruction in Zimbabwe, noting that some mining and extractive activities—often carried out by foreign investors—are causing mountains to disappear and landscapes to be irreversibly altered, in apparent contradiction to *Laudato Si'*.

It was suggested that the Church consider producing a documentary exposing the destruction as a way of raising awareness and urging authorities to act.

As the meeting concluded, pastoral directors were urged to return to their dioceses with renewed vigour.

The success of the synod's implementation in Zimbabwe now depends on reviving synodal structures, forming the faithful, deepening collaboration, and faithfully embracing the vision of a listening, participatory, and missionary Church.



Fr. Mgcini Moyo, the national pastoral coordinator, stresses a point.

A new chapter of service as Franciscans launch autonomous custody

By Fr Givemore Mazhanje OFM



Archbishop Robert Ndlovu, Bp. Raymond Mupa, and Fr Massimo Fusarelli OFM

Harare- The Order of Friars Minor (OFM) in Zimbabwe, known as the Custody of the Good Shepherd, has officially become an Autonomous Custody, marking a historic milestone in the life of the Franciscan family in the country.

The declaration was made during a solemn liturgical celebration held on 1 November 2025 at St Francis of Assisi Parish in Waterfalls, Harare.

The day drew together two bishops, numerous priests, religious brothers and sisters from various congregations, representatives from government and the corporate sector, and thousands of parishioners and invited guests from across Zimbabwe and abroad. The event marked the formal transition of the Custody from its long-standing dependence on the Irish Province to a new era of local leadership and responsibility.

His Grace Archbishop Robert Christopher Ndlovu of Harare presided over the Mass, while Bishop Raymond Mupandasekwa of Masvingo and Apostolic Administrator of Chinhoyi preached the homily.

The celebration was honoured by the presence of Hon. C.G.D.N. Chiwenga, Vice President of Zimbabwe and Guest of Honour.

Also present were key Franciscan leaders, in-

cluding Fr Massimo Fusarelli OFM, Minister General of the Order; Fr Aidan McGrath OFM, Minister Provincial of the Irish Province; and Fr Sipehelele Gwanisheni OFM, General Definitor for Africa. Several friars from different parts of Africa and Ireland also attended.

The story of the Custody of the Good Shepherd dates back to 11 April 1958, when the first Irish friars arrived in Rhodesia and settled in Waterfalls, then a suburb of Salisbury. Over the years, more missionaries from Ireland joined, working in parishes, schools, vocational training centres, and hospitals.

In the mid-1980s, the first Zimbabwean candidate entered the fraternity. More local vocations followed in the 1990s, and in 1992 the Custody of the Good Shepherd was formally named.

Today, after 67 years of Franciscan presence, the seed planted by the Irish Province has matured, with the Custody now ready to stand on its own.

The celebration began with a long and colourful procession. Fr Alfigio Tunha OFM delivered a concise history of the Custody, tracing its journey from 1958 to the present moment. The liturgy was animated with singing, drumming, dancing, and ululations—joyful expressions marking the birth of a new Franciscan entity.



Some of the priests attending the celebration.

During the Mass, the Minister General formally presented the decree erecting and declaring the Autonomous Custody of the Good Shepherd in Zimbabwe, changing its juridical status from Dependent to Autonomous Custody.

In his message, Fr Massimo Fusarelli emphasised that autonomy was not merely an administrative milestone but a spiritual calling.

"Brothers, the canonical erection of your Custody as autonomous is not merely an administrative act. It is a call to deepen your commitment to walk with the people of Zimbabwe, sharing not only your spiritual gifts but your very lives," he said.

He encouraged the friars to strengthen their fraternal life and deepen their prayer.

The Minister Provincial, Fr Aidan McGrath, highlighted the responsibility of carrying forward the legacy of the Irish friars. As a symbolic gesture, he presented a fruit tree to Fr Fanuel, the Custos, signifying a mission that is alive, growing, and bearing fruit.

In his response, Custos Fr Fanuel expressed the fraternity's gratitude:

"This celebration is a new chapter. We are deeply grateful for the mentorship, friendship, and rich cultural exchange that has enriched our Franciscan family."

He underscored the friars' commitment to continuing the mission with compassion, peace, and service.

Councillor Fr Patience Tigere OFM described the

moment as both historic and deeply spiritual. "This is not just a new chapter for the Friars in Zimbabwe; it is a celebration of faith, community, and the enduring spirit of service that defines our mission."

The laity also expressed admiration for the milestone.

Mrs Chindove, chairperson of the Diocesan Pastoral Council, congratulated the friars for their progress and for their long-standing work in pastoral ministry, education, and healthcare within and beyond the Archdiocese of Harare.

Mr Matindike of St Francis Xavier Centre described the event as "spectacular and marvelous," saying he was inspired to see the local friars embrace their new autonomy with confidence.

From St Francis Mission in Nharira, Mrs Mangara celebrated the organisational excellence of the event and said the birth of the new entity signified "progress and the capability of the local friars to stand on their own."

The Custody of the Good Shepherd expressed heartfelt appreciation to benefactors, parishioners, partners, and friends whose support made the launch possible.

With the establishment of the Autonomous Custody, the Franciscan presence in Zimbabwe begins a new chapter—one built on decades of mission, sacrifice, and unwavering service to the People of God.



The liturgy proceeds

Building a synodal Church without losing Catholic identity, Bishop Ncube tells Hwange leaders

By Quegas Mutale in Hwange



Bishop Raphael Ncube, the bishop of Hwange, sprinkles the congregation with holy water.

Hwange- Bishop Raphael Ncube spoke at length about the implementation of the synod on synodality during the 2025 Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Hwange Diocesan Pastoral Council, held at the Marian Shrine on 28 November 2025.

Three AGMs ran concurrently: the Junior Diocesan Pastoral Council, the Senior Diocesan Pastoral Council, and the Presbyteral Council. The meetings took place from 24 to 29 November 2025.

His Lordship Bishop Ncube encouraged diocesan leaders, reminding them that the spirit of synodality must continue to guide the Church. He cautioned, however, that not everything should be carried out "in the name of synodality," emphasising that certain matters require the bishop's review before implementation.

"The way we are doing this meeting is synodal. The way we are seated is the way they did during the assemblies," said Bishop Ncube.

He noted that bishops selected from across Africa had discussed the pastoral care of people in polygamous situations during the synod sessions in Rome. Bishop Ncube explained that any formal response will first be announced at the bishops' conference before being communicated to dioceses and parishes.

He warned leaders against interpreting synodality as permission to legitimise issues contrary to Church teaching. Using polygamy as an example, he said: "If it appeared in the consultations, it

does not mean that it is right. The position of the Church stands."

Turning to concerns about declining church attendance, Bishop Ncube observed that many Catholics are leaving because some communities have abandoned authentic Catholic liturgical practice.

"We may lose genuine Catholics by following those who may leave the Church tomorrow," he said, urging leaders not to compromise Catholic liturgy in an attempt to appeal to people "who may not be fully Catholic."

"There is a lot that touches us. The synod allows the Catholic Church to be. It says: love me or hate me, I will remain Catholic."

He added that the Catholic Church in the United States is currently experiencing growth "because it is seen to be the one upholding the Catholic tradition."

Bishop Ncube encouraged leaders to cherish and strengthen what the Church already possesses rather than imitate neighbouring churches or denominations. He invited them to reflect on whether those who leave the Catholic Church remain where they go, for how long, and whether those churches endure.

"Let's be the flame of the Church. Let us love the beauty of the Church," he urged.

Reinforcing his message, he reminded leaders that Jesus Himself "was not loved by everyone," adding: "If we want to impress the world, we are not the Church of Christ. Let's preserve the Catholic Church."

He stressed that even as the synod is implemented, the identity and integrity of the Catholic Church must be safeguarded, especially as other churches try to imitate her.

Alongside the AGM proceedings, Bishop Ncube led a Mass for the faithful departed of Hwange Diocese on 28 November 2025.

He blessed the cemetery for priests at the Marian Shrine and then blessed the tomb of Fr Brighton Munkuli, who died in a road traffic accident in July 2025.

He also blessed the graves of the laity buried in the cemetery, as well as the memorial sites for all deaneries.

Strength in every woman's story

By Tricia Mlambo



Chido Govera addresses the audience

Harare- Women from across Zimbabwe gathered at Arrupe Jesuit University on 21 November for a landmark conference confronting one of the nation's most urgent crises: gender-based violence (GBV).

What unfolded was not merely a meeting, but a moving tapestry of testimony, hard statistics, artistic expression, and a powerful call to action reminding every attendee that ending GBV is a daily commitment, not an annual campaign.

The atmosphere was heavy with emotion but alive with hope as participants shared personal stories and listened to testimonies of resilience. Organisers emphasised that empowerment is not an event but a journey built through community, mentorship, and continued engagement.

"The invited women are now part of our community," Mrs Chikwekwete said.

"We will continue to engage them in future programmes, track the impact of projects inspired by this event, and identify partnerships that can further women's empowerment."

The guest of honour Chido Govera set the tone with a deeply personal narrative story mirroring the experiences of countless Zimbabwean women shaped by cultural expectations of silence, obedience, and early marriage.

"I think my own life story is a typical story for many young people, women especially," she said.

"We are often burdened by the duty of care and society views us as maybe not as worthy, not as belonging as the other gender." Accepting the invitation to speak, she said, was an act of responsibility.

"If I am invited to a conference that aims to sensitize the community and to make efforts to end gender-based violence, then I want to be there because I want to make sure that what was happening to me as a young girl does not continue to happen to women."

Once constrained by cultures that sought to define her life, she said she had broken free.

"Today, I'm not the same little girl who has to ask for permission. Today I can stand for myself and I hope to stand up for other women as well."

Her story intertwined with that of Loveness, an ordinary woman from Bemiswa whose small but courageous acts of protection changed her life. "Loveness did not need to receive any special funding to stand up for me the way she did," she reflected.

"All of us can do something in our families, in our communities, in our churches, in our institutions. Every person, everywhere, has the power to act to protect, to empower, and to end gender-based violence."

Mrs Kapuya, representing Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions, delivered sobering facts that grounded the emotional testimonies in the stark reality of Zimbabwe's GBV landscape.

"Do we have peace in Zimbabwe? Do we say we are at peace because we are not at war?" she asked. "It's said there is freedom of speech but is there really freedom after speech?"

Her presentation revealed alarming patterns: Between January and June, 2,043 women were documented as victims of human rights violations nearly half of all victims reported.

Violations included assault, abduction, displacement, intimidation, sexual harassment, and politically motivated violence.

1,849 GBV-related incidents were recorded between 2024 and 2025.

Emerging forms of harm, sextortion, cyber harassment, spiritual abuse, and gendered dis-



A healthy woman exercises her vocals says Hope Masike

formation are increasing. Her questions lingered long after she stepped down, urging participants to reflect on the systems that silence women even when institutions claim to protect them. Dr Amos Muyambo challenged the audience to rethink the social and religious structures that reinforce harmful norms. "Religion is a very useful tool in Zimbabwe," he said, "because most people believe in religion and it can shape people's moral behaviour. Let's take advantage of religion, but let's also take that religion outside, because most men don't go to church." He urged men to embrace emotional honesty rather than suppressing pain under the weight of cultural expectations. "It's not being weak to share your emotions. Men must also cry, must express their pain. These are the things that are making people hate." The Ministry of Women Affairs reminded participants that many victims remain silent out of fear, stigma, and the risk of retaliation. Yet efforts continue to raise awareness and provide financial, legal, and emotional support. The conference interwove the gravity of its discussions with artistic performances by Hope Masike, Arrupe Arts and Culture, The Band, and Brian Nyahuma. Music and poetry became a language of healing a visceral reminder that GBV is not merely a social or legal issue but a deeply human one. Chido Govera highlighted economic empowerment as a crucial pathway to safety and dignity, referencing the Future of Hope Foundation's

programme training women in mushroom farming. "Nothing is waste. Maize stocks are waste, but in the right hands they can become valuable," she said. "It's the same with people the right support, mentorship, and opportunities can transform lives." Organisers announced concrete outcomes from the conference: The Future of Hope Foundation committed to training selected women in mushroom farming. CABS expressed interest in future collaborations. Networks were formed to promote mentorship and women-led community responses. "Women love to share their stories for the benefit of others," an organiser said. "Gender-based violence is multi-faceted physical, economic, psychological, and sexual and the response must be equally multi-faceted." As the day drew to a close, a powerful message echoed across the room: "GBV activism must be an everyday thing. Nothing is waste. Every story matters. Every effort counts. Stand up, speak out, protect, and empower. Be a Loveness in someone's life. The change starts with you. The change starts today." Participants left not only inspired but accountable, reminded that the fight against gender-based violence is both personal and collective. As the Chido Govera concluded: "When enough of us step forward, share our stories, mentor others, and create platforms for women, we do not only impact individual lives, we change our society for the better." The work, she said, does not end with a conference it begins anew every single day.



