

CATHOLIC CHURCH NEWS

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Special Feature: Holy Week

- 2025 soccer star graces St. Michael's Ascot Mission Sunday
- Zimbabwe Church advances synodality implementation
- Historic ground-breaking ceremony at Bondolfi Teachers' College
- Catholic students visit Chikurubi maximum prison
- Public hearings or managed consent?



More than the expression of ideas

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From the editor's desk ...

Dear Reader,

Happy Easter! As we bask in the joy and glory of the Resurrection, I am pleased to present to you the February–March edition of Catholic Church News. In this issue, we have combined stories from both months, and we will resume our regular monthly publication next month.

In this edition, we trace the journey towards Easter across our dioceses in Zimbabwe through Lenten stories and a special Holy Week feature. Easter remains the foundation and springboard of our faith. Every Christian is called to live as an Easter people—“seeking the things that are above, where Christ is...” (Col 3:1).

This same Easter spirit is reflected in the wider Church. Caritas Africa recently celebrated 20 years of Deus Caritas Est in Ivory Coast, with the commemorations culminating in the Abidjan Declaration. Among its key messages was a strong reaffirmation that Caritas is not merely a development agency, but an essential expression of the Church's very identity.

Back home, notable developments continue to unfold. In the Diocese of Masvingo, history was made as Bondolfi Teachers' College held a groundbreaking ceremony for the construction of a science centre dedicated to STEM subjects under its Diploma in Education programme.

Our Lenten coverage highlights moments of deep spiritual renewal. We feature the Ash Wednesday celebrations at St Mary's Minor Basilica in the Archdiocese of Bulawayo, marking the beginning of the penitential season. Living out the call to almsgiving, Catholic students from the Archdiocese of Harare visited Chikurubi Maximum Prison in a gesture of compassion and solidarity. Such initiatives—especially by the youth—suggest that this year's Lent was marked by a genuine seeking of the Lord.

In another inspiring story, a group of faithful from the Archdiocese of Harare chose to mark 14 February—widely associated with romantic love—in a different way. They gathered at Christ the Word Monastery for

a day of recollection in preparation for Lent, reflecting on what can be described as “the greatest love of all”—the love of God.

In our Parliament Watch column, we turn our attention to the recently held and controversial public hearings on the Constitution of Zimbabwe Amendment (No. 3) Bill, 2026.

On the international stage, Pope Leo XIV called on the faithful—especially young people—to rediscover the voice of God within their hearts, urging a return to prayer, silence, and deeper reflection as the foundation for discerning one's vocation.

Within our region, the Catholic Archdiocese of Lilongwe has encouraged the lay faithful to express their love for Jesus Christ through the worthy reception of the Eucharist, described as the source and summit of the Church's life and faith.

Meanwhile, in Zambia, a recent incident in which the Zambia Conference of Catholic Bishops fell victim to an artificial intelligence-generated video highlights the growing challenge of misinformation in today's digital age.

And, the ZCBC Secretariat continues to play a vital role in revitalising the Church in Zimbabwe through the work of its various commissions. From national pastoral efforts to implement the Synod on Synodality—through workshops held in the Diocese of Hwange and the Archdiocese of Harare—to the CCJPZ National Information Sharing and Coordination Meeting, there is a renewed commitment to transforming communities through dialogue, national cohesion, and sustainable development.

At the same time, the Family and Marriage Commission is strengthening pastoral care by training family counsellors who can accompany couples and families facing various challenges in their daily lives.

As you journey through this edition, may the joy of the Risen Christ continue to inspire faith, hope, and love in your daily life.

Happy Easter once again.

Fr. Johnston Z. Mlambo

SPECIAL FEATURE: HOLY WEEK

From Palms to Chrism, a nation encounters Christ's saving mystery



Archbishop Robert Ndlovu blesses the holy oils during the Chrism Mass in Harare.

By Fr. Johnston Mlambo

From Palm Sunday processions to Easter Vigil Mass celebrations across all dioceses, the Church in Zimbabwe has entered the sacred drama of Holy Week, where the blessing of the Holy Oils and the celebration of the Easter Triduum draw the faithful into the very heart of Christ's passion, death, and resurrection—the source of the Church's life and mission.

From the bustling urban centres to the quiet rural missions, the Catholic Church in Zimbabwe has once again entered the solemn and sacred season of Holy Week, marked by vibrant liturgies, deep spiritual reflection, and a visible expression of faith across all dioceses.

Holy Week, central to the Christian faith,

reveals the identity of the Church as a pilgrim people journeying towards their eternal homeland, celebrating the mystery of Christ's passion, death, and resurrection through some of the most profound liturgies of the Church year.

Palm Sunday: A Unified Beginning

On 29 March 2026, dioceses across Zimbabwe marked Palm Sunday, commemorating the triumphant entry of Christ into Jerusalem.

In the Diocese of Masvingo, the liturgy at St Mary's Cathedral was presided over by Rt Rev Bishop Raymond T. Mupandasekwa, while in Hwange, celebrations at St Ignatius Cathedral were led by Rt Rev Bishop Raphael Ncube. In the Diocese of Gokwe, Rt Rev Bishop Eusebius Nyathi presided over the Palm Sunday liturgy at St John's Cathedral.

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Bishop Raphael Ncube blesses the holy oils

Across parishes nationwide, the faithful took part in processions and liturgical celebrations, publicly witnessing their faith and setting the tone for the sacred days ahead.

Chrism Mass: the heart of diocesan unity

In the days that followed, dioceses across the country gathered for the Chrism Mass—one of the most significant liturgical celebrations of Holy Week, highlighting the unity of the Church around the bishop and the centrality of the sacraments.

In the Diocese of Mutare, the Chrism Mass was celebrated on 31 March 2026 at Holy Trinity Cathedral, where Rt Rev Bishop Paul Horan called for prayers for peace amid global conflicts and urged the faithful to embrace servant leadership in the spirit of Christ.

He also encouraged active participation in national processes, including the ongoing public hearings on Constitutional Amendment Bill No. 3, while calling the faithful to fully engage in the Easter Triduum.

The Theology of the Holy Oils

At the heart of the Chrism Mass across Zimbabwe lies the blessing and consecration of the Holy Oils—the Oil of Catechumens, the Oil of the Sick, and the Sacred Chrism—each carrying profound theological meaning in the life of the Church.

These oils are not merely symbolic; they are sacramental signs through which Christ continues to act in His Church. Through them, the grace of the Holy Spirit touches the human person in concrete and transformative ways.

The Oil of Catechumens signifies strength and preparation. It is used to anoint those

preparing for Baptism, marking the beginning of a spiritual struggle against sin and evil, and the readiness to enter new life in Christ.

The Oil of the Sick expresses Christ's compassion for human suffering. Rooted in apostolic tradition, it is a sign of healing, consolation, and spiritual strength, reminding the faithful that Christ draws near in moments of pain and weakness.

The most solemn of all is the Sacred Chrism, consecrated by the bishop. This perfumed oil signifies the fullness of the Holy Spirit and participation in Christ Himself, the "Anointed One."

Through Chrism, the faithful share in Christ's priestly, prophetic, and kingly mission, called not to passive belonging, but to active participation in the Church's life and mission.

Thus, the Holy Oils reveal a profound truth: the Christian life is an anointed life—called, healed, strengthened, and sent.

A growing Church in Harare

In the Archdiocese of Harare, thousands of faithful, alongside hundreds of priests and religious, gathered at the Catholic University of Zimbabwe for the Chrism Mass, presided over by Archbishop Robert Christopher Ndlovu.

The large turnout once again necessitated the use of the university venue, as the Cathedral has for several years been unable to accommodate the growing number of participants.

"This is something deeply consoling. It tells us something very important: the Church is alive," Archbishop Ndlovu said.

At the centre of the liturgy was the blessing and consecration of the Holy Oils, through which, he emphasised, "the grace of Christ touches countless lives."

A Call to service in Bulawayo

In the Archdiocese of Bulawayo, the Chrism Mass, presided over by Archbishop Alex Thomas, brought together priests, religious, and lay faithful in a powerful expression of unity and mission.

Reflecting on Christ as the Anointed One, Archbishop Thomas reminded the faithful that this anointing is shared by all the baptised and is directed towards service.

He called on priests to renew their commitment with humility and dedication, while urging the laity to actively live out their faith by

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Bishop Raymond Mupandasekwa leads his faithful in the way of the Cross in Masvingo.

promoting peace, reconciliation, and hope.

Masvingo: A call to peace and faithfulness and walking the way of the Cross

In Masvingo, the Chrism Mass at St Mary's Cathedral was marked by a solemn and prayerful atmosphere, with large numbers of clergy, religious, and faithful in attendance. Rt Rev Bishop Raymond T. Mupandasekwa called for peace in a world marked by conflict:

"We are surrounded by what the Holy Father has called a 'crucified humanity.' To those engaged in war, Christ the King of Peace cries out to you from His Cross: God is love and mercy. Lay down your weapons and remember—you are brothers and sisters."

The liturgy also included the renewal of priestly promises and a moment of remembrance for deceased clergy and faithful.

The faithful of the Diocese also entered deeply into the mystery of Christ's Passion through a solemn Good Friday observance marked by prayer, reflection, and visible unity.

In a profound expression of faith, Rt Rev Bishop Raymond T. Mupandasekwa led priests, religious sisters and brothers, and the laity in the Way of the Cross (Nzira yeChipiyaniso) procession from Ss Peter and Paul Cathedral to the new St Mary's Cathedral.

The faithful walked together in prayer, song,

and meditation, reflecting on the suffering of Christ, with congregants taking turns to carry the Cross in a moving reenactment of Christ's journey to Calvary.

This was followed by the Good Friday liturgy of the Passion of the Lord, structured in three parts: the Liturgy of the Word, the Veneration of the Cross, and the reception of Holy Communion.

Chinhoyi: A Church sent to the margins

In the Diocese of Chinhoyi, the Chrism Mass was presided over by His Excellence, Archbishop Janusz Stanislaw Urbanczyk, who emphasised the missionary nature of the Church.

He called on priests to reach out to the most marginalised, while encouraging the laity to support their clergy through prayer, reinforcing the shared mission of the Church.



The Papal Nuncio to Zimbabwe delivers his homily in Chinhoyi.

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Bishop Paul Horan washes the feet of the faithful in Mutare.

Hwange: reliving the first encounter with Christ

In the Diocese of Hwange, His Lordship Bishop Raphael Mabuza Ncube celebrated the Chrism Mass on Tuesday, 31 March 2026, at St Ignatius of Loyola Cathedral. The liturgy was a vibrant display of diocesan life, featuring the presentation of gifts from Holy Week pilgrims who traveled from all parishes and missions. During his homily, Bishop Ncube outlined three guiding pillars for a fulfilled ministerial life:

- Revelation: Reliving the first encounter with Christ to rekindle the priestly vocation.
- Revolution: Noting that revelation without an internal revolution remains incomplete.
- Resolution: The public reaffirmation where priests respond “I am” to serve the people of God.

The Easter Triduum: The Heart of the Mystery

Flowing from the Chrism Mass, the Church now enters the Easter Triduum—the most sacred time in the Christian calendar. The Easter Triduum is the Church's celebration of the Paschal Mystery—Christ's Passion, Death, Burial, and Resurrection—and stands at the very centre of the liturgical year.

It is not three separate feasts, but one single mystery celebrated in stages.

It begins with the Mass of the Lord's Supper on Holy Thursday, continues through Good Friday, where the Church contemplates the Passion, and reaches its climax in the Easter Vigil, when the Resurrection is proclaimed. Theologically, the Triduum makes present the saving events of Christ. What happened in history becomes a living reality in the life of the Church today.

