

**AN EXAMINATION OF THE IMPACT OF THE WORK  
OF THE MISSIONARIES ON THE ZIMBABWEAN  
CHURCH IN VIEW OF SELF-RELIANCE:  
A CASE OF ST KILIAN'S MISSION IN RUSAPE.**

*John Mutisi O. Carm*

**Recommendations on the Local Church on Self-Reliance**

**Introduction**

This write-up will make recommendations of methods that can be used to promote self-reliance at St Kilian's. The examination of the current situation of the Church and environment at the mission shall be the key bases for discussions and suggestions. The recommendations shall be open-ended meaning they will also broadly look at the ways the local church can tackle the question of self-reliance.

**Recommendations**

***Catechesis***

Several Catholic theologians have argued catechesis to be the key pastoral method for the promotion of self-reliance in the Church. Pope John Paul II in his apostolic exhortation, *Catechesi Tradendae*, stressed the role of catechesis in the life of the Church. He says, "The more the Church, whether on the local or universal level, gives catechesis priority over other works and undertakings the results of which would be more spectacular, the more she finds in catechesis a strengthening of her internal life as a community."<sup>1</sup> For St Kilian's thus catechesis may help in the education of the people on their role and duty in the Church. Since catechesis is crucial to the transformation of attitudes and formation of behaviours the local Church at St Kilian's can benefit from it and move from a dependency syndrome to them understanding their own role in the local Church and have to take care of its needs. Catechesis then can improve the quality of the faith of the locals which would imply a growth of their sense of belonging and improvement in their support both spiritually and materially for the Church.

### ***Collaboration***

Collaboration is another element that can be noted to be a step in the right direction in the fight towards a self-reliant Church in the developing world. Collaboration can mean the inclusion of the parishioners in the administration of the local Church thereby exposing them to the daily demands and administrative issues that require finance thereby fighting mistrust and the feeling of being passengers in a one-man band run by the priest. To counter this, empowerment of the parish council is one way towards self-reliance were the priest can help empower the parish executive by exposing them to workshops and joint meetings with those from a parish ranking above them financially for the exchange of ideas and their formation for action.

### ***Fundraising Committee***

Formation of fundraising committees has been noted to be an ideal initiative especially for Churches in the developing world. In the catholic Churches in Zimbabwe this is an aspect that most have accepted. Ennie Chiramba in her article Working towards self-reliance, notes that, "Fundraising committees have been established in various parishes to develop, expand or improve on the existing income generating ideas or projects currently underway."<sup>2</sup> In her article she asks fundamental questions on the ability of Catholics to donate, pledge and give to the Church. With the aid of catechesis this can be argued to be possible for Catholics especially in Zimbabwe who had been used to receiving handouts but besides this they remained hospitable and charitable people. This means if they are catechised well indeed, they can support the Church. Formation of a fundraising committee can indeed help the people at St Kilian's to examine their financial situation and look at ways to develop and raise more income for the Church without directly burdening the people through high levies they cannot afford.

Fundraising committees have been echoed to be the voice of the Church to the people in issues of finance. This has been supported by those who feel that it is indeed not the role of the priest to be week in week out talking about finance or raising funds at the neglect of his chief function of proclaiming the word of God. Thus, the implementation of a finance

committee at St Kilian's may ease the burden of the priest, giving him space to concentrate on the pastoral priestly duties with little stress from financial issues. Fundraising committees help the people to also know of their financial obligations to the Church twisting them from the receiving syndrome to full participation in financial issues. Chiramba asks, "Could it be that we are now free from the dependency syndrome where we always receive and giving little in return."<sup>3</sup> The synod on the Church in Africa, *Africae Munus* goes in the same lines encouraging the Church in Africa to take control of their future by making strides to be self-reliant as they cannot depend forever on the aid from missionaries. Therefore, the fundraising committee at St Kilian's will have the duty to teach and initiate self-reliance where people can learn to contribute wholeheartedly things of quality including their time and participation in fundraising events. These can include poultry and animal husbandry projects where the people can avail their labour for success of the projects. Since St Kilian's has a boarding facility, high school they can have a market for their produces, thus, there is room for income generating projects.

### *Catholic Schools and Institutes*

In the Action Plan for implementing the 2nd Africa Synod 2011-2015, the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops Conference (ZCBC) pointed to Catholic Schools having a huge role in the fight towards self-reliance of the Church in Zimbabwe. The ZCBC in the above document proposed to, "train school's management in resource mobilisation for school's infrastructural development and procurement of learning and teaching material".<sup>4</sup> It is unfortunate to note that in interviews at St Kilian's it could be noted that the school administration still feels vulnerable and under-resourced to be able to be self-reliant. However, one can note the Catholic institutes and schools, St Kilian's High School included to be well resourced to be able to self-sustain their very selves and to even learn to plough back to the local Church. Ways to achieve this task could include the training of both the administrative, teaching and non-teaching staff on resource utilization and safeguarding along with participation in evaluations and maintenance projects ensuring participation in taking care of what was built by the missionaries and suggesting ways to develop further the institution. Exchange initiatives

with other Church run institutes as well as government institutes can also help open doors of ideas for growth for St Kilian's without disregarding the Church's structures. The education of the students on self-reliance can also be the way to go for it is the educational formative years that can help form the young's attitudes of giving and sharing which is a crucial element for the modern Zimbabwean Catholic Church.