A cross section of participants

Fr Tryvis Moyo warns seminarians against distorted forms of faith

By Johnston Mlambo



Fr. Tryvis Moyo delivers his homily

Harare- The Secretary General of the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops' Conference (ZCBC), Fr Tryvis Moyo CSsR, has urged seminarians to guard against forms of faith that lose their grounding in truth and community, warning that not all expressions of belief remain faithful to the Gospel.

He said this during the Mass that opened the Sessio Academica on 15 November 2025 at St John Fisher and Thomas More Major Seminary, Chishawasha.

Preaching on the Gospel of the day from Luke 18:1-8, which ends with the question, "When the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?", Fr Moyo said the Lord would indeed find faith — but not necessarily the kind that leads to salvation.

"Dear brothers and sisters, make no mistake about it, when He comes there will be faith," he said. "But, what kind of a faith, we don't know. It might be a distorted faith, it might be a faith that has deviated from the things that really matter, it might be a faith that has lost its taste."

Drawing on his years in formation work with both future priests and religious, Fr Moyo said he always looked for three basic signs in a candidate in today's changing world: Does he have an intelligible faith? Can he be lived with? Can he do a day's work?

Quoting St Alphonsus Liguori, he warned against confusing piety with maturity.

"There is nothing as dangerous as a stupid and pious seminarian. With time piety fades away and stupidity remains."

He then unpacked what he called "an intelligible faith."

"An intelligible faith is one that does not seek to please, neither does it seek to punish," he said. "But it journeys, it accompanies, it soothes, it reaches out, it knows when to push them, it knows when to caress them, it knows when to support and it knows when to leave them... An intelligent faith knows when to present things to God and when to leave things in the hands of God and wait for God to decide."

Turning to the second criterion, Fr Moyo said a priest's "day's work" goes far beyond simply celebrating Mass.

"A day's work for a priest is more than just saying Mass," he said. "Does he educate himself, does he read, does he love them [the people he serves and the community he stays in]? Dear brothers and sisters, if you do not love them you have no right to preach. If we love them we will serve them. And if we serve them out of love that does make a difference."

He also stressed the importance of being someone who can live in community.

"We are men and women meant for a community," he said. "If the spirit of a community is not within us, how can we build communities?"

At the same time, he cautioned that the world's problems are not caused only by ignorance.

"I must be quick to qualify that some of the challenges we have in the world and in our country are not caused by stupidity but sometimes by demagogues, intelligent men who have not



Seminarians sing from the heart.



A cross section of congregants

integrated their lives into communities, who have no emotional intelligence,” he said.

“They live in a world of ideas and they think ideas are a reality. The invitation is to have our feet on the ground and if we have our feet on the ground our discernment begins with our experiences.”

Fr Moyo told the congregation that the *Sessio Academica* — with its intellectual presentations — should help bridge faith and reason, but must never be reduced to mere academic display.

“As we come today to celebrate this open day they will showcase what happens in the seminary,” he said. “One of the things that will stimulate us are the intellectual presentations.

“These intellectual discussions are supposed to stimulate us, to get us excited so that we can further engage with what we have heard and test it in our lives.

“I don’t think it’s what the seminary should be known for, to say they present nice papers. Anybody can do that. There is more that is demanded of us. To say: how do we bring together faith and reason?”

“If we can bring the two together in such a manner that they can speak to each other and enrich each other, then there is hope for the people of God. They stand a chance of being nourished by their pastors.”

Before concluding his homily, Fr Moyo turned to what he called “something worrisome in the Church in Zimbabwe”: growing liturgical innovations that risk shifting the focus away from God. “When it comes to liturgy it is our public worship rendered to God and the focus is not the priest, the focus is not the people of God. The focus is God,” he said.

“We are beginning to see what I can call idolatry in liturgy where priests who are formed well, who are instructed well, who know what they should be doing but, in search of doing the extra more that the laity are looking for to please them, they try to be innovative.

“They become [entertainers], and when they do that idolatry kicks in. You become a celebrity — that priest with an exciting Mass, that priest with many jokes.”

He reminded the congregation of Pope Benedict XVI’s teaching:

“You will remember what Pope Benedict says, there is no place for an applause in liturgy.

“Because in the liturgy we encounter the Mighty One, in the liturgy we are rendering what we can give to God, and in the liturgy God is the focus.

“God instructs, feeds, cares and nourishes people, and at times we are challenged in the liturgy. How can you be challenged and you clap hands?”

For the seminarians, the message was clear: the



Fr. Tryvis leads the doxology.



Time for communion

priest they are preparing to become must have a faith that thinks, a heart that loves, hands that work, and a manner of celebrating the liturgy that points always to God — never to himself.

The homily flowed naturally into a symbolic offertory procession that visually expressed what priestly formation seeks to achieve.

As the gifts were brought to the altar, seminarians processed up the aisle in turn, each dressed to represent one of the pillars of formation and speaking briefly as they walked about what that pillar means.

The first pair highlighted that “holiness starts on good humanity.”

They explained that this pillar focuses on shaping the person behind the priest, helping him become mature and balanced.

Human formation, they noted, has two main arms: manual work and sport.

Manual work, they said, instils the dignity of la-

bour and reminds seminarians that holiness is found not only in the chapel but also in daily tasks.

“Through the simplicity of working with our hands we learn humility, endurance and compassion, becoming people who know that the greatest work is recognisable in the eyes of God.”

Sport, they added, forms not just muscles but character. Both arms converge in discipline, “the crown of human formation.”

Next came the one symbolising spiritual formation — the heart of seminary life — by which a seminarian becomes a man of prayer rooted in the Eucharist, Scripture, and personal intimacy with Christ.

A seminarian representing intellectual formation spoke of the “systematic development of the mind” that equips future priests:

“to be articulate in matters of faith, to engage with contemporary issues and to preach the Gospel with clarity.”

Finally came the one representing pastoral formation — the stage where everything comes together in service to God’s people.

He explained that pastoral formation prepares seminarians:

“to be close to the people, to listen, to accompany and to serve.”

The carefully choreographed offertory made clear that what was being placed on the altar was not only bread and wine, but the entire work of priestly formation — offered to God for purification and fruitfulness.



Seminarians dialogue with the Lord after communion.

Missionary Daughters of Calvary mark 75 years of dedicated service

By Leonard Ncube in Hwange



Part of the large congregation present

Hwange- The Missionary Daughters of Calvary (CMFC) are this year celebrating 75 years of service in Zimbabwe, amid growing calls for the religious congregation to be recognised as co-founders of Christianity in the country, particularly in Hwange Diocese.

Known in three languages—Italian (Congregazione Missionarie Figlie del Calvario), Spanish (Congregación Misioneras Hijas del Calvario), and English (Congregation of the Missionary Daughters of Calvary)—the CMFC was founded in Mexico in 1885.

Their diamond jubilee was celebrated with a special Mass at the CMFC Mother House in Cheshou, near Marist Brothers Secondary School in Dete, Hwange Diocese.

Hwange Bishop, Rt. Rev. Raphael Mabuza Ncube, presided over the celebration, joined by Bishop Emeritus Albert Serrano of Hwange, Bishop Eusebius Nyathi of Gokwe, Bishop Rudolf Nyandoro of Gweru, and Bishop Raphael Mweempwa of Monze Diocese in Zambia.

The CMFC Sisters serve in Hwange, Gokwe, Harare and Bulawayo, as well as in Monze Diocese in Zambia.

The Missionary Daughters of Calvary first came to Zimbabwe at the invitation of the Spanish Missionary Institute (SMI), which was already established in the then Southern Rhodesia.

They are widely remembered for their pastoral presence and humanitarian support during the liberation war.

Starting with five pioneer Sisters, the congregation has grown to 104 Zimbabwean Sisters today. Their journey began on 22 October 1950, when they opened their first mission house in the then Wankie Diocese, beginning a ministry that has flourished for 75 years.

The first Sisters began their work at St Mary's in Hwange, laying the foundation for a legacy that would expand rapidly. Between 1954 and 1966, they opened six new convents at Holy Family, Kana, Tshongokwe, Kariangwe, Sacred Heart, and Chireya.

The first Zimbabwean Sisters completed their novitiate in Spain and returned as professed Sisters in 1969, after which the first novitiate was opened in Dete.

A house was later established in Bulawayo in 1975 to serve as a support base for the mission. In his homily, Bishop Ncube described the CMFC as founders of Christianity in Hwange, urging the congregation to recognise its central role in shaping the Diocese.

"Today we are celebrating 75 years of the co-founders of the Diocese of Bulawayo and Hwange. I want the Sisters to understand themselves as founders of the Diocese of Hwange,



A mixed congregation follows the proceedings

and this celebration has to be understood from that point of view," he said.

"When the history of the Church is told, your congregation deserves an independent chapter. You are a huge part of the history of the Church in Zimbabwe and in Hwange. We are here as your sons and daughters to celebrate the gift through which you gave birth to this diocese."

He commended the Sisters for standing with communities during difficult moments marked by war, droughts, and hardship, adding:

"After 75 years, let this celebration be a special moment of recognising you in a unique way. Let it be an assurance that you are with us—and will remain with us."

The celebration featured a presentation on the congregation's history and its contributions to education, healthcare, and pastoral work. Messages were delivered by various dignitaries, including the Speaker of Parliament, Advocate

Jacob Mudenda, whose speech was read on his behalf by Fr Mgcini Moyo, the national pastoral coordinator.

Throughout their 75 years of service, the CMFC have significantly contributed to community development through institutions such as Sunrise Orphanage in Binga, Tshongokwe Hospital in Lupane, Dete Eye Clinic, Holy Redeemer Nursery, Dete Old People's Home, as well as several pastoral centres and social outreach programmes.

Bishop Emeritus Serrano encouraged the congregation to remain steadfast in their vocation.

"Thank you for what you have done and what you will continue to do. May the Lord increase your numbers and make you holier every day," he said, recalling the early collaboration between the SMIs and the CMFC.

CMFC Country Director, Sr Emilia Zivavose, said the Sisters remain committed to responding to modern social challenges.

"We are involved in many ministries—social work, old age homes, orphanages, education, health. We are not exempt from the challenges of life, but we believe that prayer gives us the strength to continue. Everything we do is rooted in prayer," she said.

The event also featured poetry and traditional imbube music from the Ingonyama Dance Group of Dete, adding cultural vibrancy to the celebration.

The anniversary theme,

"75 Years of Faith, Hope and Love in the Spirit of Redemption,"

speaks to a legacy of courage, evangelisation, and unwavering service to the People of God.



For certain hearts, the celebration lingers

Hwange youth makes history with first Tonga set-piece

By Leonard Ncube in Bulawayo and SOCCOM Reporter



Omega Mugande, the set piece composer

Bulawayo- Omega Mugande, a youth from Hwange Diocese who composed the 2025 St Cecilia National Music Festival set-piece Tonga song, has challenged other young people to take an active role in composing music for the Church.

He spoke in a brief interview during the festival held at Hartsfield Rugby Grounds in the Archdiocese of Bulawayo, where deanery choirs from the Archdiocese of Harare dominated the competition. The day also saw the Zimbabwe Catholic Association for Sacred Music (ZICASAM) honouring several legendary composers who pioneered Catholic sacred music in local languages, as the Church celebrated both emerging and seasoned musical talent.

Mugande's song *Lweendo Lwachilangililo*—the first Tonga set-piece in ZICASAM's 21-year history—marked a significant milestone for both Hwange Diocese and the association. The national competitions began in 2005.

"I composed the song *Lweendo Lwachilangililo*, which means Pilgrims of Hope, after realising the need to remind Christians about how they should live a Godly life," said Mugande, a member of Holy Family Parish in Hwange Urban Deanery.

"The song encourages us to have hope in the Lord and what we should do as Christians in order to see the Kingdom of Heaven. For my song to be the set-piece this year, a Tonga song for

that matter, it's a blessing for me and it's really a milestone. I hope it acts as a motivation to all young Catholics to say anything is possible in life."

Although drumming the Tonga rhythm is often challenging for choirs outside Hwange Diocese, Mugande said he was impressed with how ensembles mastered both the melody and the beat.

"I am grateful. Thank you very much for the presentation the choirs did. I am sure it was quite an experience for all of us and a challenge to drum the Tonga beat, but they all did well," he said.

In a written interview with SOCCOM after the event, ZICASAM chairperson Mr Tafara Mangoma said the competition "showcased an inspiring level of musicianship and dedication."