It is a movement:

- from darkness to light,



Bishop Eusebius Nyathi



A deacon, accompanied by a fellow deacon, carries Holy Communion in Gweru.

- from death to life,
- from sin to grace.

The faithful are invited not merely to observe these mysteries, but to enter into them, allowing their lives to be transformed by the Risen Christ.

Gweru: love your vocation and serve with joy

In the Diocese of Gweru, the faithful gathered on Tuesday, 31 March 2026, at St. Theresa's Cathedral for a Mass led by His Lordship, Bishop Rudolf Nyandoro.

In a moving homily, Bishop Nyandoro encouraged his priests to love their vocation and serve with joy, even in difficult moments. He also made a poignant appeal to the laity to support, pray for, and respect their priests,

who give their lives in service to the community.

A Church on mission

As Zimbabwean Catholics journey through Holy Week—from Palm Sunday to the Easter Vigil—the celebrations across dioceses reflect a Church alive in faith, united in worship, and committed to mission.

The liturgies not only commemorate the central mysteries of the Christian faith but also call the faithful to live out their identity as a people anointed in Christ—called to serve, to heal, and to proclaim the Good News.

In this sacred time, the Church in Zimbabwe stands as one, walking together in faith, hope, and love.



Bishop Rudolf Nyandoro prepares the oils for consecration.

NEWS FROM THE ZCBC SECRETARIAT

Caritas Zimbabwe joins Africa in marking 20 years of *Deus Caritas Est*



Archbishop Alex Thomas keenly follows the proceedings during the conference.

By Fr. Johnston Mlambo

Church leaders, humanitarian actors, and Caritas delegates from across Africa and beyond gathered in Abidjan from 16 to 20 March 2026 for the *Caritas Africa Deus Caritas Est* Conference, marking 20 years since the publication of *Deus Caritas Est*.

Held under the theme, "Caritas: A True Catalyst for Love, Service, and Social Transformation in Africa," the conference brought together participants from 46 African countries to reflect on the Church's mission of charity and its future direction in a rapidly evolving humanitarian landscape.

Zimbabwe was represented by a delegation that comprised the Bishop Chair of Caritas Zimbabwe, Archbishop Alex Thomas, the Secretary General of the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops' Conference, Fr. Tryvis Moyo, and the National Coordinator of Caritas Zimbabwe, Mr. Harrington Chuma.

The gathering culminated in the Abidjan Declaration, a strong ecclesial reaffirmation that Caritas is not merely a development agency, but an essential expression of the

Church's very identity.

"Caritas is not an optional commission. It is constitutive of the Church's identity, as foundational as the proclamation of the Gospel and the celebration of the sacraments," the declaration states.

A Continental Moment of Reflection and Learning

Archbishop Alex Thomas described the meeting as a deeply enriching experience.

"I was very happy to be present at this meeting... it was a time to meet together as various Caritas in the African continent where we shared our experience, learned about the activities and strategies of various countries," he said.

"It was a time to learn a lot from each other," he added, noting that the discussions, group sessions, and exchanges were "very enlightening."

The conference also provided an opportunity to encounter the lived reality of the Church in Côte d'Ivoire, with delegates visiting parishes and witnessing vibrant local participation.

Adding to this reflection, Caritas Zimbabwe

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Mr. Harrington Chuma, Caritas Zimbabwe National Coordinator, takes notes.

National Coordinator Harrington Chuma underscored the importance of such continental gatherings in strengthening institutional learning and collaboration.

"This kind of engagement allows us to reflect deeply on our identity and mission as Caritas, while also drawing practical lessons from other countries," he noted.

Caritas: At the Heart of the Church's Mission Central to the conference was a renewed theological grounding of Caritas in the life of the Church.

Drawing from key Church documents—including *Deus Caritas Est* (2005), *Intima Ecclesiae Natura* (2012), and *Dilexi Te* (2025)—participants reaffirmed that charity (*caritas*) is not secondary, but intrinsic to the Church's mission.

"The Church is charity," the declaration affirms, emphasising that Caritas flows from the very heart of the Church as an expression of God's love in action.

Delegates also warned against reducing Caritas to technical project management.

"Professional competence is necessary... but it is never sufficient without formation of the heart," the declaration states, cautioning against "institutional drift and ideological colonization."

Mr. Chuma echoed this concern, stressing the need to safeguard the ecclesial identity of Caritas.

"Caritas must always remain rooted in the Church's mission. Once it loses that identity,

it risks becoming just another development organisation," he said.

A Call for Local Ownership and Renewal in Zimbabwe

Reflecting on the implications for Zimbabwe, Archbishop Thomas offered a candid and deeply reflective assessment of the current state of Caritas operations.

"What I learned in a very particular way is that Caritas has to be organised from the parish level. It should not be too much centrally controlled," he said.

He contrasted this with the experience in Abidjan, where parish-based Caritas structures are visibly supported and owned by local communities.

"In our case here in Zimbabwe it is too much controlled and managed by the funding partners. The local community is only an observer. This has to be changed," he said.

The Archbishop emphasised that the future sustainability of Caritas depends on reclaiming local ownership.

"Localisation of operations and funding is an absolute necessity for future sustenance," he stressed.

Mr. Chuma reinforced this point, highlighting the importance of community ownership.

"The strength of Caritas must begin at the grassroots. When communities take ownership, the mission becomes more sustainable and more authentic," he said.

Reclaiming Ecclesial Identity

The Abidjan Declaration strongly reinforces

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this call, urging all Caritas structures—parish, diocesan, and national—to act in *nomine Ecclesiae* (in the name of the Church) and to maintain governance systems that reflect this identity.

Archbishop Thomas echoed this concern, warning that Caritas must not be reduced to an NGO model.

“Caritas is the developmental arm of the Church and not to be understood as an NGO,” he said.

He further noted that current practices risk compromising the Church's vision of charity. “The real needs of the community are overlooked... selection criteria of the needy is highly compromised or controlled by external forces,” he observed.

Mr. Chuma added that aligning Caritas operations with Church teaching is essential for credibility and effectiveness.

“We must ensure that our structures, programmes, and decisions reflect the values and teachings of the Church at all levels,” he said.

Challenges and a Call for Conversion

The conference also highlighted broader structural challenges facing Africa, including corruption, inequality, and the exploitation of natural resources.

In response, delegates committed to strengthening Caritas' prophetic voice in addressing the root causes of poverty and injustice.

For Archbishop Thomas, this calls for a deeper transformation within the Church itself.

“The main challenge I notice is that here in Zimbabwe we are not following what is expected of Caritas by the Church,” he said.

“This requires a new mindset for all of us if Caritas has to go further. We need funding, but we cannot compromise the Church, which is the Body of Christ.”

Toward a Synodal and Sustainable Future
The Abidjan Declaration outlines a vision of Caritas that is:

- rooted in local communities,
- guided by synodal listening and participation,
- financially sustained through local resource mobilisation,
- and committed to ensuring that the poor are not passive recipients, but active protagonists of their own development.

“Nothing about us without us,” the declaration emphasises, calling for inclusive structures that give voice to those most affected by poverty.

A Renewed Mission

As the Church in Africa marks two decades since *Deus Caritas Est*, the Abidjan conference stands as both a celebration and a call to renewal.

For Zimbabwe, the message is particularly clear:

Caritas must return to its roots—as an expression of the Church's love, lived concretely in parishes, owned by communities, and guided by the Gospel.

In the words of Archbishop Thomas, the path forward requires courage and clarity:

“This has to be changed.”



Participants of the Caritas Africa *Deus Caritas Est* Conference pose for a group photo.

Zimbabwe Church advances synodality implementation through diocesan workshops



Synodality in action at last year's Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops' Conference plenary.

By Fr. Johnston Mlambo

The National Pastoral Centre of the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops' Conference (ZCBC) has intensified efforts to implement the Synod on Synodality through a series of workshops held in the Dioceses of Hwange and the Archdiocese of Harare.

The workshops, aimed at capacitating dioceses for effective implementation of the synodal process, come at a time when the universal Church has entered the implementation phase following the conclusion of the three-year Synod on Synodality.

Zimbabwe is considered to have already established functional synodal structures, which now require refinement and strengthening in light of the Synod's final document. In the Archdiocese of Harare, participants included members of the Archdiocesan Curia and Deans, who gathered at Rockwood Pastoral, Spiritual and Formation Centre on the 6th of March 2026, while in Hwange, the workshop was attended by priests of the diocese at St Mary's Shrine.

Contextualising synodality in Zimbabwe

The National Pastoral Coordinator, Fr. Mgcini Moyo, highlighted the importance of contextualising the synodal process within the local Church.

"In Hwange, it was a matter of contextualising the whole synodal process, taking it

back to Vatican II, and presenting the Final Document. We then examined the document, identifying themes that are closer to our local context.

Hwange linked the implementation of the Synod with the diocesan synod held about a decade ago. We now have to find practical ways to implement the Synod on Synodality," he said.

Concerns were raised during the workshops that, if not taken seriously by some clergy, the synodal process risks becoming a mere "tick-box exercise."

Participants, however, reaffirmed their confidence that the Church, guided by the Holy Spirit, will continue along the path willed by God.

From listening to structural reform

The implementation phase of the Synod is now taking on a more structured and juridical dimension at the universal level.

On 20 February 2026, the General Secretariat of the Synod announced the establishment of the Eastern Canonical Commission to revise the Code of Canons of the Eastern Churches (CCEO), signalling a shift from pastoral reflection to normative reform within the Church.

Harare embraces synodal responsibility

Reflecting on the Harare workshop, Fr. Moyo underscored the shared responsibility of all

members of the Church in implementing the Synod.

"The Final Document of the Synod on Synodality emphasises that local Churches need to find ways to implement the Synod.

The Archdiocese of Harare is taking this seriously by empowering all leaders in key pastoral offices.

One important takeaway for me was when participants said that 'this is our responsibility, and all of us are accountable for implementing the Synod—as deaneries, as parishes, and as commissions.'

I believe that if each diocese manages to get all hands on deck, there is hope that synodality will move from being merely beautiful words to a lived reality. The participation was very good," he said.

The laity Called to active participation

The Pastoral Council Chairperson of the Archdiocese of Harare, Mrs Busi Chindove, said the workshop was relevant and helped in forging the way forward with regard to implantation of synod.

"Father Mgcini Moyo did an excellent job of unpacking the Synodal journey from the consultation with the people of God at Parish and Diocesan level, the national synthesis document, the continental stage that reflected on our dream about the church in Africa, the first session, the second session leading to the final document," she remarked "We also learnt that the Synod on Synodality has its roots in Vatican II. The Synod of Bishops is a product of Vatican II" she added.

It was stated at the workshop that

"The Synodal journey has not been an easy one because not everyone has embraced the Synodal process because it is by its very nature about embracing change."

Mrs Chindove said the workshop made it clear that "what defines us as church is communion, participation and mission and that the church exists to evangelise.

"We as the laity are challenged that the role of the laity has shifted from one of 'pay, pray and obey' to one of bringing alive ' communion, participation and mission'. As Pope Leo X1V said while speaking in the Vatican Square and as quoted in the Pathways document, ' We are a missionary church that builds bridges and encourages dialogue, a

church ever open to welcoming , like this Square with its open arms , all those who are in need of our charity , our presence , our readiness to dialogue and our love'.

The challenge is how do we translate these words into everyday lives in our homes, parishes, Diocese and so on.

We need to call on the Holy Spirit as we walk this journey because the work of synodality is the work of the Holy Spirit," reflected the chairperson of the pastoral council of the Archdiocese of Harare.

"The expectation and the assignment for all of us is that we need to make the final document a living document..." she added.

Mrs Chindove further outlined practical resolutions adopted at the workshop, including the establishment of an inclusive implementation team, the need for translation of key documents into local languages, and the formation of synodal structures at parish and deanery levels.

