



CMRS Zimbabwe

Conference of Major Religious Superiors

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Statement of the Conference of Catholic Major Religious Superiors in Zimbabwe in Solidarity with the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops Conference

“The joys and hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the people of this age, especially those who are poor or in any way afflicted; these are the joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the followers of Christ”. This statement from the *Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World*, a Vatican II document published in 1965, captures succinctly the Catholic Church’s understanding of its role in society. Since its founding over 2000 years ago, the Catholic Church, following Christ’s example, has always advocated for social justice and promoted the respect of human dignity, especially safeguarding the rights of the poor. This preferential option for the poor has been a hallmark of the Church’s mission in its advocacy for the establishment of just political, social and economic institutions nationally and globally.

As the Conference of Catholic Major Religious Superiors in Zimbabwe, (CMRS-Z) and indeed as part of the Church, our mission is that of the service of faith, of which the promotion of justice is an integral part. As such, we stand firmly with the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops Conference’s Pastoral Letter on the situation in Zimbabwe. Like them, and like millions of other Zimbabweans, we know that Zimbabwe is in a crisis and has been such for a long time.

We see the manifestation of that crisis in the precarious lives of the people of Zimbabwe some of whom we serve and accompany through our parishes, schools, hospitals, social and humanitarian centres. We see the crisis in the thousands of our citizens who spend a good part of their days queuing in banks for small amounts of money, and other services. We see it in the suffering of health care workers, who have been on strike for some time now, the sick who cannot access nor afford medication and health care services because of the state of the country’s health care system. We see it in the thousands of children and students who cannot afford to go to school or progress in their education for lack of financial resources. We see it in the more than 5 million food insecure Zimbabweans. We see it in the millions of Zimbabweans who have left the country in search for a better life for themselves and their families. We see it in the many Zimbabweans who are mistreated at roadblocks.

As Religious Orders of the Catholic Church in Zimbabwe, we unite ourselves with our Bishops in their genuine and truthful concern regarding the situation in Zimbabwe today. Our Catholic Social teaching encourages us to always advocate for the common good.

We note with concern the government’s aggressive response to the pastoral letter by singling out one of the Bishops while ignoring the issues of concern that were raised in the pastoral letter. Our government ought to work towards finding lasting solutions to the crisis in Zimbabwe today.

The Holy Spirit stirs our imperfect hearts to action for the good of God's people. The social analysis done by the Church and other organizations naturally leads to social action towards the common good. To ignore that responsibility is to fail to carry out our God given mandate. The Church does not seek political power; it seeks the good of the people. It is this vision of a better Zimbabwe expressed through the concerns of the Bishops that we align ourselves to and promise to continue working towards its realization.

Indeed, "The March" has not ended. We enjoin all Zimbabweans of goodwill to pray for the conversion of us all so that we can all be peace-loving and garner the strength and will to work concretely for the transformation of our country.

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