"The choirs delivered powerful renditions, and the spiritual atmosphere was truly uplifting for everyone present," he noted, adding that the Jubilee of Choirs held on the Friday at the Basilica "was the best-ever event for choristers," with a smoothly flowing programme and strong participation.

Asked if he was satisfied with the standard of competition, Mr Mangoma said the bar was now very high, with many choirs delivering standout performances.



Outer City and Marondera deaneries' choir, Harare - the champions - showcase their rare talent



Northwest Deanery Bulawayo on stage

"The competition has reached a level where every ensemble strives for first place, making adjudication extremely challenging," he said, while noting that the intensity also highlighted areas for further growth.

He pointed out concerns regarding the venue and the PA system, saying both contributed to logistical challenges and even momentary confusion near the VIP tent. He suggested that, in future, the Church should consider partnering with Gweru Diocese, which has a larger, more suitable venue for national competitions. Mr Mangoma also encouraged greater repertoire diversity, noting noticeable repetition in some own-choice pieces. Broadening the range of liturgical and cultural works, he said, would enrich the festival even further.

On the reduced number of participating choirs, he explained that the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops' Conference (ZCBC) had directed that participation be limited to 30 choirs for practical reasons. Three choirs — one from Gokwe and two from Chinhoyi — later withdrew due to transport and logistical challenges arising from the prevailing economic climate.

Looking ahead, he confirmed that Mutare Diocese will host the 2026 St Cecilia competition, with the set-piece coming from Masvingo Diocese.

Hwange Bishop Raphael Mabuza Ncube presided over both the Mass and the music festival, officially launching the day's proceedings.

Archbishop Alex Thomas of Bulawayo and Bishop Rudolf Nyandoro of Gweru later joined the celebrations.

During the event, Bishop Ncube presented tokens of appreciation to legendary composers honoured for their contributions between 1962 and 1980.

Among those recognised were Mr Shamu Maurunge of Masvingo, who began composing in 1962; Mr Joseph Makaure, also of Masvingo, known for *Haiwa Mambo*; and J. K. Dzingai from Harare Archdiocese, composer of *Imi Murimuny-yu Wapasi*.

Others included Mr Nezungai of Masvingo (*Garirira Mwari Mweya Wangu*); Mr Gambiza of Gweru (*Mambo Isimba Rangu*); Mr Severino Shiri (*Tirivanhu VaMwari*); and Mrs Nyikayaramba, also from Masvingo.

From Hwange, Mr Trinity Chipembele and Mr Onisimos Mpala (*Isu Tose Timuli Yenu Mwali*) were honoured, while Bulawayo contributors Mrs Lucy Nkomo (*Themba Inkosi Nhliziyo Yami*) and Mr Noel Lunga (*Woza Kithi Moya Ongcwele*), who both began composing in 1978, also received recognition.

Bishop Ncube reminded participants that, although the competition was intense, the heart of St Cecilia celebrations lies in worship.

He said the festival should be seen as "a show where everyone is a winner" because each choir sings to glorify God.

He also expressed gratitude to the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops' Conference for its continued support of the festival.



Bishop Raphael, the bishop chair of the ZCBC pastoral centre, hands over the trophy.



Adjudicators decide the fate of the competing choirs

ZICASAM chairperson Mr Mangoma acknowledged that adjudication had been "very tough" because of the narrow margin in performance quality.

Competition results were as follows:

Outer City, South West, North West, and Inner City deaneries from the Archdiocese of Harare took first to fourth place respectively, with Mutare placing fifth.

Positions 6–10 went to: Kwekwe, Chirumhanzu, Masvingo Urban, South East Chivhu, and Hwange (named Most Improved Choir).

Positions 11–20 were awarded to: Southern Deanery, Bulawayo Eastern Deanery, South Africa, Zvishavane, Chinhoyi Eastern, Chitungwiza, Soweto (Bulawayo), Gweru, Masvingo South, and Mhondoro.

Positions 21–28 were taken by: Lowveld,

Mwenezi, Gutu, Gokwe (named Most Committed Choir), Chivi, Zaka, North West Bulawayo, and Harare North.

North West Harare was named the biggest urban choir, while Chirumhanzu received the award for biggest rural choir. The Best Female Conductor award went to a conductor from Outer City Marondera, and the Best Male Conductor came from South West Harare.

The adjudication panel comprised Fr Blessing Gondo (Mutare Diocese), Mr Godfrey Gondo (Harare Archdiocese), Mr Taruvinga Mutoda (Gweru Diocese), Mr Shuro Chihava (Masvingo Diocese), Mr Sylvester Chisale (Chinhoyi Diocese) and Mr Newman Dube (Hwange Diocese).

The otherwise joyful and prayerful celebration was overshadowed by two serious incidents involving choristers from the Archdiocese of Harare, both of whom sustained broken limbs in separate accidents.

1. Charmaine Mandigona – Inner City Deanery Choir, University of Zimbabwe student Charmaine accidentally stepped into a hole and suffered two fractures in her leg. She was rushed to UBH Hospital, where X-rays confirmed the fractures. She has since been transferred to Harare for further medical attention and will undergo surgery to have an intramedullary rod inserted.
2. Rudolf Chimudzi – Inner City Deanery Choir, Rhodesville Parish Rudolf was involved in a hit-and-run accident near the venue shortly after the event. He also



South West deanery - Harare performs

sustained two fractures in his leg. After undergoing surgery and having an intramedullary rod inserted, he is now plastered and recovering at home.

The Church community has been encouraged to keep both choristers in prayer as they recover, even as the memory of the festival remains one of faith, music, and the continued growth of sacred song in Zimbabwe.

Meanwhile, leaders of the Archdiocese of Harare Sacred Catholic Music Ministry met Archbishop Robert Christopher Ndlovu to present the trophies won at the festival and to update him on developments in the Music Ministry. Speaking to SOCCOM, the Ministry's chairperson, Mr Stanley Mlambo, said:

"The meeting with the Archbishop was held to update him on developments in the Music Ministry since our last engagement... We briefed him on the Bindura September 20 competitions, where an unfortunate incident resulted in three fatalities and five injuries."

He said the discussion also reviewed the 2025 St Cecilia celebrations, the strong performances of Harare choirs, and the honour of presenting the trophies to His Grace, with conductors

also taking photographs with him.

Mr Mlambo said the Archbishop emphasised discipline at all music gatherings, unity between composers and choir masters, and his joy at the excellent results achieved.

Reflecting on Harare's dominance, he said: "As chairperson, I was overjoyed by this milestone. Together with my counterpart, the Chairperson for Composers, we visited all our deaneries rallying our choirs behind the motto: 'Eight Choirs, One Voice, One Mission.' What we witnessed in Bulawayo was remarkable."

However, he also raised concerns:

"The competition started late, the PA system performed poorly, and the seating arrangements were inadequate. Choirs performed under direct sunlight, and the programme became chaotic. There is a great deal of work required to improve how we host our competitions."

He echoed Mr Mangoma's assessment of the high standard of competition:

"It was evident that choirs invested significant time and resources. My hope is that the same standard we witnessed on stage will also be reflected in how our choirs prepare for liturgies in our parishes."





Arrupe cultural night celebrates Africa's heritage with a call to dignity and hope

By Thelma Chiomba and Vianney Niyonsenga

Harare- Arrupe Jesuit University burst into colour, music, and shared heritage on 8 November as students, staff, and guests gathered for the 2025 Arrupe Cultural Night — an annual celebration that has become one of the institution's most vibrant traditions. Held under the theme "Building a Culture of Dignity and Hope Through Our Cultural Heritage," this year's event transformed the campus into a living mosaic of African identity. More than 20 nationalities were represented, and the university grounds brimmed with anticipation as the sun set, marking the beginning of an evening rich in tradition, performance, and cultural storytelling.

The opening ceremony set an energetic tone. Performers in striking traditional attire filled the stage with rhythmic dances, expressive dramas, and ancestral songs that carried the weight of generations. Each act offered its own window into the histories and values that shape African communities.

One of the evening's standout moments was the performance by Mbira Dzenharira, whose deep, meditative tones immersed the audience in Zimbabwe's spiritual and musical heritage.

The resonance of the mbira — at once ancient and timeless — drew listeners into a shared experience of memory, meaning, and cultural pride.

From West African griot melodies to dance traditions from across the continent, the performances celebrated the diversity and unity that define Arrupe's student community. The night became both a celebration and a reflection: a recognition that cultural identity is not static but a living source of dignity, resilience, and hope.



A group performs traditional dance



Lost in the moment

Beyond entertainment, the Cultural Night has long carried a social mission: to support disadvantaged students through educational assistance. This year's fundraising aim was to secure scholarships for several A-level students facing financial hardship. However, despite the strong turnout and enthusiastic participation, organisers acknowledged that event costs surpassed the income raised, leaving the scholarship goal unmet.

The shortfall cast a reflective shadow over an otherwise jubilant night, highlighting both the scale of need and the importance of solidarity within the wider community. Organisers expressed hope that individuals and partners moved by the event's vision would help support the scholarship initiative.

Those wishing to contribute toward the education fund may contact:

- Vianney Niyonsenga, Student Representative for Culture and Liturgy – 078 942 2263
- Thelma Chiromba, President of the Student Representative Committee – 078 186 5673
- Fr. Dominique Savio Habyarimana, Dean of Students – 078 999 0833

As the evening closed, one message remained clear: culture is more than celebration — it is a bridge of understanding, a source of identity, and a foundation for hope. Through events like the Arrupe Cultural Night, the university continues to cultivate a community where dignity is upheld, diversity is honoured, and the shared dream of uplifting future generations remains at the heart of its mission.



Mbira Dzenharira brings their magic to the gathering.

Becoming one: a historic union of Congregatio Jesu and IBVM

By Sr Charlene Makuzha, CJ and SOCCOM Reporter



A Group photo in front of the Basilica of Loyola

A moment long hoped for by generations of Mary Ward women has finally arrived. After centuries of shared origins but separate canonical paths, the Congregatio Jesu (CJ) and the Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary (IBVM – Loreto) have officially merged to form one congregation, realising the prophetic dream of their foundress, Venerable Mary Ward. The union became legally and canonically effective at 12:00 PM CET on 4 November 2025, and was publicly proclaimed in a deeply moving Eucharistic celebration in Loyola, Spain, presided over by Fr Arturo Sosa SJ, Superior General of the Society of Jesus.

The merging of the two congregations brings together about 1,800 sisters across the world, united by a shared charism, Ignatian spirituality, and a commitment to education, justice, and the empowerment of women. The celebrations in Loyola expressed not only the joy of a long-awaited homecoming, but also the gratitude of a global family finally becoming one.

Speaking with visible emotion, Sr Veronica Fuhrmann CJ, General Superior of the newly united congregation, described the moment as “a fulfilment of Mary Ward’s dream.” She noted:

“We are very happy that we can finally fulfil Mary Ward’s vision of a united congregation of women religious with the same constitutions as those of the Society of Jesus. Seeing this union realised not only spiritually but also canonically

fills us with great joy and gratitude.”

Her sentiments were echoed by Sr Carmel Swords CJ, the outgoing Institute Leader of the IBVM, who stressed the significance of unity in today’s world.

“In a fractured world, our members have freely chosen to become one congregation as a witness to Christ’s gospel message of peace and harmony,” she said. “Together, we are stronger, and we move forward filled with missionary zeal.”

In his homily, Fr Arturo Sosa SJ reminded the sisters that their mission is not to take Jesus to the margins as if he were absent, but to recognise Christ already present among the poor and excluded.

“Our mission,” he emphasised, “is to seek Jesus where he already is, and to help others discover his presence.”

He went on to underline the continued relevance of the vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience in a world marked by consumerism, broken relationships, and ego-driven pursuits.

The Zimbabwe–Mozambique Region was represented at the celebrations by Sr Elizabeth Gotore CJ, Sr Tendai Chirhomoh CJ, and Mrs L. Dziripi, Chairperson of the Friends of Mary Ward Association. For them, the experience was unforgettable. Speaking on behalf of the trio, Sr Tendai said:

“I am deeply grateful for the opportunity to witness this significant milestone of our congregation. Echoing our foundress, we sing, ‘glory, glory, glory.’ Our journey to this moment as pilgrims of hope has inspired this occasion with profound meaning. It reaffirms our shared mission and honours the legacy we hold in common.”

She added that this moment would “serve as a source of renewal and growth” and stand as “a powerful testament to the Gospel.”

Reflecting on behalf of the region, Sr Maria Goretti CJ, the Regional Superior, described the union as “a dream come true after many years of separation due to external forces.” She recalled witnessing the petition for merger by the IBVM



Merger Mass auditorium

during the CJ General Congregation in 2022 in Nemi, Rome.

Her words captured the depth of the sisters' joy: "We went through many years of prayer and reflection preparing us for this day. When the CJ and IBVM leaders met in Loyola last year, it was like two families preparing for a wedding feast. Today is that wedding feast — when we finally became one."