She also emphasised immediate "low-hanging fruits," such as making synodal documents accessible to the faithful, promoting inclusivity, encouraging participation, and fostering collaboration across Church structures.

A Church on a journey

The workshops in Hwange and Harare mark an important step in Zimbabwe's journey toward making synodality a lived reality.

As the Church transitions from consultation to implementation, the emphasis now lies on translating the Synod's vision into concrete pastoral action at every level of ecclesial life. With strong participation from clergy and laity alike, and guided by the Holy Spirit, the Zimbabwean Church continues to walk together in communion, participation, and mission.



Listening: Key to Synodality.

ZICASAM Strengthens unity and excellence in sacred music following Mutare meeting



By Fr. Johnston Mlambo

The Zimbabwe Catholic Association of Sacred Music (ZICASAM) has reaffirmed its commitment to promoting unity, excellence, and evangelisation through sacred music following its National Committee Meeting held in Mutare on 6 March 2026.

The meeting reviewed the 2025 National St Cecilia Celebrations and Jubilee of Choirs, drawing participation and feedback from all eight dioceses, and highlighting both the strengths and areas for improvement in the Church's music ministry.

Sacred music continues to play a central role in the life of the Church in Zimbabwe, serving not only as a liturgical expression but also as a powerful instrument of evangelisation and unity.

Fr. Mgcini Moyo, National Pastoral Coordinator of the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops' Conference, commended the association for its growing impact.

"ZICASAM is playing a very important role in promoting harmony and unity in the field of Catholic Sacred Music in the dioceses of Zimbabwe," he said.

He described the coming together of various ministries—composers, choristers, choir conductors, and trainers—as "a special gift to the Church," noting that the synodal approach adopted by the bishops has

strengthened collaboration within the music apostolate.

"The bishops brought together all those serving in the ministry of music in a synodal spirit to unite the People of God in the mission of the Church," Fr. Moyo added.

A Growing Ministry of Evangelisation

The report presented at the meeting emphasised that national sacred music events, particularly the annual St Cecilia Celebrations, have become important pastoral platforms for fostering unity among choirs and deepening the spiritual life of the faithful.

The Jubilee of Choirs programme, held in November 2025 in Bulawayo, was widely praised as a spiritually enriching initiative that strengthened fellowship among participants and recognised the contributions of sacred music to the Church's liturgical life.

Participants noted that the programme successfully brought together both young and experienced choristers, creating opportunities for mentorship while honouring pioneers of sacred music in Zimbabwe.

Fr. Moyo highlighted this dimension, noting that leadership within ZICASAM is actively working to promote young composers while preserving the legacy of those who laid the foundation of sacred music in the country.

Challenges and areas for Improvement

Despite the positive outcomes, the meeting also identified several operational and logis-

tical challenges that affected the overall experience of the 2025 national celebrations. Among the key concerns were venue suitability, sound system quality, crowd management, and the transparency of adjudication processes.

Participants also raised issues related to communication, accommodation arrangements, and financial administration, including delays in the disbursement of prize money to winning choirs.

These challenges, the report noted, risk undermining the credibility and effectiveness of national sacred music events if not addressed.

Commitment to reform and growth

In response, ZICASAM adopted a series of recommendations aimed at strengthening future celebrations.

These include improving venue selection processes, investing in high-quality sound systems, enhancing security and crowd management, and introducing more transparent adjudication systems.

The meeting also emphasised the need for stronger coordination between ZICASAM and host dioceses, as well as improved communication before and after national events. A digital adjudication system is expected to be piloted at diocesan level, with the aim of enhancing fairness and transparency in future competitions.

Looking ahead

The association also outlined upcoming national programmes, including a National Music Course scheduled for August 2026 at Kutama Mission, a music training initiative in Binga, and a National Music Symposium expected later in the year.

The next National St Cecilia Celebrations are tentatively set for November 2026.

Fr. Moyo expressed optimism about the future of sacred music in Zimbabwe, acknowledging that while the journey has not been without challenges, significant progress has been made.

“The process of bringing together the various groups... has not been easy, but a lot of progress has been made,” he said.

He further underscored the growing significance of the St Cecilia celebrations, which now attract thousands of participants from across the country.

Evangelisation through song

At the heart of ZICASAM's mission remains the call to evangelise through music.

“We continue to evangelise through singing,” Fr. Moyo affirmed, capturing the essence of the Church's sacred music ministry.

As the Church in Zimbabwe continues to strengthen structures for liturgical music, the Mutare meeting stands as a renewed commitment to ensuring that sacred music remains both a source of unity and a powerful expression of faith in the life of the Church.



CCJPZ national gathering illuminates path to healing, reconciliation, and unity in Zimbabwe



Participants of the national information sharing and coordination meeting.

By SOCCOM Reporter

In the heart of Zimbabwe, a beacon of hope shone brightly as the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace in Zimbabwe (CCJPZ) convened its National Information Sharing and Coordination Meeting. From February 4th to 5th, 2026, at the Palm Leaf Gardens in Kwekwe, 25 dedicated individuals—17 men and 8 women—gathered to reaffirm their commitment to transforming communities through dialogue, national cohesion, and sustainable development.

A sacred beginning and a shared vision

The meeting commenced with a deeply spiritual Holy Mass presided over by the CCJPZ Bishop Chair, grounding the discussions in a shared commitment to Gospel values. Yvonne Matwaya-Takawira, the Meeting Chair, emphasized that the gathering was crucial for charting a course toward a more just and harmonious society.

The Church's role: a Divine imperative

Rt. Rev. Bishop Rudolf Nyandoro, CCJPZ Bishop Chairman, delivered a powerful message (articulated by Fr. J. Maseko) rooted in Catholic Social Teaching. He reminded attendees that the Church's commitment to dialogue and reconciliation is a "divine imperative".

"As followers of Christ, we are called to be

active agents of reconciliation, working tirelessly to resolve conflicts, promote understanding, and build bridges between divided communities," the Bishop stated. He highlighted that true and lasting peace requires a commitment to justice, truth, love, and freedom, beginning in the hearts of individuals. He also drew from Pope Leo XIV's 2025 *Urbi et Orbi* message, noting that "only forgiven hearts can be true builders of peace".

Aligning with the national vision

Mr. Paul Z. Muchena, CCJPZ National Coordinator, presented a roadmap for aligning the organization's work with Zimbabwe's national vision for 2030 and the Zimbabwe Heads of Christian Denominations (ZHOCD) National Vision Document.

"Aligning CCJPZ's work with the national vision... is not merely a strategic imperative; it is a moral obligation," Muchena asserted.

He emphasized that building the "Zimbabwe we all want" requires moving from conviction to coordinated action, including the establishment of non-partisan, faith-anchored Community Peace and Reconciliation Committees (CPRCs) in every district.

Strategic review: a "Synodal" identity

On the second day, participants reviewed the CCJPZ Strategic Plan (2023–2027), led by

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Dr. Nhemachena. A significant outcome was the refinement of the vision statement to: "A Synodal God Fearing, Just and Peaceful nation". This reflects the Church's commitment to synodality—walking together and listening collaboratively. The organization's core values were streamlined to focus on Charity and Synodality.

A Roadmap for Action

The meeting concluded with a clear Action Plan for 2026, summarizing key priorities for the upcoming year:

- Ecumenical Outreach: Scaling up interreligious approaches to reach schools, hospitals, and "hard to reach" communities.
- Human Dignity: Conducting conflict management training for transformations using the Social Teachings of the Church (STCs).
- Social Accountability: Utilizing jingles, skits, and community radio stations to promote better service delivery.
- Evidence-Based Advocacy: Conducting research in collaboration with Arrupe Jesuit University and the Catholic University in Zimbabwe to inform justice and peace work.
- Environmental Justice: Implementing cli-



Fr. Johannes Maseko delivers his speech.

mate-focused programs specifically involving youth, women, and people with disabilities.

In his closing remarks, Fr. J. Maseko encouraged participants to embrace their role as "ambassadors of reconciliation". By fostering dialogue and strengthening partnerships, the CCJPZ aims to build a brighter future where peace and justice reign for all Zimbabweans.

Zimbabwe's Sr. Annah Nyadombo represents Africa at Vatican safeguarding assembly

By Pauline Chateuka

On 16 March 2026, the Zimbabwe National Education and Safeguarding Coordinator, and Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors (PCPM) Africa Region Moderator Sr. Dr. Annah Theresa Nyadombo HLMC attended a PCPM plenary assembly in Rome.

Established in 2014 by the late Pope Francis, the Commission continues to play a critical role in ensuring that the protection of minors and vulnerable persons remains at the heart of the Church's life and ministry.

The assembly opened with Holy Mass at St. Peter's Basilica, grounding the work of the Commission in prayer and reflection. This was followed by an audience with His Holiness, Pope Leo XIV.

Addressing the assembly, Pope Leo emphasized the role of the commission in ensuring that abuse is prevented.

"Your mission is to help ensure that abuse is prevented. Yet prevention is never just a set of protocols or procedures. It is about helping to form, throughout the Church, a culture of care, in which the protection of minors and persons in vulnerable situations is not seen as an obligation imposed from outside, but as a natural expression of faith. It calls, therefore, for a process of conversion where the sufferings of others are heard and move us to take action. In this regard, the experiences of victims and survivors are essential reference points. While they are certainly painful and difficult to hear, these experiences powerfully bring the truth to light and teach us humility as we strive to assist

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Zimbabwe Education and Safeguarding Coordinator and Pontifical National Commission for the Protection of Minors (PCPM) Africa Region Moderator Sr. Dr. Annah Theresa Nyadombo HLMC greets Pope Leo XIV at the PCPM plenary assembly in Rome.

victims and survivors," he said

The Holy Father also encouraged the commission to engage everyone while tackling the issue of abuse.

"The Commission's engagement with the Church at every level, with victims, survivors, and their families as well as with civil society partners, has prompted you to deepen your study in two rapidly developing areas of safeguarding: the concept of vulnerability in relation to abuse, and the prevention of technology-facilitated abuse of minors in the digital space. By reading these "signs of the times," you help the Church to address safeguarding challenges courageously and respond with pastoral clarity and structural renewal. This is already taking concrete form in the development of a Universal Guidelines Framework. I look forward to receiving the final proposal so that, after appropriate study and discernment, it can be published," said Pope Leo.

The Universal Safeguarding Guidelines emerged as a central theme. These guide-

lines aim to create a unified global framework rooted in dignity, accountability, and pastoral care. They emphasize leadership responsibility, listening to survivors, multi-disciplinary collaboration, formation, and addressing modern challenges such as digital abuse.

As the Africa Region Moderator, Sr. Dr. Annah Theresa Nyadombo HLMC said, as a commission, they were going to implement everything that was agreed upon at the plenary in their respective regions.

"We are going to do everything in our power, in pursuit of the Church's mission, by making sure that we eliminate the abuse of minors and vulnerable persons," said Sr Dr Nyadombo.

The assembly concluded on 20 March with renewed commitment. Members departed strengthened in their mission to promote a culture of care and protection across the global Church. The next plenary assembly is scheduled for September 28 to October 2, 2026, in Rome.

Church trains counsellors to strengthen marriage and family life in Zimbabwe



A group engages in a workshop task in Bulawayo.

By Muzikayise Sibanda

The family remains the first school of faith and what the Church calls the “domestic Church,” the place where the Gospel is first lived, learned, and handed on to the next generation. In a time when families are facing numerous social, economic, and cultural pressures, the Church in Zimbabwe is strengthening its pastoral commitment to accompany both young and established families.

It is within this vision that the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops' Conference (ZCBC), through its Family and Marriage Commission, is implementing a project titled “A Synodal Journey with Families: Accompaniment of Future and Present Families in the Face of Contemporary Challenges.” The initiative is being carried out with the generous support of Missio Aachen.

The project, which is being rolled out across eight dioceses in Zimbabwe, seeks to strengthen pastoral care for families through the training of Family Counsellors who can accompany couples and families facing various challenges in their daily lives.

The Archdiocese of Bulawayo hosted the

first training workshop from 23 to 27 February 2026, bringing together participants from different parishes within the archdiocese. The workshop was marked by strong participation and a shared commitment among attendees to support families within the life of the Church.

One of the highlights of the workshop was the gracious presence of The Most Reverend Alex Kaliyanil, Archbishop of Bulawayo, who visited the training and offered his blessing to the participants. In his encouragement, he reminded those present of the vital role families play in the life of the Church and society.

His presence underscored the Church's continued commitment to promoting and strengthening family life, recognising marriage and family as central to both evangelisation and social stability.

The training sessions were facilitated by Connect Zimbabwe, an organisation with experience in counselling and psychosocial support. During the workshop, 25 Family Counsellors were trained and equipped with practical knowledge and pastoral skills to assist families experiencing various forms of difficulty.

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**The facilitator stresses a point.**

Participants received formation in areas such as effective listening, conflict resolution, pastoral accompaniment, and ethical counselling practices within a faith-based context. The training aimed to help counsellors respond with sensitivity to the real-life struggles that many couples and families encounter today.

The broader goal of the project is for each participating diocese to have trained counsellors who can be easily accessible to families in need. These counsellors will offer their services freely and without charge, ensuring that families experiencing marital, relational, or emotional challenges can find support within the caring pastoral environment of the Church.

This initiative reflects the Church's synodal approach, which emphasises walking together, listening to one another, and responding to the needs of God's people. Families today often face many pressures, including economic hardship, changing social dynamics, and the rapid transformation of communication and cultural values.

Through projects such as this, the Church seeks to accompany families with understanding, compassion, and practical pastoral care, remaining faithful to her mission of proclaiming the Gospel of the family.

Those who have received the training are now encouraged to return to their parishes and communities and serve as instruments

of hope and healing. Their ministry goes beyond technical counselling; it is a deeply pastoral service rooted in the Church's mission of promoting the dignity of marriage, the wellbeing of families, and the common good of society.

Trained counsellors are also encouraged to raise awareness of the availability of counselling services within their parish communities. Many families continue to struggle in silence due to lack of information or fear of stigma. By making these services known and accessible, counsellors can help create safe spaces where families feel supported in seeking guidance.

The successful launch of the training programme in the Archdiocese of Bulawayo marks an important step in the wider implementation of the project across the remaining dioceses in Zimbabwe.

As the programme unfolds, it is hoped that the growing network of trained counsellors will contribute significantly to strengthening marriages, promoting healthy family relationships, and nurturing communities rooted in Christian values.

Ultimately, the Church's ministry to families seeks to accompany couples and households in their vocation of love, fidelity, and life-giving communion. At a time when the institution of the family faces many challenges, initiatives such as this reaffirm the Church's commitment to walking with families and proclaiming the Gospel of the Family as a source of hope for the world.



NEWS FROM DIOCESES

2025 soccer star graces St. Michael's Ascot Mission Sunday



By SOCCOM Reporter

On 1 February 2026, St. Michael's Ascot in the Diocese of Gweru joined the global Catholic community in celebrating Mission Sunday. This special day, dedicated to the Missionary Childhood Association (MCA), highlighted the Church's commitment to nurturing young minds and fostering a missionary spirit from an early age.

The celebrations were marked by deep devotion and vibrant enthusiasm as the community gathered to reflect on the vital role children play in the life of the Church.

A Call to Nurture Young Faith

The festivities began with a Mass presided over by Reverend Fathers Z. Mapiye and A. Masuna. In a powerful homily, Fr. Masuna emphasized the importance of children as the heartbeat of the Church. He urged parents and guardians to recognize the immense value of guiding their little ones, noting that the future of the faith rests on the foundation laid today.

In a heart-warming liturgical rite, the parish welcomed new members into the Mission-

ary Childhood Association. These young disciples expressed their eagerness to grow in faith and serve their community, embodying the MCA's spirit of service.

Soccer Star Washington Navaya Joins the Celebration

Adding to the day's excitement was the presence of the 2025 Zimbabwean Premier League Soccer Star of the Year, Washington Navaya. Accompanied by his family and several prominent media figures, Navaya joined the congregation to support the youth.

Fr. Alfonse Masuna, the Parish Priest of St. Michael's, explained that the parish purposefully invites diverse guests of honour to MCA events to inspire the children.

"This year we thought of inviting Washington Navaya, Soccer Star of the year 2025," Fr. Masuna shared. "Since we were also talking about drug and substance abuse, he told our children not to be lured into the evil of drug and substance abuse. He told them that one might not be gifted academically but can still make it in life by a natural talent like playing soccer."

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A Missionary Childhood child shows off the Bible during a Bible procession.

Children Evangelising to Children

The impact of the event was clearly visible among the laity. Gracious Chirove, one of the attendees, described the atmosphere as 'unique and awe-inspiring'.

"The way they engaged the Missionary Childhood children and how they actively participate was very good and amazing," Chirove noted. "It made other parents who do not bring their children to Missionary Childhood want also to bring their children to participate."

This active participation perfectly illustrated the MCA motto: "Children evangelising to other children."

Fundraising for the Mission

Beyond spiritual growth, the day served as a successful fundraiser for the association's activities. Washington Navaya contributed generously, gifting the children US\$100 and a soccer ball, along with a T-shirt for the Parish

Priest.

The MCA at St. Michael's has a strong track record of self-sufficiency and charity. Fr. Masuna reported that last year, the children raised US\$1,750 through various initiatives. From those funds, they donated US\$350 to the parish, while the remainder covered congress fees and transport for underprivileged members.

Looking Ahead

The celebration served as a poignant reminder of how faith, family, sport, and discipline intersect to nurture a child's spiritual journey. As the congregation dispersed, there was a palpable sense of renewed commitment to the Church's mission.

The young missionaries are already looking forward to their next major milestone: a special event planned for Mother's Day later this year.



Caritas Chinhoyi joins Mashonaland Central in commemorating world wetlands day



By SOCCOM Reporter

Caritas Zimbabwe, Diocese of Chinhoyi, joined Mashonaland Central Province in commemorating World Wetlands Day in Shamva District on 6 February 2026 at Lion's Head Resort and Nature Conservancy.

The commemorations were held under the theme "Wetlands and Traditional Knowledge: Celebrating Cultural Heritage."

Caritas is widely recognised for promoting environmental protection through initiatives that empower communities to take a leading role in safeguarding natural resources. Among its key interventions are the promotion of dam construction, environmental conservation programmes, and community-based environmental stewardship.

In the Diocese of Chinhoyi, Caritas continues to support the training and establishment of environmental protection committees. The organisation also promotes practical conservation measures such as the construction of gabions and riparian buffers, gully reclamation, and the adoption of regenerative agriculture.

Speaking during the commemorations,

the Mashonaland Central Permanent Secretary for Provincial Affairs and Devolution, Mr T. Maregere, who represented the Minister of State for Provincial Affairs and Devolution, Hon. Christopher Magomo (MP), emphasised the importance of valuing traditional knowledge in environmental conservation.

"When we value traditional knowledge, we honour our national heritage and secure our children's future," said Mr. Maregere.

This year's World Wetlands Day theme resonates strongly with Zimbabwe's rich cultural heritage, highlighting the important role that indigenous knowledge and traditional practices play in preserving wetlands and protecting the natural environment for future generations.



Farewell and thanksgiving for school head at Silveira High School



Silveira High School Head, Mr C. Vhurumuku, actively participates in his farewell Mass.

By SOCCOM Reporter

Masses gathered in thanksgiving on 7 February 2026 to bid farewell to former Silveira High School Head, Mr. C. Vhurumuku, as he retired from service. Although he served for only a year, his remarkable impact left a lasting legacy that the school community proudly celebrated.

The Catholic Diocese of Masvingo's Responsible Authority, Rt. Rev. Bishop Raymond Tapiwa Mupandasekwa, Very Rev. Fr. Oscar Chagweda, the Education Secretary Sr. Annah Bondeka, together with guests, students, teachers, support staff, heads from sister schools, and trainee nurses from Silveira Nursing School, filled the assembly with applause and admiration as they recognised Mr. Vhurumuku's excellence.

During the Thanksgiving Mass, His Lordship Bishop Mupandasekwa praised Mr. Vhurumuku for his commitment to raising the standards of the school. "In such a short time, he has managed to raise the standards of education in the school,

which were already high. We give thanks for such excellence," said Bishop Mupa.

The celebration also provided an opportunity to present the outstanding 2025 ZIMSEC examination results. At A-Level, learners who achieved top scores obtained 25 points, while the majority attained between 15 and 20 points, contributing to an impressive pass rate of 99.10 percent. At O-Level, the school recorded a 99.5 percent pass rate, with 114 students earning five or more As, while the top candidate achieved 17 As.



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Silveira High School students

In his final remarks, Mr. Vhurumuku expressed heartfelt appreciation to his family and to the Diocese for their unwavering support throughout his career, which began in 1984. He served at various academic institutions, including St Antony High School, where he taught Biology and rose through the ranks to become Senior Master and later Deputy Head, earning a Merit Award for academic excellence and also serving as Acting Head. His leadership later peaked at Gokomere High School, where he produced outstanding results, including the best candidate at national level. His appointment to Silveira High School at the beginning of 2025 became yet another chapter of excellence in his distinguished career. "I was worried when I was transferred to Silveira School, which already had existing high standards. I did not know how I would perform, but through the grace of God, the journey became successful." He described his career as interesting because he always associated it with good results. He also extended gratitude for the warm reception he received from his predecessor, staff, and learners, and thanked the examination candidates for giving him what he described as a "resounding send-off." "As I hand over the baton to the incoming head, I will keep the school in my prayers so that its standards remain high."

The students also had words that captured his leadership philosophy. "It is your attitude that determines your altitude. Always develop a sense of ownership of your school." The farewell concluded with the school's Head Girl delivering an emotional tribute. "We wish to express our sincere appreciation to our former Head for his leadership and dedication to Silveira High School. Your tireless efforts have laid a strong foundation for the growth and success of the Silveira community."



Sr. Anna Bondeka (centre, above).



Bulawayo faithful mark Ash Wednesday as Archbishop calls for digital fasting



Archbishop Alex Thomas applies ashes.

By **SOCOM Reporter**

Catholics in Bulawayo joined the global Church in observing Ash Wednesday on 19 February 2026, marking the beginning of the Lenten season, with large numbers of faithful gathering at St Mary's Cathedral Minor Basilica for liturgical celebrations.

The main local observance took place at St Mary's Cathedral Minor Basilica, where Archbishop Alex Thomas presided over a well-attended evening Mass, the third celebration of the day, with the cathedral filled to capacity.

"Even though it was in the evening, the third Mass of the day, still the Basilica was filled to the brim," the Archbishop noted, reflecting on the strong turnout of the faithful.

In his homily, Archbishop Thomas highlighted the significance of Ash Wednesday as a moment of reflection and repentance, describing the ashes as a powerful symbol of conversion.

"For us, ashes are a profound symbol of our faith, a reminder to repent of our sins," he said.

He also observed that Ash Wednesday and Good Friday remain two occasions when many Catholics, including those less active in church life, return to participate in the liturgy.

A journey of spiritual renewal

Framing Lent as a period of transformation, the Archbishop described the season as a spiritual "crossing over" from sin to new life. "The purpose of this Mass was for one to prepare themselves for the feast of Easter... Lent is a crossing over from sin to a new life," he said, drawing parallels with Christ's resurrection.