Acknowledging that new beginnings come with their own challenges, she added with hope,

"Like in marriage, there are excitements, fears, expectations, and hope — but we trust that the Lord who has begun this work will bring it to fulfilment. We are now one Institute of Mary Ward, women geared for mission with new energy and strength as pilgrims of hope."

To fully appreciate the significance of this union, one must look back to the extraordinary life of Mary Ward. Born in 1585 into a recusant Catholic family in England, she envisioned a form of religious life far ahead of her time — one that allowed women the apostolic freedom and mobility of the Jesuits, rooted in the Constitutions of St Ignatius. Her vision was met with misunderstanding and opposition. In 1631, her Institute was suppressed, and she was imprisoned. Yet she remained steadfast, convinced that women were capable of doing "great things" in service of the Gospel. The spirit she ignited endured, sustained by her companions and kept alive in communities across Europe.

Over the centuries, despite operating separately due to historical developments, the CJ and IBVM sisters continued to share the same mission and spirituality. Their paths intertwined more closely in recent decades through joint ministries, for-

mation programmes, and collaboration in social justice and education. Discernment toward union intensified in 2019, and even during the COVID-19 pandemic, the sisters found creative ways to pray, meet, and reflect together. The decisive moment came in 2022, when both General Congregations unanimously affirmed their desire to unite. After further global discernment, the IBVM members cast their canonical vote for merger on 31 July 2025, preparing the way for the historic union now celebrated.

Across Africa, the newly united congregation continues its mission in Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Kenya, Tanzania, Ghana, South Sudan, Zambia, and South Africa, serving in education, social apostolates, pastoral ministry, ecological justice, and spiritual accompaniment. The values of freedom, justice, sincerity, and joy — so central to Mary Ward's spirituality — remain the guiding light of their ministry.

For many sisters, the union feels like a homecoming. It is a moment of profound graced fulfilment — a realisation of Mary Ward's conviction that "there is no such difference between men and women that women may not do great things," and that the Institute she founded would one day flourish despite all obstacles.

As the celebrations in Loyola concluded, there was a shared sense that this is not simply the end of a long process, but the beginning of a renewed mission. Or, in the words of Sr Maria Goretti,

"This day was made by the Lord; we rejoice and are glad in it."

The Mary Ward family across the world now steps forward as one, united in heart, mission, and purpose — ready to "do good, and do it well," just as their foundress desired.



Cheers to the merged congregation

From pilgrimages to pastoral pressures: dioceses table their year

By Fr. Johnston Z. Mlambo



Pastoral directors plan the closure of the jubilee year ceremony

Masvingo- Diocesan pastoral directors and vicars from across Zimbabwe offered a wide-ranging reflection on their pastoral year, sharing both encouraging signs of growth and persistent challenges shaping parish life.

These insights emerged during the National Pastoral Team meeting held at Gokomere Training Centre in the Diocese of Masvingo from 12–13 November 2025, where participants gathered to assess the year, share experiences, and prepare for the next phase of the Synod on Synodality.

From reports shared during the meeting, diocesan presentations revealed a Church that remains active and spiritually vibrant despite pressing economic and structural realities.

In Bulawayo, catechetical formation advanced significantly and Jubilee celebrations were well attended, although overlapping events forced the postponement of several important activities.

In Harare, the handover of Mutemwa Shrine from the Franciscans to the diocese and an unusually high number of priestly ordinations marked strong pastoral growth, though the sheer size of the archdiocese continues to present coordination challenges.

Gweru highlighted successful pilgrimages and

growing enrolment in catechetical programmes, even as newly formed deaneries continue to find their footing.

Mutare reported dynamic Jubilee celebrations and pastoral visitations, but also raised concerns about an overly congested pastoral calendar.

Chinhoyi recorded strong guild participation and noted progress in developing diocesan shrines, while continuing to navigate the demands of serving a predominantly rural and geographically diverse region.

Masvingo celebrated the Jubilee of more than 300 voluntary catechists and an active pastoral life, though the diocesan spread of small and satellite communities remains a pastoral challenge.

Gokwe advanced training in synodality and lay ministries, yet highlighted limited resources in rural parishes as an obstacle to broader mobilisation.

Hwange reported high levels of participation in diocesan and deanery pilgrimages, along with solid catechetical formation, although long distances and rural terrain complicated attendance at centralised diocesan events.

Across the dioceses, several common patterns emerged.

Most reported strong participation in Jubilee activities, including pilgrimages to local and regional shrines.

Many dioceses noted improved coordination of synodal activities, though nearly all acknowledged that synodal teams formed during the consultation phase had fallen dormant and now need revival as the Church enters the implementation stage of the Synod on Synodality.

Pastoral fatigue, limited financial resources, and long travel distances—especially in rural areas—were repeatedly cited as challenges.

Concerns regarding liturgical irregularities were also shared across dioceses and were set aside for fuller discussion in a dedicated session later in the meeting.

Representing Hwange Diocese, Fr. Xolani Ndlovu said the meeting helped crystallise a “united approach and response to the common issues facing the Church in Zimbabwe.”

He described Hwange’s pastoral year as spiritually fruitful, noting the overwhelming turnout for diocesan and deanery pilgrimages.

However, he acknowledged the limitations imposed by the rural nature of the diocese, which restrict full participation in centralised events.

On the issue of liturgical abuses—one of the central concerns raised by the bishops—Fr. Xolani said that while Hwange has not experienced widespread violations, the diocese is alert to growing trends seen elsewhere.

He highlighted the problem of emotionally charged, Pentecostal-style preaching during major diocesan gatherings, noting how such sermons often go viral on social media.

Hwange continues to reserve preaching at major diocesan celebrations to the local ordinary, a practice Fr. Xolani strongly affirmed.

Preparations for the closure of the Jubilee Year, he said, were progressing well. “It is my hope that the faithful will experience the universality of the Church and be enriched during the closing Mass,” he added.

Fr. Xolani also welcomed the national pastoral office’s efforts to strengthen pastoral coordination. “All dioceses stand to benefit from the common projects proposed at the meeting,” he noted.

From Bulawayo, Fr. Limukani Ndlovu reported a rich and active pastoral year marked by numerous Jubilee events at parish, deanery, and arch-

diocesan levels.

Two major diocesan pilgrimages—to Empandeni and Our Lady of Fatima—drew overwhelming numbers of pilgrims, underscoring the laity’s renewed spiritual energy.

He said many parishioners also travelled to Rome for various Jubilee events.

The archdiocese strengthened catechetical formation through the Emthonjeni Pastoral Centre, which celebrated a milestone graduation of catechists in partnership with the Catholic University of Zimbabwe.

On the liturgical front, Fr. Limukani emphasised the need to continually remind priests and liturgy teams to uphold the dignity and edifying nature of the sacred liturgy.

Bulawayo is actively encouraging the use of Conversation in the Spirit in pastoral gatherings, though some clergy and laity remain hesitant about adopting synodal methods.

Fr. Limukani identified transparency, accountability, formation, evaluation, and harmonised decision-making structures as the most useful aspects of the “Pathways to Implementation of Synodality” document.

The archdiocese continues to prioritise mental wellness, holding its annual Mental Health Summit and encouraging parishes to establish mental wellness desks.

A collaboration with Fazenda is underway to identify a suitable site for a mental health rehabilitation centre.

Preparations for the Jubilee Year closure at the Minor Basilica are well advanced, with representatives from parish councils, ministries, commissions, and associations expected to attend.

The diocesan reflections presented at Gokomere painted a picture of a Church that is diverse in context yet united in pastoral mission.

From vibrant Jubilee participation to ongoing challenges of resources and distance, from concerns over liturgical discipline to renewed emphasis on synodality, Zimbabwe’s dioceses demonstrated both resilience and openness to growth.

As the Church enters the implementation phase of the Synod on Synodality, the insights shared at the meeting signalled a renewed commitment to strengthening pastoral life and walking together as one People of God.



Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops' Conference (ZCBC)

Advent Pastoral Message

28 November 2025

"Remember the Poor"

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

1. As we enter this holy season of Advent, we mark not only the beginning of a new liturgical year but also an invitation to a new beginning — a moment of grace in which we look back with gratitude and repentance, and look forward with faith and hope. Advent, with its spirit of expectation and renewal, calls us to pause and examine our lives as Christians and as a nation. It invites us to ask: *What kind of people are we becoming? What kind of Church and nation are we building? And do our relationships, choices, and public life reflect the dignity of Christ?*
2. This year's Advent comes at a particularly meaningful moment, as the Jubilee Year draws to a close and the universal Church reflects on the life and witness of Pope Francis, whom the Lord has called to eternal rest. We remember him with sorrow, for his absence is deeply felt; and with gratitude, for he was a shepherd who tirelessly urged the Church to be missionary, compassionate, and close to the poor. We also thank God for the gift of Pope Leo XIV, our new Holy Father, and we pray that the Spirit of wisdom will guide him to lead the Church with courage, tenderness, and mercy.
3. The Jubilee Year has been a profound season of grace and pilgrimage. Many faithful from Zimbabwe joined millions across the world in travelling to Rome and other holy sites, seeking renewal, communion, and deeper encounter with the Lord. We pray that these experiences rekindle faith, inspire repentance, and strengthen our collective commitment to justice, peace, and love.
4. As we prepare our hearts for the coming of Christ — born in poverty and simplicity — our thoughts naturally turn to the poor. Their cry is a painful reality we cannot ignore. These brothers and sisters, created in the image and likeness of God, remind us that the mystery of the Incarnation is inseparable from the mystery of human dignity. In *Dilexit Te*, Pope Leo XIV teaches: *"On the wounded faces of the poor, we see the suffering of the innocent and the suffering of Christ Himself"* (no. 9).
5. The poor are never a burden to be managed nor a problem to be ignored. They are part of our family — our mothers and fathers, sons and daughters, neighbours and friends. A nation's moral and spiritual health is measured by how it treats its most vulnerable members. In this regard, we still have work to do. Many of our people

continue to live without access to decent work, adequate food, quality education, or basic healthcare. Too often they face conditions that undermine their dignity — economic inequality, social exclusion, political manipulation, degrading labour practices, and the subhuman struggles that many endure simply to survive.

6. We are especially concerned about the suffering of Zimbabweans at the hands of certain foreign investors who exploit workers through unfair labour practices, appalling conditions, poor remuneration, or even violence. While we welcome investment that brings jobs, technology, and development, economic progress must never come at the expense of human dignity. At times, it appears that in our own land, certain investors are more protected than citizens. This ought not to be so. No person should live in fear — of losing their land, their natural inheritance, their job, or their safety. Every worker, from the miner in rural Zimbabwe to the factory worker in the city, deserves respect, fairness, and the full protection of the law.
7. Equally alarming is the reckless exploitation of natural resources — minerals, forests, wetlands, rivers — which are being depleted and polluted at an unsustainable rate. The earth, our common home, is crying out under the weight of human greed and neglect. Pope Francis reminds us in *Laudato Si'* that creation is a sacred gift entrusted to our care: *“The earth herself, burdened and laid waste, is among the most abandoned and maltreated of our poor”* (no. 2). When the environment is destroyed, it is the poor who suffer first and most — through loss of farmland, contaminated water, climate shocks, and displacement.
8. True development cannot arise from the ruin of ecosystems or the suffering of communities displaced by extractive industries. Ecological conversion must begin with the recognition that everything is interconnected: the well-being of people, the health of the environment, and the moral fabric of society. We therefore call for a renewed national commitment to responsible stewardship — where economic progress goes hand in hand with environmental protection, and where the needs of the poor are placed above the pursuit of profit.
9. The coming of Christ brings light to those who sit in darkness. It assures us that God walks with us — especially in moments of pain, uncertainty, and poverty. Advent teaches us to hope, not with empty optimism but with the conviction that God can renew both hearts and nations.
10. During this season of Advent, as Mary carries her unborn child, we raise our alarm at attempts by foreign organisations to force the evil of abortion upon our people and upon our culture of respect for all forms of life. We encourage all people of goodwill, especially our public representatives, to resist this pressure to withdraw protection from the most vulnerable members of our community, the unborn citizens of our community.
11. As shepherds of the Church in Zimbabwe, we call on all people of goodwill — leaders, workers, investors, and citizens alike — to protect and promote human dignity. Let this Advent be a turning point:

- where the poor are protected, not abandoned;
- Where life in its various forms is preserved, not destroyed;
- where governance seeks the good of the people, not the protection of a few.

12. Advent reminds us that true renewal begins in the heart. Each of us is called to conversion — to reject greed, indifference, and injustice, and to embrace humility, mercy, solidarity, and love. This transformation is possible if we heed the prophet’s call:

“Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight his paths... and all people shall see the salvation of God.” (Isaiah 40:3–5)

13. May this season deepen our love for the poor, strengthen our resolve to build a just and peaceful nation, and prepare our hearts for the coming of Christ, our light and our hope.

We wish you a blessed Advent season and a joyful Christmas.

Prayer:

Heavenly Father, as we prepare for the coming of your Son, awaken in us a renewed love and care for the poor. Send us your Holy Spirit, that in solidarity with them, our choices and decisions may protect and promote their God-given dignity. We ask this through Christ our Lord, who chose to identify with the poor. Amen.

+Rt. Rev. Paul Horan, O. Carm., Bishop of Mutare — ZCBC President

+Most Rev. R. C. Ndlovu, Archbishop of Harare — ZCBC Vice President

+Rt. Rev. Raphael M. M. Ncube, Bishop of Hwange — ZCBC Secretary & Treasurer

+Most Rev. Alex Thomas, S.V.D., Archbishop of Bulawayo

+Rt. Rev. Rudolf Nyandoro, Bishop of Gweru

+Rt. Rev. Raymond Mupandasekwa, C.Ss.R., Bishop of Masvingo & Administrator of Chinhoyi

+Rt. Rev. Eusebius J. Nyathi, Bishop of Gokwe

NEWS IN PICTURES









YOUTH CORNER

Forming leaders for change

By Benjamin T. Matsika



The group pose for a photo

Harare- From 27–30 November 2025, the Jesuit Youth Office, Southern Africa Province (SAP), in collaboration with the Zimbabwe Young Christian Students (ZYCS), hosted an inspiring leadership and advocacy training at Makumbi Pastoral Centre. Bringing together 45 young leaders from six high schools, the four-day programme created a vibrant space for formation, reflection, and empowerment.

The training sought to strengthen the capacity of ZYCS leaders—both at school and national levels—equipping them with the knowledge, confidence, and practical skills needed to become transformative leaders in their schools and communities.

Participants benefited from a rich line-up of dynamic speakers whose inputs deepened their understanding of leadership, Catholic identity, and social responsibility.

Mr. David Munhumeso Manenji, the first ZYCS President, delivered a heartfelt and informative session on the history of the Young Christian Students movement.

He outlined its mission, values, and long-standing role in youth empowerment.

His reflections helped students appreciate the legacy they inherit and the responsibility they carry in shaping society today.

Summarising the heart of his message, he noted that YCS “is an international, intergenerational movement that provides a platform for new generations to learn from previous generations globally.”

Shereen from the Youth Empowerment and Transformation Trust (YETT) unpacked the Students’ Academic Freedom Regional Advocacy Programme (SAFRAP), a vital initiative promoting student rights and academic freedoms.

Her session offered practical advocacy tools, policy literacy, and strategies for effective engagement in educational and civic spaces.

“If you want to make a meaningful impact with-



The facilitator shares some insights with the youths



For some, the session is tiring

in your respective institutions," she advised, "it is essential to build trust and establish strong relationships with policymakers and other relevant authorities."

Policymakers, she emphasised, are integral to the success and sustainability of any advocacy initiative.

Fr. J. Maseko, the National Youth Coordinator for the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops' Conference, offered a faith-grounded reflection on student leadership within Catholic movements.

He spoke about leading with integrity, compassion, and Gospel values, encouraging young leaders to embody Catholic Social Teaching and to serve their communities with courage and humility.

Responding to a question on how to recruit and retain new YCS members, he said: "The results of this workshop can serve as an efficient and attractive force. When those who did not attend observe a positive change in you—the participants—they will feel encouraged not to be left behind."

Br. T. Virima, ZYCS Associate and Animator, gave an in-depth presentation on the YCS methodology of See, Judge, Act and Reflect, grounding it in the movement's historical development.

Through group social inquiry exercises, he helped participants appreciate the power of collective action in advancing social justice and human empowerment.

Drawing from his personal journey—from his early involvement with YCS at Loreto to discerning his vocation as a Brother of the Sacred

Heart—he encouraged participants to let faith shape their identity.

"We do not end with action," he reminded them. "We must reflect on what we have done to determine whether we have achieved our objectives."

Throughout the programme, the central mission remained clear: to cultivate leaders who are informed, articulate, socially aware, and grounded in strong moral values.

Through sessions on leadership, advocacy, group work, and critical reflection, participants gained tools to positively influence their school environments and address social justice issues affecting their peers.

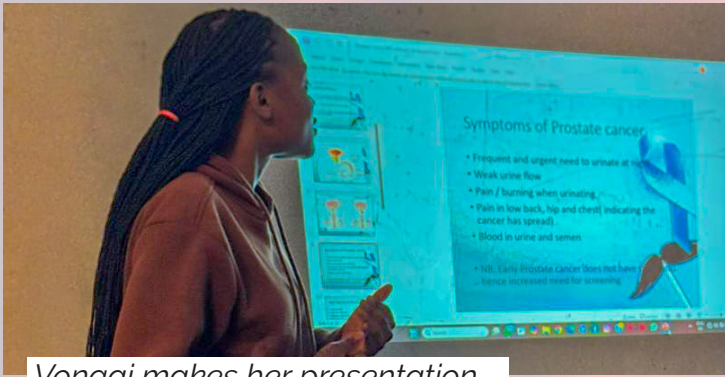
The Jesuit Youth Office SAP and ZYCS continue to invest in shaping a generation of young people who are confident, ethical, and committed to positive change—leaders ready to make an impact not only in their schools but in the wider society.



The group engages in an exercise

UZ Catholic society holds prostate cancer and mental health awareness day

By Benjamin T. Matsika, IYD Coordinator, Zimbabwe



Vongai makes her presentation.

The University of Zimbabwe Catholic Society on Tuesday, 25 November 2025, hosted an impactful health awareness event addressing two critical yet often neglected issues among young adults: prostate cancer and mental health. The programme brought together 40 students for a day of learning, honest dialogue, and a renewed commitment to prioritising wellness within the University Catholic Community.

The first session, led by Bachelor of Medicine and Surgery student Vongai Zimondi, focused on prostate cancer—an illness that primarily affects men in later adulthood but whose awareness is vital for all generations.

She explained the age groups most at risk, emphasising that early understanding equips young people to support affected relatives and to prepare for their own long-term well-being.

Vongai underscored the role of prevention and regular screening in combating the disease.

She noted, "As a young adult, practising a healthy lifestyle and understanding your genetics is not an act of lacking faith, but an act of wisdom, one that helps you care for the body entrusted with fulfilling its God-given purpose.

This same wisdom is reflected when men over the age of 40 commit to regular screening."

She explained the anatomy of the prostate gland and how cancer develops, offering clear, accessible medical insight.

Early detection, she said, not only improves a patient's quality of life but significantly reduces long-term healthcare costs. Students were encouraged to adopt preventative lifestyles—healthy eating, physical activity, and awareness of personal and family medical histories.

Her presentation did more than inform; it inspired students to take a proactive and responsible approach to their physical well-being.

The second part of the programme focused on mental health and was facilitated by Tadiwanashe Mutanana, a fourth-year medical student and active member of the UZ Catholic Society.

Addressing an issue that affects many yet is still clouded by stigma, Tadiwa unpacked the root causes of mental health struggles, including academic pressure, personal challenges, social expectations, and the often unseen emotional battles young adults face.

He offered a clear overview of how stress, anxiety, and depression develop and how they affect daily functioning. Students were invited to share experiences and testimonies, creating a safe and empathetic space that highlighted the universality of mental health challenges.

The openness of the session underscored the need for compassion and accompaniment within student communities.

Practical coping strategies were shared, such as reaching out for support, speaking openly about one's struggles, maintaining a balanced lifestyle, engaging in prayer and reflection, and embracing community participation.

Tadiwa reinforced the message that mental health deserves the same seriousness and care as physical health.

The UZ Catholic Society's dual-focus event demonstrated the importance of forming young adults who understand that health is holistic—encompassing body, mind, and spirit.

Although prostate cancer and mental health challenges may seem distant to some students, early awareness is key to prevention, timely intervention, and breaking harmful stigmas.

By creating a space for education, testimony, and honest conversation, the programme empowered students to take responsibility for their health, support one another, and champion well-being within the wider university community.

In an increasingly demanding world, initiatives like this serve as vital reminders that knowledge, openness, and compassion are essential tools in building a healthier and more resilient generation.

A clarion call: Catholic youth as architects of hope

By Gabriel Isaac Kandewo



We stand at a pivotal moment in history — a time of unprecedented change and challenge. The world around us is evolving at breakneck speed. It demands innovative solutions and unwavering moral compasses.

In this context, I firmly believe that Catholic youth possess a unique capacity: not simply to observe, but to build; not merely to inherit, but to shape; not to be passive recipients, but active architects of hope and transformative agents of the Gospel.

This is not an abstract ideal. It is a conviction forged from witnessing young people discover their God-given power when grounded in faith and ignited by a desire to serve.

We are not simply inheriting a Church; we are co-creating its future.

Beyond the Pews: Embracing Active Discipleship

For too long, youth in the Catholic Church have often been seen as passive receivers — inheritors of tradition rather than active participants in its growth. This perception limits our potential and diminishes our calling.

But the Gospel demands more. It calls us to a discipleship that is vibrant, courageous, and present in every part of life. Active discipleship means stepping beyond the pews and engag-

ing the real world with the unwavering values of Christ. It means meeting challenges head-on and allowing our faith to shape the world around us.

Confronting the Shadows: A Generation Called to Heal

Our generation faces a range of challenges: the psychological impact of social media, addiction, and growing social division. These are not distant issues. They touch our friends, our families, and our communities in real ways.

As Catholic youth, we cannot remain on the sidelines. We are called to be healers — to stand at the frontline of compassion, to accompany those in pain, and to embody the hope that the Gospel offers.

Healing begins with presence, solidarity, and the courage to care.

The Power of Witness: Living a Life That Speaks

Evangelisation is far more than formal preaching. At its heart, it is daily witness.

The way we live, the decisions we make, and how we treat others become powerful testimonies to the transforming power of faith.

When we strive for integrity, kindness, and selfless service, we invite others to see Christ through us.

This witness is particularly important in a world where many are sceptical of institutions. Genuine love and authentic actions break barriers and open hearts to the Gospel.

People notice how we live. Our example matters.

Engaging the Public Square: Shaping a Just Society

Catholic Social Teaching gives us a clear and grounded framework for justice, dignity, and the common good. As young people, we share responsibility for shaping a society that reflects these values.

This means taking part in civic life:

- speaking up for the vulnerable,
- participating responsibly in national conversations,
- holding leaders accountable, and
- using our collective voice to advocate for fairness and human dignity.



Faith is never meant to remain private. It must shape the public square and inspire a more just world.

Intergenerational Dialogue: Bridging the Wisdom Gap

Youth brings energy, creativity, and fresh ideas. Older generations bring wisdom born from lived experience.

To build a strong Church and society, we need both.

We must seek out the guidance of our elders — not as a formality, but as a source of grounding and perspective. Likewise, our elders benefit from the enthusiasm and ideas of the young.

This mutual exchange strengthens our Catholic tradition and creates a resilient community, wo-

ven together by wisdom and the zeal of youth.

Advent: A Time for Renewal and Purpose

As we enter the sacred season of Advent, let us welcome this time of preparation with renewed purpose. Let us reflect prayerfully on our calling as Catholic youth. What gifts has God given us? How can we use them for His glory and for the good of others?

Advent invites us to:

- pray intentionally,
- immerse ourselves in Scripture,
- serve concretely, and
- allow Christ's light to direct our choices.

This season reminds us that God enters our world quietly but powerfully — and we are called to carry that light forward.