He reminded the faithful that the Easter season renews baptismal promises, calling believers to move away from past ways of life and embrace spiritual renewal.

A call to interior conversion

Reflecting on the reading from the Book of Joel (2:12–18), Archbishop Thomas emphasised the importance of inner transformation rather than external appearances.

"Render your heart to God, not external appearances," he urged, cautioning against excessive concern with outward image.

He encouraged all members of the Church—young and old alike—to participate in Lenten practices of prayer and fasting.

"A fast must be called for all ages—the newlyweds, the elderly, and young people," he said, underscoring the universal call to re-



A cross section of St. Mary's Cathedral, Byo.

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penitance.

Prayer, Fasting and Charity

The Archbishop reaffirmed the three traditional pillars of Lent—prayer, fasting, and almsgiving—as essential tools for spiritual growth.

“The season of Lent is a time to experience the compassion and mercy of the Lord... and to be compassionate with each other, doing works of charity,” he said.

He explained that fasting is not merely about self-discipline, but about drawing closer to God and overcoming temptation.

“To overcome temptation, we need the power to be closer to God,” he noted, encouraging the faithful to shift their focus from physical to spiritual nourishment.

In addition to spiritual benefits, he also pointed to the holistic value of fasting, including its positive impact on personal discipline and wellbeing.

The Archbishop further called on the faithful to practise restraint in speech, urging them to avoid gossip and harmful language, and instead cultivate kindness within families and communities.

Digital fasting challenge

In a message directed particularly at young people, Archbishop Thomas proposed a form of “digital fasting” during Lent.

“During the next 40 days of Lent, can we all agree that for the first 15 minutes of the morning, we restrain from picking up your cellphone? Instead, pick up your Bible and let the Lord speak to you,” he said.

While acknowledging the benefits of technology, he warned against its misuse.

“This little phone in your pocket is doing too much harm to yourself and others around you. Be responsible Catholics. Let us not be slaves of our gadgets.”

He also cautioned against the use of mobile phones during Mass, stressing the importance of reverence in worship.

From social media to service

Archbishop Thomas challenged the faithful to redirect their time and resources toward acts of charity, particularly in support of the poor and vulnerable.

“Use that money you have reserved for your data and assist someone who is poor,” he urged.

He encouraged young people in particular to engage in acts of compassion, including visiting the elderly and those who are isolated.

“Find time to visit the elderly... sit down with them, talk to them, and pray with them,” he said.

The Archbishop also called on the faithful to move away from excessive focus on entertainment and instead actively participate in the life and mission of the Church.

A season begins

As the Lenten season begins, Catholics in Bulawayo and around the world now embark on a 40-day journey of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving, preparing spiritually for the celebration of Easter.



Masvingo diocese empowers young altar servers in first workshop



An altar server makes her contribution during the altar servers' workshop.

By Maxine Kundishora

More than 300 learners and the youth from across the Catholic Diocese of Masvingo gathered at Gokomere Mission from 20–22 February 2026 for the first-ever diocesan Altar Servers Workshop.

This initiative sought to deepen understanding of altar serving and inspire young Catholics to become active servants in the house of the Lord.

The workshop was organised by the Altar Servers Association of the Diocese while Mass was celebrated by the Very Rev. Dr. Oscar P. Chagweda.

During his homily, he spoke to the young servers, reminding them of their sacred calling,

"This is what you have been called to do, to work for Christ. As such, serving at your parishes is something to take pride in," he said.

"Being a server is important; never underestimate that. No Mass is ever held without servers, even the great Pope Saint Paul VI labelled altar servers as 'little priests,' he added.

He also shared that his vocation to the

priesthood began through many years of serving at the altar at Our Lady of Lourdes Parish in Chivhu, accompanying priests to mass, which stirred in him the desire to become a priest.

Biblically, altar serving traces its roots to the early Church, where young acolytes assisted priests during the Eucharistic celebration, a role historically linked to the minor order of acolyte, recognised in the Church's liturgical structure.

Rooted in experience and passion for service, the workshop was facilitated by catholic servers Marshal Samson and Takunda Mashiri, who combined practical demonstrations with theory on mass proceedings, liturgical seasons, and altar server responsibilities.

With zeal, the intrigued "little priests" took part in all the step-by-step walkthroughs and question & answer sessions to address common misconceptions.

"We are happy because this is the first workshop of its kind. When these children return home, they will serve Mass more diligently and assist their priests better. We believe that common mistakes during mass will

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Altar servers perform a demonstration procession during the workshop.

soon be history," said Precious Mudadigwa, a teacher accompanying learners from Nyaningwe Primary School.

While St Anthony High School teacher and catechist Kasiyani Kufakunesu echoed similar sentiments,

"This workshop will help young people in their liturgical work as altar servers.

They have gained knowledge about what they are supposed to do at the altar and will cascade this to others who could not attend," he said.

The organizer, Rev Fr Llyod Muzenda, expressed satisfaction with the turnout and impact of the event,

"As the Spiritual Director of Altar Servers in the Diocese, I am very happy with the attendance as evidenced by the numbers. We hope to host similar workshops in April and August, and we encourage more young people from all our parishes to participate."

"Thank you to the Bishop, Rt Rev. Sekuru Mupandasekwa, fellow organizers, parents, and parish priests for your support thus far," he added.

Olean Chavani, a participating learner from Gokomere Mission, remarked, "As an altar server, I had a lot of questions that were answered today, and I would like to thank the

facilitators and Fr L. Muzenda for hosting this unforgettable workshop for us."

More learners attested that the workshop influenced them to become altar servers, as they gained interest through networking and the sessions, most of whom testified that the workshop was eye-opening.

"I used to think serving was only for a few chosen people, but now I know we are all called to serve for Christ with love," a learner from Mukaro Primary shyly admitted.

The event was a step towards preserving the Catholicism of the Church by investing in young people, and could not have been done any better.

It truly promoted the spirit of service at the altar, being passed from one generation to the next — catching them young and inspiring them to work for Christ by serving in His holy house.



25 years of faithful service, countless blessings and dedication



Fr. Mukumba shows off his Papal blessing.

By Pauline Chateuka

The faithful of the Archdiocese of Harare gathered on 21 February 2026 at Immaculate Conception, New Highfields Parish, to celebrate the Reverend Fr B. K. Mukumba's silver jubilee.

The main activity of the day was the Mass, which was celebrated by His Grace Archbishop Robert Christopher Ndlovu.

Priests from the Archdiocese came in large numbers to support their brother priest, while the Mukumba family, guilds, and members of the Catholic Church from different parishes also attended the event.

The celebration was filled with song, prayer, and heartfelt tributes. The speeches from representatives of different groups showed the impact Fr Mukumba has had on their spiritual growth and communal life.

Many spoke of his guidance during challenging times and his ability to inspire hope. In his address, Archbishop Ndlovu commended Fr Mukumba for his steadfast commitment to his vocation, describing his ministry as a testimony of perseverance, humility, and deep pastoral care.

"Ndinoda kutenda baba Mukumba asi dai ndisina mwoyo murefu pangadai pasina 25 years dzemhemberero asi shamhu yandinoshandisa inoita kuti vave vanhu vakashin-

ga. Ndinoda kuti kwavari rambai muchidzidza nekushinga kuti musvike mu50 years. Ndinoda kutenda vatenderi nekuchengeta uye rutsigiro rwamunopa vafudzi venyu."

For 25 years, Fr Mukumba has faithfully answered the call to serve, dedicating his life to proclaiming the Gospel, administering the sacraments, and shepherding God's people. Those who have worked closely with him describe him as a priest deeply rooted in spiritual growth.

"We want to thank the Lord for Mukoma Bar-na, he is very important in our family. Tinoti kwamuri mukoma rambai muine mugariro unodzidzisa vatenderi kuti vakaruruma havana chavanotyia."

The silver jubilee was not only a commemoration of years served but also a reaffirmation of the enduring value of priestly ministry in today's world.

It was a moment to reflect on the countless lives touched, the sacraments celebrated, and the communities strengthened through Fr Mukumba's faithful service.

In his speech, Fr Mukumba thanked Archbishop Ndlovu for his unwavering support.

"I am forever grateful for Sekuru's guidance; without him I wouldn't have made it to 25 years as a priest," he said.

As the Archdiocese marked this significant milestone, the faithful prayed for continued blessings upon Fr Mukumba for good health, renewed strength, and many more fruitful years in the vineyard of the Lord.



Archbishop Ndlovu (centre) attentively follows the proceedings.

Historic ground-breaking ceremony for science centre at Bondolfi Teachers' College



Bishop Mupandasekwa breaks the ground.

By Maxine Kundishora

History was made on 16 March 2026 as Bondolfi Teachers' College held a groundbreaking ceremony for the construction of a science centre to support its Diploma in Education programme, with a particular focus on STEM subjects.

The groundbreaking ceremony marked the beginning of a new chapter for the institution, with the planned establishment of a Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) hub set to equip teacher trainees with practical skills and innovation-driven learning.

Established in 1963, the institution has built a long-standing reputation for teacher education excellence in Zimbabwe's education sector—a legacy the new science centre seeks to strengthen.

While the college has traditionally trained primary school teachers, it is set to begin training secondary school teachers from August this year, hence the need for the science centre.

The ceremony began with Holy Mass celebrated by the responsible authority

and guest of honour, Rt Rev Bishop Raymond T. Mupa. Also present were the Very Rev. Dr Oscar P. Chagweda, Education Secretary Sr Annah Bondeka, Bondolfi Rector Rev. Fr C. Magundani, and Principal Dr E. Macharaga. Priests and religious, representatives from sister institutions, the local community, and other key stakeholders were also in attendance.

Local leadership, including Chief Charumbira, was present alongside government representatives from the Ministry of State for Provincial Affairs and Devolution, the Ministry of Higher and Tertiary Education, Innovation, Science and Technology Development, the Tertiary Education Service Council, the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education, and the Centre for Teacher Education and Materials Development (UZ).

"Education is at the heart of the Church's mission. Our Lord Himself was called 'Teacher,' and He entrusted His disciples with the task of teaching all nations. In this spirit, Bondolfi Teachers' College continues to form educators who will not only instruct in classrooms but also inspire communities," said Bishop Mupa in his address.

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Bishop Mupandasekwa elevates the Body of Christ.

Speakers commended the STEM programme, aligning the initiative with Zimbabwe's national vision for innovation, industrialisation, and scientific advancement.

In a rapidly changing world driven by technology and innovation, the demand for competent science teachers continues to grow.

"We are excited about the noble idea of channelling resources towards a science block that will promote the production of teachers for STEM," said Mr Ndanga from the Tertiary Education Service Council (TESC). The centre is expected to strength-

en practical learning, equipping trainee teachers with the knowledge and skills necessary to teach science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.

"The centre will enhance the quality of teacher training while contributing to a scientifically literate and technologically capable society," said the principal, Dr Macharaga.

"We are grateful to all stakeholders for this landmark occasion, and we look forward to the successful completion of the science centre and the opportunities it will bring to our students and the nation," she added.



Bishop Mupandasekwa receives a shovel for the groundbreaking ceremony.

Archdiocese of Harare Catholic schools launch girl guides and scouts



The Girl Guides follow the proceedings keenly during the launch.

By Pauline Chateuka

On 13 March 2026, the Archdiocese of Harare Catholic Schools launched Girl Guides and Scouts at Chishawasha Mission Primary School. As a move to strengthen leadership and discipline among learners. The event was graced by Vicar General Fr Kennedy Muguti, Chaplain Fr Tiwowoyechi Silungwe, Education Secretary Sr Monica Maparura, members of the YESS Girls Movement from different countries, and officials from the Girl Guides Association of Zimbabwe.