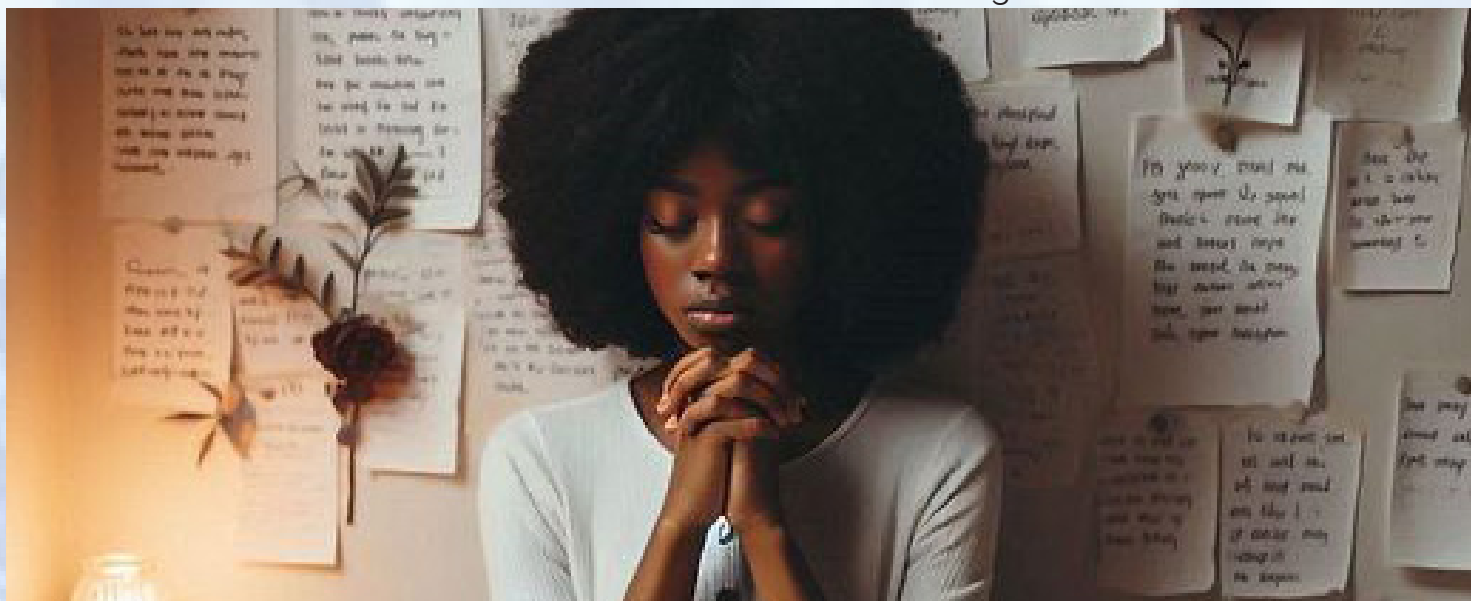
Conclusion: A Generation Called to Action

The future of the Church — and the world — rests significantly in the hands of the rising generation. When we embrace our role as agents of the Gospel, live with authenticity and integrity, and courageously engage the realities of our time, we help build a brighter and more compassionate future.

This is not passive hope. It is an invitation to act with conviction, courage, and faith.

Empowered by the Holy Spirit and guided by our rich Catholic tradition, let us rise to the moment with open hearts and willing hands.

Let the world witness the transformative power of Catholic youth — a generation committed to shaping a civilisation of love and illuminating the world with the light of Christ.



NEWS FROM THE CONTINENT

“Church must not be silent,” communicators challenged to shape society through gospel values

By Sr. Jecinter Antoinette Okoth, FSSA



At the Opening of a three-day workshop for Catholic Television (TV) directors across Africa and the National Communication Coordinators from the Association of Member Episcopal Conferences in Eastern Africa (AMECEA) region on Tuesday, November 25, media professionals have been reminded of their role to shape society and ensure the “Church must not be silent” in the digital sphere.

Addressing 40 participants from about 20 countries, the Secretary General of AMECEA, Very Rev. Fr. Anthony Makunde, in his welcoming remarks, stressed that if the Church remains passive in the media arena, “Others will shape the hearts and minds of our people.”

He emphasized that Catholic media are not intended to compete with secular outlets, but rather meant to serve as essential tools for peacebuilding, authentic evangelization, and forming consciences in truth and charity.

Referring to the Pontifical Council for Social Communications’ pastoral instruction *Aetatis Novae*, which notes that media shape the “moral and social attitudes of individuals and entire societies,” the Tanzanian cleric pointed to the urgent “signs of the times in Africa,” specifically mentioning the aggressive rise of secular content, moral confusion, and social tensions. He

warned that many of the faithful, especially the youth, consume secular content, and if compelling alternatives are not offered, the resulting “spiritual and cultural vacuum will be filled by narratives that weaken moral principles and distort truth.”

Fr. Makunde affirmed the AMECEA region’s long-standing commitment to communication, with the core mission rooted in the teaching of the Second Vatican Council and Pope Paul VI’s *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, which affirms that media are essential instruments for evangelization.

The objective of Catholic television and media, he clarified, is to go beyond mere information, education, or entertainment. “They must, as Pope Francis reminds the faithful, proclaim the truth ‘with the flavor of the Gospel,’ becoming channels of hope, peace, and moral guidance.”

The workshop, themed “Strengthening Catholic Television for Evangelization and Collaboration in Africa,” was aimed at bringing together media practitioners to reflect, strategize, and collaborate on utilizing television, radio, digital platforms, and print media to ensure Catholic media remains credible, professional, mission-driven, and deeply rooted in the Gospel.

Citing pastoral instruction on *Communio et Progressio*, that media should become “a means of unity and understanding among people,” Fr. Makunde stressed the significance of the unity of communicators on the continent.



SECAM urges AU–EU Summit to prioritise justice, inclusion and reparations

By SOCCOM Reporter



Luanda, Angola — As African and European leaders gather in Luanda for the 7th AU–EU Summit, the Catholic Church in Africa has issued a strong call for justice, transparency, and meaningful participation of African communities in shaping the continent's future.

Speaking through a detailed statement, the Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar (SECAM) said the Church could not remain silent while decisions affecting millions are made without the voices of those who live the daily realities of poverty, displacement, environmental destruction, and economic exploitation.

The statement emphasised that the Church's voice matters because it is rooted in communities: "We share in the joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the people, especially the poor," SECAM said, echoing *Gaudium et Spes*.

SECAM noted that 2025 is no ordinary year. The African Union declared it the Year of Justice for Africans and People of African Descent, and will launch a Decade of Reparations (2026–2036).

At the same time, the Church is marking the Ju-

ilee Year, a moment calling for truth, renewal, and justice.

Following COP30 in Brazil, where Global South voices highlighted the urgent need for ecological responsibility, SECAM said the AU–EU Summit must confront historical injustices and ensure that Africa's people—not foreign interests—benefit from development partnerships.

A major concern raised by SECAM is the systematic exclusion of African civil society organisations from the official summit.

Even groups willing to self-fund their attendance—faith-based organisations, women's and youth groups, Indigenous associations, peace-builders, humanitarian networks, and development agencies—were denied access.

SECAM questioned how a summit "focused on Africa's future" could lock out those who work closest with African communities.

In response, civil society groups are hosting a Parallel Peoples' Summit at the Catholic University of Angola, described not as rebellion but as a necessary alternative to the official summit's limited participation channels.

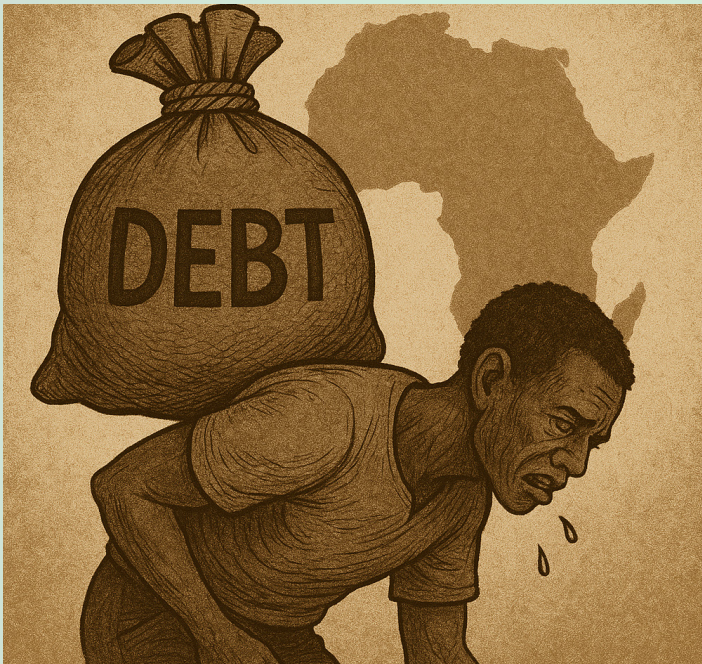
SECAM urged the AU and EU to confront the historical realities of:

- the Transatlantic slave trade
- slavery
- colonialism
- neocolonial economic systems
- resource exploitation

These, the bishops said, are "matters of historical fact and moral responsibility" that continue to shape Africa's economic struggles and social wounds.

SECAM expressed disappointment that the European Union has not fully committed to reparatory justice, despite benefitting from centuries of African exploitation.

The Church warned that some AU–EU initiatives risk repeating the old patterns where Africa pro-



vides raw materials while others reap the benefits.

SECAM insisted on a model that:

- puts African communities, not geopolitical interests, at the centre
 - ensures just trade practices
 - strengthens local governance and community empowerment
 - includes restorative and structural justice
- Development, SECAM stressed, must uplift people rather than enrich external actors.

SECAM said Africa's debt crisis—rooted partly in historical injustice—requires serious restructuring, not sympathy. True reform must ensure that countries are not trapped in cycles of borrowing and dependency.

On ecological justice, SECAM warned that Africa's forests, waters, minerals, and biodiversity must no longer be sacrificed for profit or global politics. Following COP30, the Church insisted that ecological justice is inseparable from social justice.

The bishops also emphasised that African sovereignty belongs to the people, not just governments or foreign investors.

The Church expressed hope that the summit would lead to a stronger partnership, but insisted that this can only happen through:

- inclusion rather than exclusion
- transparency rather than secrecy
- listening rather than imposing
- justice rather than political convenience

A partnership grounded in justice and honesty, SECAM said, "will have the power to heal historical wounds."

The Church affirmed its readiness to accompany both Africa and Europe on a path that promotes peace, human dignity, and authentic development.



African church urged to strengthen self-reliance in communication systems

By Sarah Pelaji



The Catholic Church in Africa has been encouraged to rethink and strengthen its self-reliance in communication systems. This is necessary to keep up with global technological changes and the evolving digital environment.

The President of the Pan-African Episcopal Committee for Social Communications (CEPACS), Rt. Rev. Bernardin Francis Mfumbusa made this call during the General Meeting of the Association of Member Episcopal Conferences in Eastern Africa (AMECEA) Social Communications Department.

The meeting taking place in Nairobi, Kenya, from November 25 to 27 has brought together Communication Directors from AMECEA member countries, as well as directors of Catholic television networks from across Africa.

The meeting aimed to boost the Church's media capability, improve content production, and create a broader network for sharing news and stories from Africa. Bishop Mfumbusa emphasized the importance of the African Church thinking carefully about how to maintain and manage its communication systems.

The Tanzanian Prelate pointed out that much of the Church's media history comes from missionaries who owned most of its communication platforms. He therefore urged Church leaders to fully embrace social media to stay relevant in a rapidly changing world, highlighting the growing problem of misinformation and the fragmenta-

tion of news on digital platforms. Bishop Mfumbusa of Kondoa Diocese in Tanzania warned that a small number of powerful corporations, such as Amazon, Alibaba, Yahoo, and TikTok, increasingly control global media. In this environment, the Church must remain alert to protect the accuracy and integrity of its messages. At the same time, the Church should ensure that communications align with her mission to reach and serve people with messages of truth and hope.

Bishop Mfumbusa noted that the Social Communications Commission has created strategic plans to strengthen communication within the Church. These plans include ways to assess how well Church communication supports its pastoral vision. He mentioned the new Africa Strategic Plan 2025 to 2028, developed with APO Group.

This plan focuses on building capacity, improving information distribution, and monitoring media output. During the meeting, the Bishop introduced the Catholic Television Service for Africa (CTSA), a new network aimed at enhancing cooperation among Catholic television stations on the continent. This initiative seeks to improve the quality of content produced in Africa, encourage the sharing of experiences and programs, and significantly lower production costs.

He further cited Latin America as a successful example where a similar model has created a strong, effective network of Catholic television services. Bishop Mfumbusa urged African Catholic media leaders to embrace creativity, innovation, and courage in finding new ways to enhance the Church's communication systems, stressing that the African Church has a unique and powerful story to share and that building a unified media network will strengthen the continent's voice within the global Catholic community.

The Nairobi meeting was described as a significant event, establishing a renewed foundation for strengthening Catholic media in Africa through modern technology, better collaboration, and a shared commitment to delivering credible, compelling, and distinctly African stories to the world.

Popular musician in Malawi challenges CUNIMA graduates to break the culture of excuses

By Luke Bisani



Zomba- Renowned Malawian artist Patience Namandingo has challenged graduating students from the Catholic University of Malawi (CUNIMA) to break the longstanding culture of excuses that he says has hindered Malawi's development.

Speaking during a final-year students' dinner held at Amaryllis Hotel in Blantyre last week, Namandingo urged the soon-to-be graduates to rise above the blame game that has characterized leadership in the country for decades.

He observed that since the colonial era, leaders have continually cited excuses to justify shortcomings in Malawi's development efforts.

"After the dawn of multiparty democracy, we now have leaders who always blame their predecessors, and the trend continues. You need to be agents of change for this country," said Namandingo.

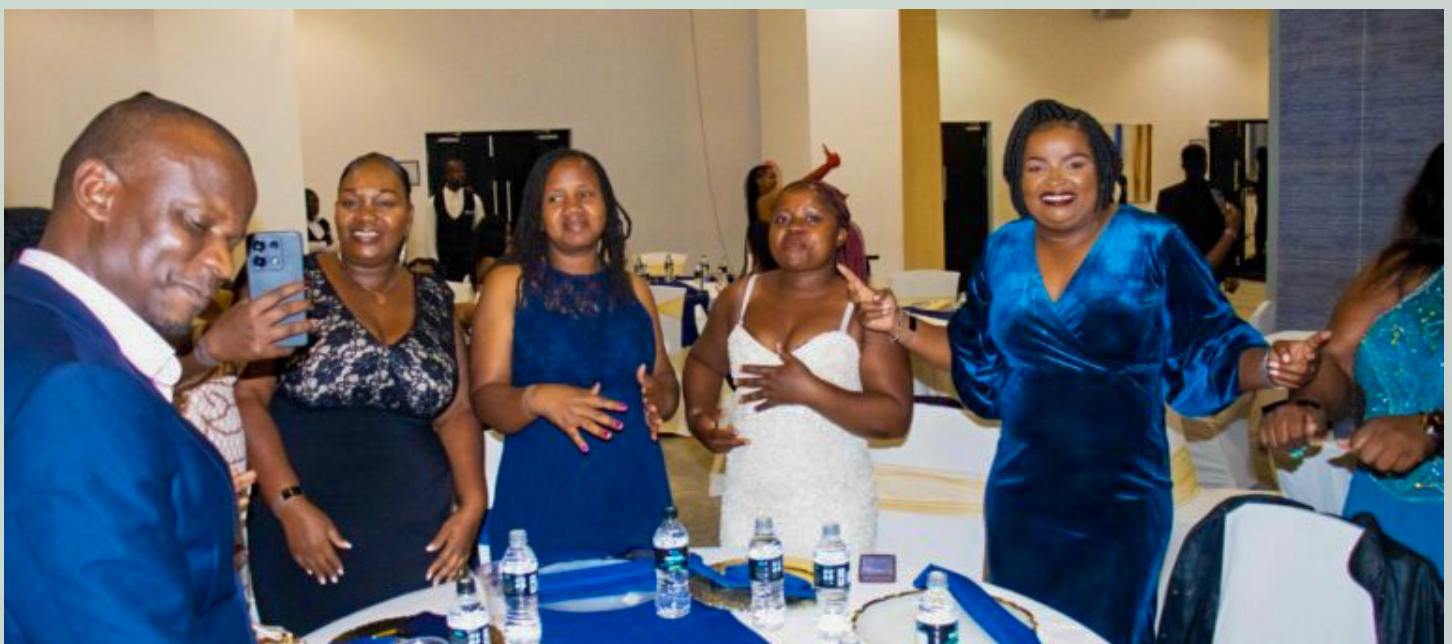
Co-guest of honour and Managing Director of Centenary Bank, Godfrey Byekwaso, encouraged the students to demonstrate responsible citizenship in their conduct.

He warned that the misuse of social media can negatively affect job prospects once students enter the professional world.

CUNIMA Vice Chancellor, Professor Francis Moto, commended the students for their dedication and hard work as they approach the completion of their studies. He further urged them to uphold the university's reputation by applying the holistic education they have acquired over the years.

The event brought together final-year students from seven faculties offered at the Catholic University of Malawi across various disciplines.

Born in 1989, Patience Namandingo is a singer, songwriter, and gospel artist known for blending gospel with Afro-pop, soul, and other genres.



OPINION PIECES

A nation at the crossroads: what Zimbabwe stands to lose if the new abortion bill becomes law

By Fr. Johnston Mlambo



Zimbabwe is standing before one of the most consequential moral decisions since Independence. Parliament is currently debating the Medical Services Amendment Bill, a proposal that would dramatically expand abortion access across the country.

This discussion has gained momentum partly because of heartfelt concerns such as those raised by Hon. Molokela-Tsiye, who argues that the Termination of Pregnancy Act of 1977 is outdated and unfair to poor women.

He insists that “if you want to have safe abortion, you need to have money” and that the average Zimbabwean woman is forced into unsafe procedures.

To him, the 1977 Act “must go,” and abortion must be more widely accessible.

His concerns reflect genuine sympathy for women in difficult situations — a sympathy shared by society, the Church, and every person of goodwill.

The trauma of rape, the fear of unplanned pregnancy, and the realities of poverty are not abstract ideas; they affect real women, girls, and families.

But sympathy, however genuine, does not automatically make abortion either safe, moral, or helpful to the woman involved.

And the actual content of the bill before Parlia-

ment reveals that it goes far beyond addressing unsafe abortions.

It fundamentally rewrites Zimbabwe’s moral, cultural, and legal foundations in ways that carry profound consequences for women, children, families, and society.

The bill allows abortion on demand for all girls under eighteen, meaning a minor can request an abortion for any reason during the first twelve weeks and for extremely broad reasons — such as “mental health” — up to twenty weeks.

The language is so permissive that a schoolgirl as young as thirteen could request an abortion on the grounds of feeling stressed, afraid, or unprepared.

Her word alone would be enough. In a society that values parental guidance, this is alarming.

Adolescence is an age already shaped by a craving for convenience and instant solutions — the same culture that elevates personal choice above every other consideration, including moral duty, family bonds, and even God.

Personal desire becomes the supreme measure of truth and morality. Young people, influenced by this culture, often prioritise convenience above everything else — even God.

The bill reinforces this worldview by treating abortion as a simple, consequence-free solution to an inconvenient pregnancy, giving a minor life-and-death authority without the guidance or wisdom of the adults responsible for her wellbeing.

Equally alarming is that parents are completely excluded.

The bill explicitly states that the only consent required is that of the pregnant minor herself — not her parents, not her guardian, not even the police in cases of suspected abuse. Doctors may advise the girl to consult her parents, but she is free to refuse, and the doctor may proceed regardless.

This effectively cuts out parents from one of the most serious crises their child may ever face.

It hands to a frightened schoolgirl a decision with profound emotional, medical, and spiritual



consequences, at an age where impulsive decisions and vulnerability are at their highest.

This secrecy also becomes a powerful shield for predators.

By removing evidence requirements for rape, incest, and unlawful intercourse, the bill unintentionally protects abusers more than victims.

A man who impregnates a girl — whether a teacher, neighbour, relative, or older boyfriend — can simply escort her quietly to a clinic.

The abortion erases all evidence: no pregnancy, no medical report, no police case, no parental awareness. The cycle of abuse continues unchecked.

In a society where many victims already face threats, coercion, and pressure to keep silent, this bill makes concealment even easier.

For adults, the bill authorises abortion up to twenty weeks based on "mental health," a category so elastic it can include stress, financial worries, relationship difficulties, or simply feeling overwhelmed. International experience demonstrates how such provisions lead to abortion on demand.

According to annual reports from the UK Department of Health and Social Care, around 98% of all abortions in England and Wales are authorised under this mental-health clause.

This is not because 98% of women were diagnosed with mental illness, but because "mental distress" is interpreted so expansively that almost any reason qualifies.

The bill also permits abortion up to birth in emergency situations, including those involving emo-

tional distress.

This opens the door to late-term abortions of fully formed babies, an ethically grave practice even in countries with liberal abortion laws.

The legislation further enables sex-selective abortion, even if unintentionally.

A woman may claim that carrying a girl — rather than a boy — would affect her mental health.

In societies where gender bias remains a concern, this could lead to unborn girls being disproportionately targeted.

This is not hypothetical; it is a tragic reality in countries such as India and China, where sex-selective abortion has led to demographic crises.

A similar logic applies to babies diagnosed with disabilities.

Under the bill, they may be aborted up to birth if abnormalities are suspected.

The United Nations Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities has repeatedly condemned such provisions as discriminatory and eugenic in nature.

All these provisions stand in stark contradiction to Catholic moral theology and Christian ethics.

The Christian worldview — rooted in Scripture and affirmed by the Church — teaches that a human life is not self-created.

It has a source, a purpose, and a destiny, and that origin and destiny is God.

Human beings do not own human life; they are stewards of it.

In this light, abortion becomes not an act of liberation, but an act of rejecting the Author of Life Himself.

It reflects the deeper crisis of modern culture — a culture where the individual becomes the measure of everything, where convenience overrides conscience, and where the pursuit of personal autonomy eclipses the call to responsibility, solidarity, and submission to God's will.

The unborn child is not a problem to be solved, but a person to be protected. The Christian ethical tradition insists that both mother and child deserve care, support, and dignity.

One of the most emotionally charged arguments used to justify abortion is rape.

And indeed, no one should underestimate or trivialise the raw terror, humiliation, and trauma that rape inflicts upon a woman. Yet compassion must never lead to falsehood.

Abortion advocates repeatedly use rape cases as a moral trump card — claiming that abortion is necessary because rape-related pregnancies condemn women to lifelong emotional pain. But this is not what evidence shows.

A landmark study by Dr. S. Mahkorn, published in *The Psychological Aspects of Abortion* (1979), examined 37 rape-related pregnancies.

Twenty-eight women chose to continue their pregnancy, while five chose abortion. Among those who continued, two-thirds reported increasing positive feelings toward their unborn children, improved self-esteem, and reduced anxiety and depression as the pregnancy progressed.

By contrast, most of the women who chose abortion later regretted it, describing it as a second traumatic event layered upon the first.

These findings are echoed in the Elliot Institute's research report *Rape, Incest and Abortion: Searching Beyond the Myths*, which reviewed 164 similar cases. In that study, none of the women who carried to term expressed regret, while many who had abortions said it intensified their emotional pain.

These insights reveal a powerful truth: abortion does not heal the trauma of rape. It often compounds it.

True compassion accompanies the victim, rather than offering a second wound disguised as a solution.

Beyond theology and moral reasoning, the social consequences of abortion liberalisation are equally serious. African experience provides sobering lessons.

In Ethiopia, abortion numbers rose sharply after the law was liberalised in 2005.

In South Africa, after abortion was legalised in 1996, the country saw a significant surge in abortion numbers, yet unsafe abortions continued.

Legal and illegal abortions now occur side by side.

Research also notes rising promiscuity, particularly among young people who view abortion as a backup plan.

This has contributed to higher rates of sexually transmitted infections, emotional turmoil, family breakdown, and long-term psychological distress.

These realities reveal that abortion liberalisation

does not solve the problem of unsafe abortion. Instead, it increases total abortions, increases sexual risk-taking, and exposes women to new layers of harm.

Zimbabwe is therefore at a pivotal crossroads.

On one path lies a future in which life becomes disposable, predators act with impunity, the family is weakened, moral clarity is eroded, and the unborn — the most voiceless among us — are left unprotected.

On the other path lies a culture that values responsibility over convenience, community over radical individualism, and life over death.

A culture rooted in African values, Christian ethics, and the belief that every human being — from conception to natural death — is loved by God and worthy of protection.

This national debate is not occurring in isolation. The Zimbabwe Heads of Christian Denominations (ZHOCD) have also issued a strong pastoral statement warning that the proposed changes "risk cheapening the value of life and undermining the moral fabric that binds our nation together."

They cautioned that no law should "grant unchecked power over human life, especially where the vulnerable are concerned."

Their voice reflects the broad Christian conviction that a nation cannot build peace, justice, or development on the destruction of its own children.

This debate is not merely about law. It is about identity. It is about the soul of the nation.

And it calls Zimbabwe to choose with courage and clarity: Will we embrace a culture of life, or surrender to a culture of death disguised as progress?

The stakes could not be higher. For the future of our children, our families, and our nation, Zimbabwe must choose life.



Pilgrims of thought and faith: seminarians open the doors of formation at Sessio Academica 2025

By Fr. Johnston Mlambo



Seminarians discuss a point to answer a question from the floor.

Ss. John Fisher and Thomas More National Seminary opened its doors to the public on 15 November 2025, welcoming families, parishioners, academics, clergy and prospective seminarians to its annual Sessio Academica. Partly open day, partly intellectual symposium, the event offered visitors a rare opportunity to “see” the seminary with their own eyes and “hear” its intellectual heartbeat through two richly prepared academic presentations.

This year’s sessions explored two themes at the core of priestly formation: Why the priest must be a philosopher, and Why formation—though stable and structured—is missionary at its very roots.

The first presentation, **From Athens to the Parish: Equipping African Priests with Philosophical Tools for Evangelization, Discernment, and the Salvation of Souls**, argued boldly that a priest today cannot be formed without philosophy. As one seminarian put it:

“The African priest must be more than a liturgical functionary; he must be a profound evangelist, a wise discerner, and a shepherd of souls.”