The initiative, which was started by Sr Hilda Madzimure, is being rolled out across Catholic schools under the Archdiocese's Education Secretariat and is designed to complement academic learning with practical life skills, character formation, and community service.

Leading the Mass at the launch, the Vicar General, Fr. Muguti, congratulated the commissioned Girl Guides and scouts, urging them to love God and their neighbours as they serve their schools and communities, stating that love is the centre of evangelism.

"As you embark on this journey, value humanity just like God. Promote the values of love, support, sharing, and complementing each other," he said

The Archdiocese of Harare Education Secretary Sr Monica applauded everyone for their efforts in making the launch a success and announced that the association was now joining the Catholic Secondary Schools Association (CASSA) programmes.

"This association is now part of the CASSA programmes. We are going to have CASSA hikes and cookouts," said Sr Monica

In her speech, the Girl Guide Association of Zimbabwe Chief Commissioner Florence Dangarembizi said the introduction of Catholic guides will strengthen the catholic ethos and mission. This will nurture the girls to be great leaders through combining faith and service.

"The association will shape compassionate leaders through building character, teaching saving, nurturing self-belief, and strengthening moral character," said Dangarembizi. Silverster Chin'anga, the Chief Commissioner of Scouts, applauded the Catholic church for the introduction of scouts and guides.

"We are delighted to welcome the Catholic schools to the Scouts in Zimbabwe. This means more publicity and members for us. We are going to bring out the desired leaders of tomorrow," he said.

All the officials expressed gratitude to Archbishop Robert Ndlovu for permitting Catholic schools in Harare to join associations that will help groom future generations of outstanding leaders.



Sisters of Our Lady congregation candidates take a new leap of faith



The new postulants can hardly hide their joy as they smile after their reception.

By SOCCOM Reporter

On 10 March 2026, the Sisters of Our Lady of Africa congregation gathered to witness a beautiful step in the journey of faith as their candidates moved into the second stage of religious formation, the Postulancy. It was a moment filled with gratitude, hope, and trust in God who continues to call hearts to follow Him. The stage of Postulancy is a very special and important time in religious life. It is a period where the young women who feel called by God begin to enter more deeply into the life, spirituality, and mission of the Congregation. During this time, they

learn what it truly means to live as religious women sharing daily life, prayer, service, and community with the Sisters. It is not only a time of learning but also a time of discernment, where both the postulants and the Congregation continue to listen carefully to the voice of God. This stage helps them to grow spiritually, emotionally, and communally, preparing their hearts and minds for the next sacred step, the Novitiate. The Novitiate is the time when one enters more profoundly into religious consecration, and therefore, the Postulancy becomes a foundation, helping them understand the values, charism, and commitment required to give their lives to

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God fully. During the Eucharistic celebration, the homily emphasized several important aspects of religious life, such as following the call of God.

Fr Mapanda reminded the gathering that God continues to call young people today just as He did in the past.

"Responding to that call requires courage, trust, and generosity. Like the disciples, those who are called are invited to leave behind their fears and walk with Christ in faith," he said

He urged the candidates to live a healthy community life and love like Christ.

"Religious life is not lived alone. It is lived

in a community where sisters support, encourage, and walk with one another. A healthy community is built on respect, understanding, patience, and shared prayer. In such a community, each sister becomes a gift to the other."

"The heart of religious life is love, a love that reflects the love of Christ Himself. The homily reminded us that a religious sister is called to serve with compassion, humility, and generosity, especially towards those most in need".

The postulants were wished a journey filled with growth, joy, and deeper intimacy with God by the congregation.

NEWS IN PICTURES







Amid a noisy world, Christians called to rediscover the heart of their faith



Participants pose for a photo with the monks after a day well spent with the Lord.

By Fr. Johnston Z. Mlambo

At a time when faith is increasingly questioned and religious identity often blurred by competing beliefs and cultural pressures, Christians are being called to rediscover what is truly distinctive about their faith.

This was the central focus of a Day of Reflection held at Christ the Word Monastery in Macheke on 14 February 2024, the feast of Saints Cyril and Methodius.

On a day widely associated with expressions of romantic love, a group of lay faithful and religious chose instead to reflect on what participants described as “the greatest love of all”—the love of God.

The recollection, facilitated by Fr. Barnabas, O.S.B., invited participants to step back from the noise and distractions of modern life and reflect deeply on the uniqueness of the Christian journey.

A faith journey in a complex world

Fr. Barnabas began by situating the Christian vocation within the reality of today’s world—one marked by religious plurality, competing spiritualities, and a growing tendency to compromise values in the name of relevance.

“The ultimate goal of the Christian journey is

the Kingdom of Heaven,” he noted, adding that this journey unfolds in a world where “everything is being questioned.”

In such an environment, he challenged participants to ask a fundamental question:

What makes Christianity distinct?

Four pillars of Christian identity

In his reflection, Fr. Barnabas outlined four key characteristics that distinguish the Christian faith from other religious traditions and spiritual movements.

A personal God

First, he emphasised that the Christian God is not distant or abstract, but deeply personal.

Drawing from the Lord’s Prayer, he explained that Jesus teaches believers to address God as “Our Father,” revealing a relationship rooted in intimacy and trust.

This personal dimension, he noted, sets Christianity apart from many religious systems where God is perceived as distant or impersonal.

A God who seeks humanity

Secondly, Fr. Barnabas highlighted that, unlike many spiritual paths that focus on humanity’s search for God, Christianity proclaims a God who actively seeks out humanity.

“In a world where people are constantly

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Choosing the better part—one that cannot be taken away.

searching for meaning through various spiritualities, the Christian message is clear—God is the one who comes in search of us,” he said.

This initiative of God, he explained, is at the heart of salvation history.

A religion of grace, not Karma

The third distinction lies in the nature of salvation.

Fr. Barnabas clarified that Christianity is not based on a system of karma—where actions automatically determine reward or punishment—but is fundamentally a religion of grace.

“God’s love and salvation are not earned; they are given,” he emphasised.

This understanding challenges believers to move beyond a transactional view of faith and embrace a relationship rooted in divine mercy.

The mystery of the incarnation

Finally, he pointed to the Incarnation as the defining mystery of Christianity.

“The Word became flesh,” he said, underscoring that God does not remain distant but enters human history.

In Jesus Christ, God comes to meet humanity, sharing in human experience and revealing His love in a concrete and tangible way.

“Our God is not one who waits for us to go to Him—He comes to us and becomes like us,” he reflected.

A challenge to respond

Having outlined these core truths, Fr. Barnabas

left participants with a deeply personal and challenging question:

“How are we responding to this kind of God amid distractions, too much noise, and competing priorities?”

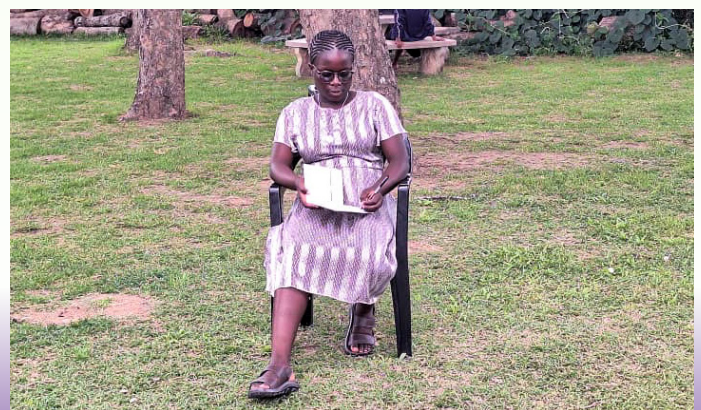
The question invited participants to examine not only what they believe, but how they live out their faith in daily life.

A day of renewal

Participants described the recollection as a meaningful and spiritually enriching experience, offering a moment of pause, reflection, and renewal.

In a world often marked by noise, distraction, and competing voices, the gathering at Macheke stood as a reminder that the Christian journey is ultimately about relationship—with a God who is personal, who seeks humanity, who saves by grace, and who comes to dwell among His people.

For those who attended, it was indeed a day well spent—one that rekindled the call to live the Christian faith with clarity, conviction, and renewed purpose.



YOUTH CORNER

Lenten journey of mercy: Catholic students visit Chikurubi maximum prison



The youth uplift the souls of the prisoners with hymns that reach and touch their hearts.

By Benjamin T. Matsika

On Saturday, 28 March 2026, Catholic students from higher tertiary institutions under the Jesuit Youth Ministry concluded their Lenten program with a profound act of mercy - a visit to Chikurubi Maximum Security Prison.

More than an outreach, the encounter became a living expression of Lent's call to compassion, solidarity, and human dignity.

Lent is a season that invites Christians to walk closely with those who are vulnerable, forgotten, and on the margins of society. In this spirit, the students entered the prison not merely to see its walls, but to meet the human beings within. Men longing for hope, forgiveness, and new beginnings.

The day was marked by fellowship, prayer, and reflection, culminating in the celebration of Holy Mass led by Fr Peter Banda, SJ and the presentation of donations to Section C. In these simple gestures, the students shared the love and solidarity of the Christian community.

University of Zimbabwe Catholic Society President, Tomutenda Chakoma, reflected on the experience:

"Today's visit to Chikurubi has deeply touched my heart and changed my perspective in ways I did not expect. For the first time, I truly understand what it means when we are called to pray for those in prison. It is no longer about words or a passing thought — it is real and an urgent need. These are people who carry pain, regret, hope, and a longing for grace. They need our prayers now more than ever."

For many students, the encounter was transformative. Fortunate Misihairahwi, a software engineering student from Harare Institute of Technology, shared:

"I met people who haven't had a single visitor in months, maybe years. No friends, no family. The loneliness must be suffocating. It hit me - a simple visit can be a beacon of hope."

The visit reminded all present that while

physical walls may confine the body, God's mercy has the power to free the heart. In this sacred season, fasting and prayer are inseparable from acts of compassion that restore hope to those who feel forgotten.

As Holy Week unfolds, the students continue to pray for the prisoners, that their hearts may be renewed, their spirits strengthened, and their lives transformed through the healing and resurrection of Christ.



Harare Cathedral youth host masquerade valentine's dinner for a cause



What is a Valentine dinner without good food? Youths are served a meal.

By Marygrace T. Venge

On the evening of 13 February 2026, the Cathedral Youth and Vocations hosted a spectacular Valentine's Dinner under the theme "Masquerade Black Tie" at the prestigious Rainbow Towers Hotel. The event, which ran from 19:00 to 23:00, was a night marked by elegance, fellowship, and purpose. Guests arrived dressed in exquisite black-tie attire, adorned with beautifully crafted masquerade masks that added a touch of mys-

tery and sophistication to the atmosphere. The venue radiated romance and refinement, perfectly reflecting the spirit of Valentine's celebrations while upholding the dignity and mission of the Church. The evening was further elevated by outstanding entertainment from celebrated artists, including Enzo Ishall, DJ Yhayha, Ras Pompy, and Buffalo Souljah. Their vibrant performances brought energy and excitement to the event, creating a joyful atmosphere that resonated with both the youth and invited guests.

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What is a Valentine dinner without good food? Youths are served a meal.

The music, carefully curated for the occasion, blended celebration with positivity, making the night both uplifting and memorable. The presence and active participation of the Youth Advisors added immense value to the event, demonstrating unity, mentorship, and continued guidance within the Cathedral Youth and Vocations ministry. Their involvement highlighted the strong collaboration between leadership and young people in advancing the mission of the Church.

Beyond the glamour and entertainment, the central focus of the evening was its noble cause. The Valentine's Dinner served as a fundraising initiative in support of the Youth and Missionary Childhood, specifically aimed at acquiring a PA system and other essential liturgical equipment. These resources will greatly enhance worship services, youth programmes, and missionary activities, empowering young people to serve with excellence and impact within the Church. The programme featured fine dining, inspiring moments, music, and fellowship that strengthened bonds among attendees. It was more than a social gathering; it

was a powerful expression of generosity, commitment, and shared vision. The Cathedral Youth and Vocations Masquerade Black Tie Valentine's Dinner was truly a resounding success—a night where elegance met purpose, celebration met mission, and community came together for a greater cause.





PARLIAMENT WATCH

Public hearings or managed consent?

By Fr. Johnston Mlambo

This month, in our Parliament Watch column, we focus on the recently held public hearings on the Constitution of Zimbabwe Amendment (No. 3) Bill, 2026, which began on 30 March and concluded on 4 April 2026. The public hearings, which are meant to provide citizens with an opportunity to express their views on the proposed constitutional changes, have already been flagged by the Veritas Zimbabwe as constitutionally inadequate. From reports gathered from independent media houses such as NewsDay and Heart & Soul TV, as well as widely circulated social media videos, a troubling pattern is emerging.

These hearings, rather than being open platforms for democratic participation, appear in some instances to be marked by intimidation, exclusion, and the silencing of dissenting voices. These concerns are now corroborated by findings from the Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission, which deployed monitoring

teams across all provinces during the hearings.

In a statement, the Commission noted: "The commission observed instances where participants with divergent views to the proposed amendments were threatened, silenced, denied opportunities to contribute and in some instances physically attacked." Reports of harassment of journalists and the denial of opportunities to speak for those opposed to the Bill are therefore not isolated claims but part of a broader pattern now recognised by a constitutional body. Particularly disturbing are revelations that, in some areas, access to the hearings themselves has been controlled. The ZHRC observed that: "Individuals and groups opposed to CAB3 were denied audience... whilst those in support of the Constitutional Amendment were able to give their views, the Commission noted the harassment and intimidation of dissenting voices." In Mashonaland West, the situation reportedly took an even more alarming turn: "In Mhondoro Ngezi, men holding whips were

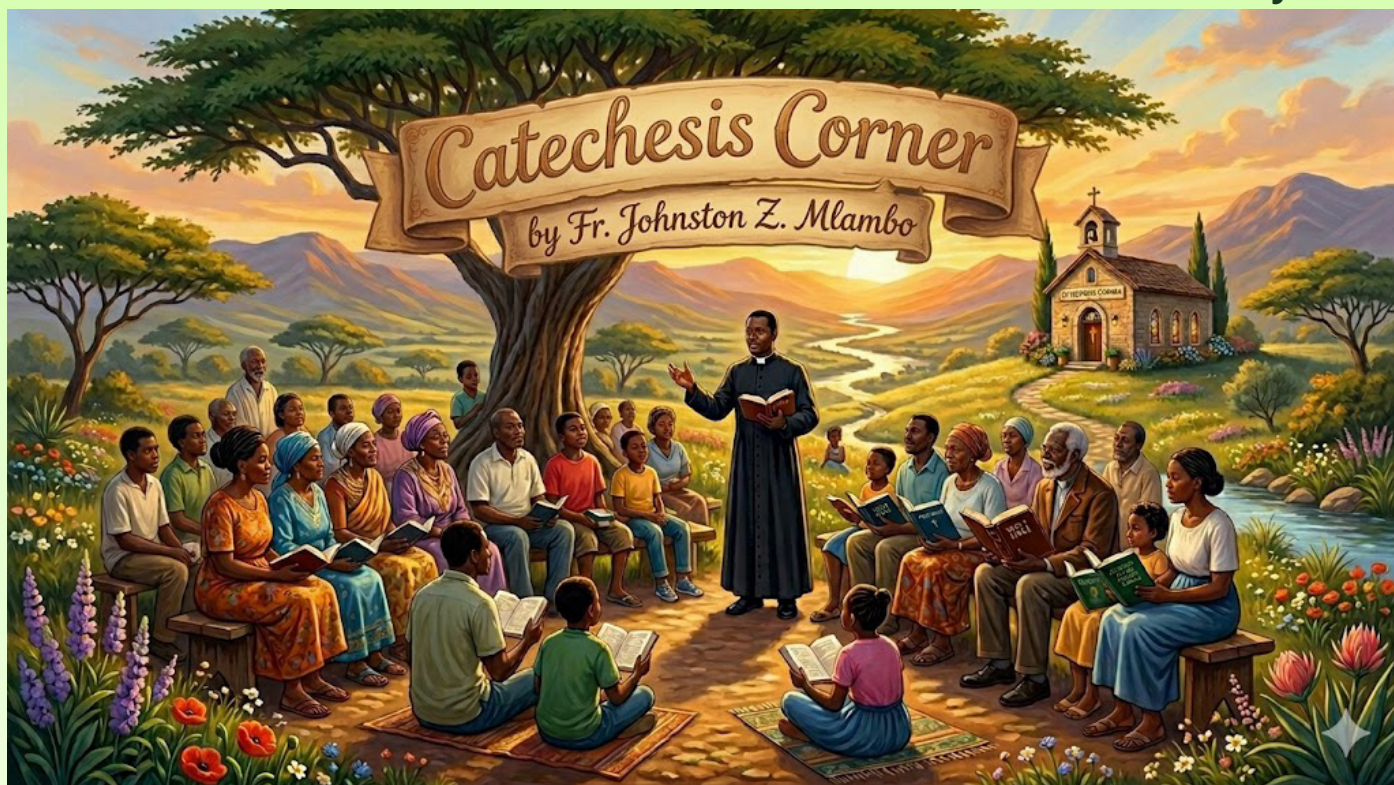
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involved in screening participants at the door." Such developments raise serious questions about the integrity of a process that is meant to reflect the will of the people. Further reports indicate that the public hearings are increasingly turning into avenues to deceitfully manufacture consent, rather than genuinely capture the views of citizens. It has emerged that some individuals supporting the Bill are allegedly planted within the crowds, raising their hands using identifiable signals so that they are prioritised to speak in favour of the amendments. At the same time, those holding opposing views are reportedly being denied the opportunity to contribute, creating a distorted impression of overwhelming support. Equally concerning is the treatment of journalists. There have been reports of harassment and restrictions placed on media practitioners covering the hearings, with some allegedly being forced to delete recorded material under pressure. The Media Institute of Southern Africa Zimbabwe has already expressed concern over the safety of journalists, urging authorities to uphold constitutional provisions guaranteeing freedom of expression and access to information. Yet, what is even more disturbing is the silence—or selective reporting—by public broadcasters and some state media houses. Despite mounting evidence of disruptions, intimidation, and exclusion, these outlets continue to present the hearings as or-

derly and widely supported processes. This level of misrepresentation is not only alarming but deeply troubling, as it creates a false national narrative. One is left to wonder whether some journalists, fully aware of the realities on the ground, are compelled to report otherwise simply to preserve their positions. Such a situation, if true, points to a media environment under strain, where truth becomes secondary to survival. The implications of this are profound. A nation cannot meaningfully participate in shaping its future if access to truth is compromised. The Constitutional Amendment Bill itself proposes far-reaching changes, including the extension of terms of office, alterations to the electoral framework, and increased executive influence in key state institutions. Given the weight of these proposals, the integrity of the consultation process is not optional—it is essential. The Zimbabwe Human Rights Commission has reminded all stakeholders of their obligations, stating that: "The constitutional amendment process must align with obligations under international and regional human rights law," including the protection of freedom of expression, participation in public affairs, and equality before the law. As the hearings continue, it is becoming increasingly important for authorities to ensure that the process remains credible, inclusive, and genuinely reflective of the people's voice. Without this, the legitimacy of both the process and its outcomes will remain in question.



Some scenes from public hearings (Photos courtesy of thehararetimeszw).



Understanding Divine Revelation: when God comes to meet us

In our previous catechesis (lesson), we reflected on how human beings can come to know God by using reason; we saw how we can know God a little by using our own minds.

When we look at the beauty of creation—the sun, the stars, and how nature works — we can realise that there must be a Creator behind all things.

This natural knowledge of God is important, but it has its limits.

By our own efforts alone, we cannot fully understand who God truly is or what his loving plan for humanity is (see Catechism of the Catholic Church [CCC 50]).

This is where Divine Revelation comes in.

God takes the first step

Revelation simply means that God reveals himself to us. It is not something human beings discovered by their own intelligence. Rather, it is something God freely chose to make known. To put it in more simple terms, Revelation means God chooses to show us who he is. It is a free gift from him. We did not find it out on our own.

Out of love, God decided to show us who he is and what he desires for us. The Catechism tells us that God revealed his “plan of

loving goodness”, a plan that existed from all eternity. This plan is centred on bringing human beings into communion with him.

God’s deepest desire is that we may come to know him as our Father, love him, and share in his divine life. Through Revelation, God makes it possible for us to know him far more deeply than our natural abilities could ever allow.

Revelation happens through words and actions

God did not reveal himself all at once. Instead, he revealed himself gradually throughout history.

The Catechism explains that Revelation takes place through both deeds and words. In other words, God speaks to humanity not only through what he says but also through what he does.

For example:

- God created the world and continues to sustain it.
- He acted in history by guiding and saving his people.
- He spoke through prophets who explained his will.

Through these actions and words, God slowly prepared humanity to understand his full revelation.

The early Church Father St. Irenaeus described this process in a beautiful way. He said that God gradually allowed humanity to become accustomed to him, just as God also came to dwell among us. This preparation reached its highest point when God himself entered human history.

God reveals Himself from the beginning

The story of Revelation begins at the very start of human history.

God revealed himself to Adam and Eve, inviting them to live in friendship with him. Even after sin entered the world, God did not abandon humanity. Instead, he promised salvation and continued guiding human beings toward redemption.

This shows us something very important: God never stops seeking humanity, even when humanity turns away from him.

The covenant with Noah

After the flood, God made a covenant with Noah. A covenant is a sacred promise between God and humanity.

Through this covenant, God showed that he still cared for all people, not only a small group. The covenant with Noah was meant for all nations and all peoples of the earth. It reminded humanity that God's plan of salvation was universal.

God chooses Abraham

Later, God called Abraham and asked him to leave his homeland and trust in God's promise. Through Abraham, God began forming a people who would carry the promise of salvation.

God promised Abraham that all nations would be blessed through him. This promise was not only for Abraham's descendants but for the whole world.

The people of Israel would later become the guardians of this promise, preparing the way for the coming of the Saviour.

God forms the people of Israel

God continued his revelation by forming the nation of Israel. He freed them from slavery in Egypt and made a covenant with them at Mount Sinai.

Through Moses, God gave them the Law so that they would know how to live as his people. The Law helped them recognise the one true God and live according to his will.

Later, God spoke through the prophets, who

reminded the people to remain faithful and announced the coming of a future Saviour. The prophets also spoke about a new covenant that God would establish—a covenant written not on stone tablets but in the hearts of people.

Throughout this time, many holy men and women kept alive the hope of salvation. Among them stands the most perfect example of faith and openness to God's plan: the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Jesus Christ: the fullness of revelation

All these stages of Revelation were preparing humanity for one decisive moment in history.

That moment is Jesus Christ.

The Catechism teaches that in Jesus, God has said everything he wanted to say to humanity. Jesus is not simply another prophet or messenger. He is the Son of God made man, the perfect and final Word of the Father.

Through his life, teachings, death and resurrection, Jesus reveals the true face of God. When we look at Christ, we see who God really is.

For this reason, there will be no new public revelation after Jesus Christ. God has already given us the fullness of his revelation in him.

What about private revelations?

Sometimes in history there are reported apparitions or messages, such as those connected to certain saints. The Church may recognise some of these as private revelations.

However, these do not add anything new to the faith. Their purpose is only to help believers live the Gospel more faithfully in a particular time and place. They cannot replace or surpass the Revelation given in Jesus Christ.