The paper insisted that philosophy is not a luxury but a pastoral tool — “the indispensable *instrumentarium*” —needed in a pluralistic and fast-changing Africa.

Drawing from *Fides et Ratio*, the presenter reminded guests that faith and reason are “two wings” that lift the Christian toward the contemplation of truth.

He stressed that, in today’s rapidly shifting

world, priests must be intellectually equipped to engage the complex landscapes around them — from African traditional religions to the fast-growing influence of Pentecostalism and Islam, as well as the secular mindsets and political ideologies shaping public life.

He noted that moral and social challenges affecting young people and families also demand a priesthood capable of deep reflection and wise discernment.

To meet these challenges, he proposed an integrated philosophical curriculum that blends the precision of Thomistic metaphysics, which brings doctrinal clarity; the strength of Aristotelian virtue ethics, which forms moral character; and the richness of African philosophical traditions such as Ubuntu, Oruka’s sage philosophy, and Gyekye’s reflections on community and personhood.

This synthesis, he argued, would form priests who are not only rooted in the intellectual heritage of the Church but are also able to speak meaningfully into African cultural realities.

Ultimately, the goal is a priest who preaches a Gospel that is intellectually sound, culturally resonant, and pastorally grounded — a priest capable of guiding the faithful with wisdom, relevance, and depth.

As he noted: “Evangelization requires more than fervour; it requires intellectual depth.”

The second presentation, delivered in a dramatic dialogue form, explored what it called “The Pilgrim’s Paradox”—the creative tension between the stillness of seminary life and the outward movement demanded by mission.

One seminarian, playing the role of Fr. Michael, captured this tension with striking clarity: “A pilgrim is firmly grounded in faith and community, yet constantly called to journey outward in mission. Stability is not comfort—it is the soil from which authentic missionary zeal grows.”

His dialogue partner, Daniel, voiced what many seminarians quietly feel but rarely express: “I imagined formation would feel like adventure. But most days feel like Nazareth—quiet, hidden, unnoticed.”

In response, Fr. Michael offered one of the most



A seminarian, 'Fr. Michael,' makes his claim.

memorable lines of the morning: "Have you ever seen a tree grow? No. Growth is hidden, quiet, almost invisible. But it is happening all the time."

The paper unfolded as a beautiful reflection on the seminarian's inner journey, drawing from Scripture, the Rule of St. Benedict, Pastores *Dabo Vobis and Evangelii Nuntiandi*.

Formation, the presenters argued, is a pilgrimage of the heart—one where silence slowly becomes proclamation, discipline matures into freedom, and stability ripens into readiness for mission.

As Fr. Michael reminded listeners, "The missionary heart is tempered in silence, purified in the desert, and sent only when it has learned to stay."

The dialogue then turned outward, addressing a misconception common among many Catholics: the belief that evangelization belongs solely to priests and religious.

Fr. Michael challenged this notion directly, stating, "All the baptized are agents of evangelization. Mission is not reserved for those in collars or habits."

He illustrated this point by naming familiar examples of lay missionary activity in Zimbabwe—from catechists forming adults and children in the faith, to Small Christian Communities reaching out to the lapsed, to lay leaders conducting funerals in the absence of priests.

He grounded this participation in Church law itself, quoting Canon 230 §3: "When ministers are lacking, lay persons may exercise the ministry of the word and preside over liturgical prayers."

Daniel observed that many lay Catholics struggle with mission due to work pressures, economic hardship, or simply a lack of confidence. But Fr. Michael gently insisted that mission is

always close at hand: "Evangelization happens wherever people live, work, and study. Unless you live among saints and angels, there is always room for mission."

Although the philosophy and theology presentations differed in style, both harmonised in a single essential truth: a priest is formed not for himself, but for the world.

The philosophy paper emphasised the need for critical thinking, cultural engagement, and doctrinal clarity.

The theology dialogue focused on interior growth, stability, self-knowledge and pastoral readiness. Taken together, they offered visitors a vivid picture of the seminary as a place of study, a place of conversion, a place of rooting, and ultimately, a place of sending.

As the narrator concluded the event, the theme resounded clearly: "Silence becomes proclamation, and interior stability becomes missionary fire."

Visitors left the Sessio Academica not only better informed but deeply inspired.

They had walked the corridors, met staff and formators, witnessed the rhythm of chapel life, and—through the presentations—glimpsed the intellectual and spiritual depth shaping the priests of tomorrow.

This year's event served as a reminder that the seminary is not a hidden fortress but a living, thinking, praying community preparing men to evangelise with intelligence, lead with humility, discern with wisdom, and serve with missionary hope.

In a world hungry for meaning, justice, authenticity and God, Ss. John Fisher and Thomas More Seminary is forming exactly the kind of leaders the Church needs—pilgrims anchored in truth and sent in hope.



Pupils of St. Joseph's primary school entertain the crowd.

Pastoral directors confront rising liturgical abuses at Gokomere meeting

Bishops call for renewed fidelity, reverence, and catechesis in Zimbabwe's liturgical life

By Fr. Johnston Mlambo



The national pastoral coordinator, Fr. Mgcini Moyo, addresses diocesan pastoral coordinators

Masvingo- Serious concerns about the dignity and integrity of the liturgy took centre stage during the meeting of pastoral directors and pastoral vicars held at Gokomere Training Centre in Masvingo from 12–13 November 2025.

The discussion followed strong observations made by the bishops at their recent administrative meeting, where they noted a worrying decline in the quality of liturgical celebrations in several dioceses.

According to reports presented at Gokomere, the bishops highlighted numerous liturgical abuses that have crept into parish worship across the country, prompting an urgent call for correction, formation, and renewed adherence to liturgical norms.

One of the most pressing concerns was the rise of secular-style dancing during liturgical celebrations, particularly among youth.

In some cases, these performances have been filmed and widely circulated on social media, giving the impression that entertainment has become the focal point of the celebration.

In some parishes, priests have been seen joining such dances in full vestments, even drumming alongside the faithful.

Pastoral directors were reminded that anything that shifts attention away from the altar and

from Christ undermines the sacredness of the Mass and must be discouraged.

The meeting also noted that some parishes are overdecorating sanctuaries to the point of obscuring essential theological symbols and carvings on altars.

In some cases, altars were decorated "like wedding reception tables," with extensive drapings and fabric arrangements that distract from the Eucharistic mystery.

Pastoral leaders were urged to ensure that the sanctuary retains its traditional simplicity, reverence, and symbolic clarity, in line with the General Instruction of the Roman Missal (GIRM). Another issue raised was the length and frequency of announcements during Mass, particularly those made after Communion and before the final blessing.

In some parishes, these announcements are so lengthy that parishioners have begun leaving immediately after Communion to avoid them, and in some cases they take up almost a third of the entire Mass.

Pastoral directors were tasked to raise the issue at the relevant diocesan platforms, ensuring that announcements are kept concise, necessary, and well managed.

It was emphasised that announcements should never overshadow the message of the Gospel

or the homily, which the faithful ought to carry home.

Concerns were also expressed about some parishes conducting fundraising activities during Mass before the final blessing, a practice described as improper and contrary to liturgical reverence.

Concerns were also expressed about incorrect or neglected liturgical gestures, such as the celebrant's approach to the altar, the proper kissing of the altar, and other symbolic movements prescribed by the Church.

Simple but meaningful gestures — like the celebrant always approaching the altar from the right side — are being ignored in many places. Some priests are omitting the kissing of the altar entirely, despite its strong theological significance as a sign of reverence and the centrality of Christ.

The meeting also noted irregularities such as seminarians who have not yet been instituted as lectors or acolytes being given albs to wear, and altar servers being vested in albs — practices which are not permitted and do not accord with liturgical discipline.

Pastoral directors discussed concerns around inculturation, noting that while cultural expression in the liturgy is encouraged, it must not adulterate the Roman Rite.

Some priests — especially those who trained or served abroad — have been introducing foreign practices that are not in line with Catholic liturgical norms.

Directors agreed that there is a need to guide priests, religious, and liturgy teams, ensuring that cultural elements enhance the liturgy without distorting its structure or meaning.

The conversation extended to the construction of new churches, where some parishes have built sanctuaries that do not follow liturgical guidelines.

In some instances, the ambo has been placed incorrectly, or the tabernacle positioned in awkward or unsuitable locations.

Pastoral directors were reminded that parishes must notify and consult their bishop before construction begins, to ensure proper liturgical orientation.

The meeting noted a growing trend of inappropriate decorations inside churches, including

pictures of priests or parishioners displayed in sanctuaries or other sections of the church, as well as the introduction of circular decorative elements that resemble practices from non-Catholic traditions.

There is also noticeable Pentecostal influence creeping into Catholic worship.

Some priests have adopted preaching styles, blessings, and prayer formulations that mimic other Christian denominations.

Even some lay-led prayers now lack the structure and theological clarity of Catholic tradition. Pastoral directors observed that this creeping influence is contributing to shallow preaching, with some homilies prioritising emotional appeal over doctrinal substance.

It was acknowledged that many of the abuses stem from lack of catechesis on the meaning and structure of the Mass.

Participants noted that the faithful — especially the youth — may not know how to express their devotion outside of the Mass.

This often leads them to bring paraliturgical practices into the liturgy, resulting in confusion and disorder.

"There are many things the faithful are doing in Mass that can be done reverently in paraliturgical contexts," one participant observed.

"We need to help them understand the difference between liturgy and devotions."

Some gatherings without priests are increasingly taking on a Pentecostal character because communities are unaware of the paraliturgical traditions available within the Church.

It was suggested that some liturgical abuses can only be corrected by direct episcopal intervention, as some priests find it difficult to accept correction from their peers.

Pastoral directors agreed on the need for clear, unified guidance from bishops, supported by ongoing liturgical formation in parishes and dioceses.



Fr. Tonderayi Sola and Fr. Johanne Nguluwe keenly follow the discussion.

Poetry Corner

Come, Emmanuel!

Come, Emmanuel, oh come, Emmanuel!
Your coming means a break
a holy rupture in the weariness of our days.
How I long for rest from anxiety and despair!

I carry the weight of my own frailty,
the grime of sin that clings to flesh and thought.
So come, Emmanuel, come and make me
whole.

Your coming signifies a new beginning.
Before me lies corruption,
to my right, the cry of the jobless,
to my left, the youth devoured by drugs.
Behind me, political manipulation hounds my
steps.
I need to begin anew in You and with You.
Come, Emmanuel oh come, Emmanuel.

I need a break.
Hospitals without medicine steal my breath;
the long nights of darkness consume my hope;
waterless taps mock my thirst.
So come, Emmanuel come,
Light of the world!

I am tired and broken.
My body bears the scars of injustice
struck by foreign hands, worn out by endless
labour
for a wage that starves.
Open pits gape like open graves,
devouring men and beasts alike,
and the land groans beneath its wounds.
Come, Emmanuel — Strength of the weary,
come!

I am on the brink of despair.
The air I breathe is poisoned;
my kin no longer visit, for the roads are gone.
Our mountains vanish before our eyes,
our forests stripped, our rivers sigh in pain.
Creation itself waits for redemption.
So come, Emmanuel oh come, Emmanuel!

Come, Hope of the nations,
Justice for the poor,
Peace for the brokenhearted.
Come, and make Your dwelling among us again.
Let Your birth be our new beginning.
Come, Emmanuel come and save Your people.

By Fr Johnston. Z. Mlambo

Echoes Of Pain

In the depths of my soul, a storm rages on
A tempest of pain, that refuses to be gone
It howls and it whispers, it screams and it
cries

Leaving me shattered, with tears in my
eyes

What's the source of this ache that won't
subside?

Is it a memory, a loss, or a heart that's
died?

Why does it linger, like a ghost in my
mind?

Can I find solace, or forever be blind?

In the darkness, I search for a light
A guiding star, to lead me through the
night

But confusion reigns, like a king on his
throne

Asking questions, that have no answers
known

What's real, what's true, what's just a fa-
cade?

Can I trust my heart, or is it just a charade?

How do I heal, when the wounds run
so deep?

Will time be the cure, or a memory that I'll
keep?

The pain whispers secrets, in the dead of
night

A mysterious language, that only it can
ignite

It asks me questions, that I dare not face
Leaving me shattered, in a dark, endless
space

Can I find my way, through this wilderness
of pain?

Or forever be lost, in this maze of strain?
Will the echoes fade, or forever remain?

Only time will tell, but for now, I'll sustain

The weight of my doubts, the fear of my
fate

And hope that someday, I'll find a way to
escape

The pain, the confusion, the questions that
plague

And find solace, in a heart that's no longer
caged.

By Marion Munkuli



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