Our response to God's Revelation

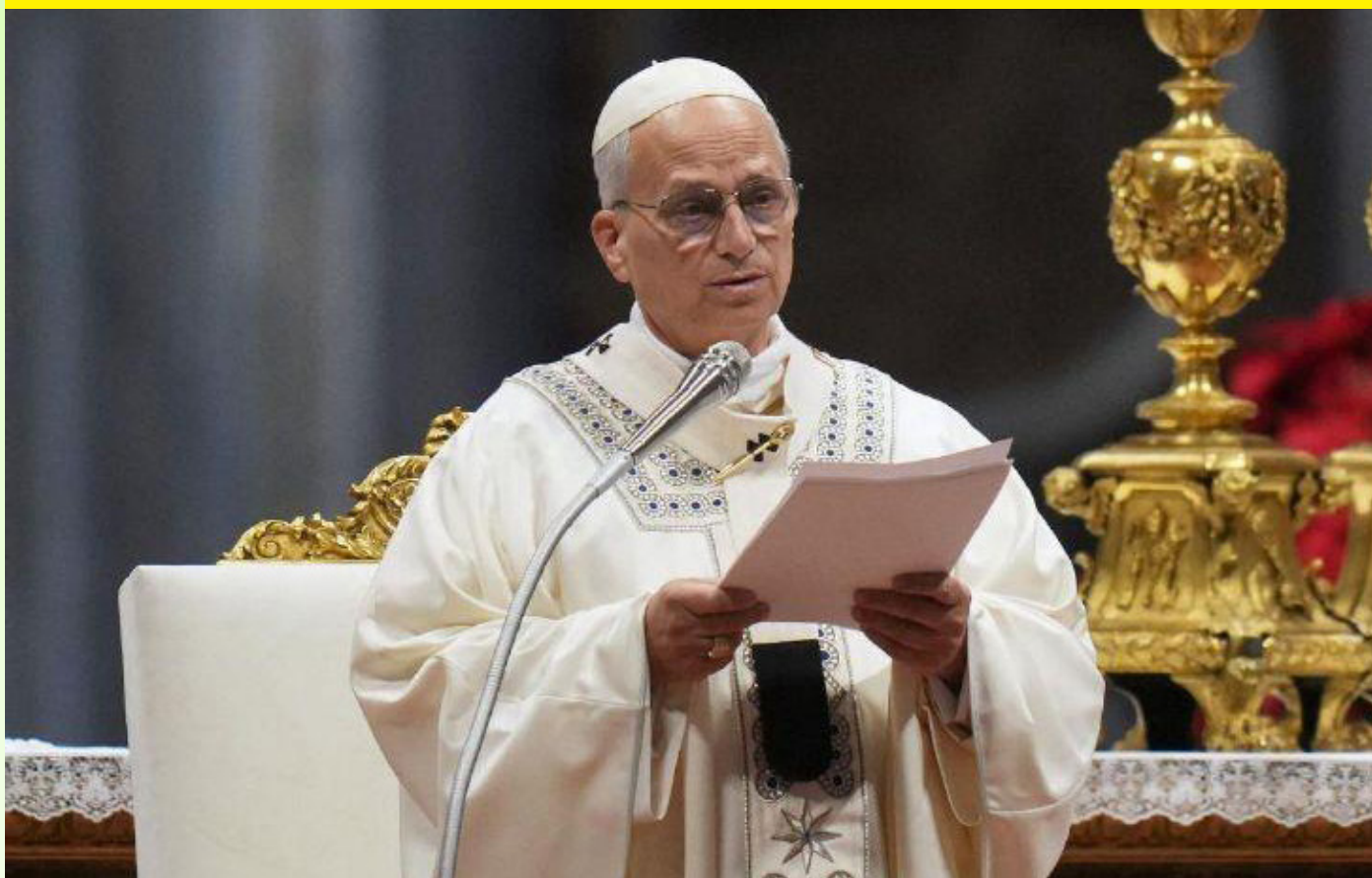
Revelation is not simply information about God. It is an invitation to a relationship.

God reveals himself so that we may:

- Know him
- Love him
- Respond to him with faith
- Share in his divine life

Through Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit, we are invited to become children of God and to live in communion with him.

NEWS FROM THE VATICAN



Pope Leo XIV urges deeper interior life in message for World Day of Prayer for Vocations

By Fr. Johnston Mlambo

Pope Leo XIV on 16 March 2026 issued a message calling on the faithful—especially young people—to rediscover the voice of God within their hearts, urging a return to prayer, silence, and deeper reflection as the foundation for discerning one's vocation.

In his message for the 63rd World Day of Prayer for Vocations, to be marked on 26 April 2026, the Fourth Sunday of Easter (Good Shepherd Sunday), the Holy Father emphasised that vocation is not something imposed from outside, but a gift from God that grows within a listening and open heart.

A Message for a challenging context

At a time when many young people in Zimbabwe are navigating unemployment, economic challenges, social pressures, drug and substance abuse, rising levels of promiscuity, and an increasingly noisy digital world, the

Pope's message speaks directly to the urgent need for interior silence.

He reminds the faithful that God's voice is often not heard in confusion or haste, but in moments of stillness and prayer.

"Only the one who pauses, listens, prays and welcomes the Shepherd's gaze" can discover the beauty and purpose of life, the Pope teaches, drawing from the image of Christ as the Good Shepherd in the Gospel of John.

Vocation as a personal encounter

The Holy Father emphasises that every vocation—whether to marriage, priesthood, religious life, or service in society—begins with a personal encounter with God.

Quoting Saint Augustine, he recalls that God is "more inward than my most inward part," a message that resonates deeply in a society where many are searching for meaning amid hardship.

For Zimbabwean Catholics, this is a remind-



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er that God is not distant, but present in everyday life—in families, communities, and even in moments of struggle.

A challenge to young people

Addressing young people directly, the Pope encourages them not to be afraid to listen to God's call.

In a context where many youths are focused on survival, employment, and migration, his message invites them to also consider a deeper question: What is God asking of me?

He urges young people to:

- make time for prayer and reflection;
- engage with Scripture and the Sacraments;
- and participate actively in the life of the Church.

Through this, he says, they will discover how to offer their lives meaningfully—whether in family life, priesthood, or consecrated service. “Every vocation is an immeasurable gift,” the Pope affirms, encouraging young Zimbabweans to see their lives not as limited by circumstances, but as filled with divine purpose.

Trusting God in uncertain times

In a country where uncertainty often shapes people's choices, the Pope points to Saint Joseph as a model of trust.

Like Joseph, who accepted God's will even in confusion, the faithful are encouraged to trust that God is at work even when the path ahead is unclear.

“Life reveals itself as a continual act of trusting in the Lord,” the Pope notes—an invitation especially meaningful for many Zimbabweans

facing economic and social challenges.

A call to families and the Church

The message also places responsibility on families, parishes, and Church leaders in Zimbabwe to nurture vocations.

In the local context, this call comes at a time when parenting itself is undergoing significant shifts. Many parents, reacting to the harshness or perceived excesses of past disciplinary methods, have moved away from traditional forms of guidance and correction.

While some of those past approaches were indeed excessive, a growing concern is that in trying to shield children from hardship, some families may be over-correcting—resulting in over-protection or even indulgence.

This trend risks raising a generation that may struggle with responsibility, discipline, and the value of honest hard work.

A culture that emphasises entitlement over effort, or rights without responsibility, can weaken the moral and spiritual foundations necessary for authentic Christian living.

Strong vocations—whether to marriage, priesthood, or consecrated life—require individuals who are well formed, disciplined, and grounded in values.

The Pope's call, therefore, is not only to young people, but also to parents and communities: to create environments where faith, responsibility, and moral integrity are nurtured with wisdom, balance, and love.

A journey, not a moment

Importantly, the Pope reminds the faithful that vocation is not a one-time decision, but a life-long journey of growth.

Like a seed that needs care to grow, a vocation must be nurtured through prayer, community, and perseverance.

A word of hope

As Zimbabwe continues to face various challenges, the Pope's message offers a hopeful reminder: God is still calling, still guiding, and still present.

By turning inward in prayer and outward in service, the faithful can discover not only their personal vocation, but also contribute to building a more hopeful and faith-filled society.

Entrusting this journey to the Virgin Mary, the Pope calls on all to “pause, listen and entrust themselves” to God—so that their lives may bear fruit for the Church and the nation.

NEWS FROM THE REGION

Archdiocese of Lilongwe urges faithful to deepen love for Christ through reverent reception of the Eucharist



By Peter Dumayo

The Catholic Archdiocese of Lilongwe has called upon the lay faithful to express their love for Jesus Christ through the worthy reception of the Sacrament of the Eucharist, describing it as the source and summit of the Catholic faith and life.

The Auxiliary Bishop of the Archdiocese of Lilongwe made the call today during the Chrism Mass at Maula Cathedral.

In his homily, Bishop Mwachawa highlighted that the laity should observe the proper and reverent reception of Holy Communion. His Lordship also reminded parents of their

duty to teach children to love receiving Jesus and to grow closer to Him through the practice of Eucharistic Adoration.

"Let me remind parents that, as children are currently on holiday, they should take this opportunity to teach them to be closer to God in order to build a strong future for the Church," the Bishop stated.

In his remarks, the Laity Chairperson, Patrick Liphava, described the Bishop's call as timely and genuine, noting that the clergy are the primary guardians of the flock.

Liphava promised that the laity would utilize Small Christian Communities to implement the Bishop's guidance.



"I acknowledge that this is an important reminder, and we will ensure that through our Small Christian Communities, we address these concerns and respond to the call," Liphava added.



Zambian bishops fall victim to AI-generated fake news



**A screenshot of the scam
(Photo: ZCCB Social Communications)**

By Fr. Johnston Mlambo

In a world of rapid digital advancements, which have brought convenience and made connectivity and the sharing of information easier, an increasingly pertinent issue is how to distinguish authentic news from fake content.

The Zambia Conference of Catholic Bishops recently fell victim to an artificial intelligence-generated video, which the Conference has since denied in a statement issued on 26 March 2026.

In the statement, the bishops said the video is designed to mislead the public.

"The Zambia Conference of Catholic Bishops (ZCCB) wishes to strongly denounce a fraudulent video currently circulating on social media, falsely alleging the launch of a

'National Easter Support Program' in partnership with the Government of Zambia and the Catholic Church," the statement reads.

The bishops explained that the video manipulates credible figures to give the false claims legitimacy. It "unlawfully uses the image of Archbishop Ignatius Chama alongside a manipulated clip of a ZNBC presenter; it has been generated using artificial intelligence (AI) to spread false and misleading information."

They further dismissed claims that citizens are being offered an "Easter blessing" of K2,500 through a digital application, stressing that such information is entirely false.

"The ZCCB categorically wishes to state that there is no such program in existence. The Church has not partnered with the Government on any such initiative, and the video in circulation is fraudulent, misleading, and malicious," the bishops stated.

Warning the public against falling victim to the scheme, the ZCCB urged caution in engaging with online content.

"We urge the public to disregard this AI-generated content, avoid downloading any related applications, and refrain from sharing the video further," the statement said.

"We advise the public to remain vigilant against similar content on social media, as this is a clear attempt to deceive and potentially defraud unsuspecting citizens."

The bishops reaffirmed their commitment to safeguarding the faithful, emphasizing that the Church remains dedicated to "truth, integrity, and the protection of the faithful from misinformation and disinformation."

The incident highlights how advancements in artificial intelligence, while beneficial in many respects, are increasingly being exploited to create convincing but false narratives, sometimes involving trusted institutions and public figures.

As misinformation continues to spread rapidly across digital platforms, there is a growing need for individuals to exercise caution, verify sources, and approach viral content with a critical eye.



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