The education sensitization on self-reliance is one element that cannot be nailed enough for it is key for the local Church's growth and sustainability in Zimbabwe. In the Action Plan for Implementing the 2nd Africa Synod, the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops Conference stresses the need for raising awareness in all structures the importance of education on self-reliance.<sup>5</sup> The educational institutes of the Catholic Church may be key here in educating the people. In this line therefore as a way of ploughing back to the Church, the schools, that is, St Kilian's High and Primary school may mobilize themselves in collaboration with the Parish Priest to engage in a program to educate the local Catholics under St Kilian's on self-reliance and even where possible education on self-sustenance projects.

### *Vocational training*

Youth empowerment is one area that can be used to work towards self-reliance for the Church of St Kilian's. This can be done through vocational training programmes for the youth, thus, empowering them to be able to work for themselves and be able to also support the local Church. In their synopsis, the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops Conference draws the attention of the readers on the youth, they say, "Like young people, children are a gift of God to humanity and they must be the object of particular concern on the part of their families, the Church, society and governments."<sup>6</sup> The same indeed can be said about the youth and the Church surely has a role to help them through orientation towards the future and as such vocational training is one way that can help both the youth of St Kilian's to be able to work for themselves and also to work for the Church and support the Church. St Kilian's having in the early years had a vocational training school this is one thing that can be looked at in the hope of re-establishing one in the light of self-reliance.

### ***Initiation of the laity in the mission of the Church***

Emphasis and a re-orientation of the role of the laity at St Kilian's is another way that the Church at St Kilians can move towards self-reliance. The former Bishop of the Diocese of Lilongwe, Bishop Kalilombe is one of the African Bishops who emphasized the need for a self-ministering, self-supporting and self-propagating Church in Africa.<sup>7</sup> For his vision to be fulfilled he called for the full participation of the laity through meeting in small groups to discuss the areas of improvement and development required in the Church. Stealing from his idea one can argue this to be the way to go for the people of St Kilian's where they can form small groups for discussions on self-reliance, examining the ways they think would lead them to self-reliance. Bishop Kalilombe called these small groups Miphakati (Small Christian Communities),<sup>8</sup> and in the Zimbabwean Church these could be seen in line with the sections though this will be an overstatement as sections are huge than what Bishop Kalilombe meant. Moreover, these small Christian communities can also be used in the behaviour change programmes on self-reliance which are important for the people of St Kilian's to move from the dependency syndrome to that of participation and being active members. This is in line with Pope John Paul II's affirmation that, "evangelization should be undertaken more and more by members of the same local church".<sup>9</sup> Thus in the same line with this and with the idea of Bishop Kalilombe, the laity of St Kilian's are thus, a principle element in the drive towards self-reliance.

### ***Dialogue***

Since the question of funds has been noted to be one area that has led to issues in most parishes in the developing world dialogue can be seen as a way out. An African proverb says, "If you want to go fast, go alone and if you want to go far go with others". This proverb can be helpful in relation to the question of self-reliance as it emphasizes the importance of cooperation for the achievement of things one cannot do alone. Self-reliance is not a feat that can be achieved only by sermons or books but a collection of methods including dialogue and education amongst others. At St Kilian's therefore one may suggest that dialogue may be the way to go in the quest for behaviour change or encouragement for one has to

note that surely the people of St Kilian's have been doing all they can to support the Church but more seems to be required for the Church at St Kilian's to achieve self-reliance.

### **Conclusion**

This write-up exposed several ways that can be implemented at St Kilian's and generally by Missions and Parishes in Zimbabwe in attempts to reach self-reliance. It has to be noted that these are not absolutes but methods that may help in one situation or another and different situations may require different methods. This paper also managed to expose the distance the Church in Zimbabwe still has to cover before reaching the goal of self-reliance.

---

<sup>1</sup> *Catechesi Tradendae* 15

<sup>2</sup> Chiramba, Ennie. *Working towards self-reliance in our parishes*. <https://relzim.org/news/working-towards-self-reliance-in-our-parishes/>

<sup>3</sup> Chiramba, Ennie. *Working towards self-reliance in our parishes*. <https://relzim.org/news/working-towards-self-reliance-in-our-parishes/>. P. 1

<sup>4</sup> Zimbabwe catholic Bishops Conference. *Action Plan for Implementing the 2nd Africa Synod: 2011-2015*. Harare: The Social Communications Department Zimbabwe Catholics Bishops Conference, 2011. P. 18.

<sup>5</sup> Zimbabwe catholic Bishops Conference. *Action Plan for Implementing the 2nd Africa Synod: 2011-2015*. Harare: The Social Communications Department Zimbabwe Catholics Bishops Conference, 2011. P. 25

<sup>6</sup> Zimbabwe catholic Bishops Conference. *Action Plan for Implementing the 2nd Africa Synod: 2011-2015*. Harare: The Social Communications Department Zimbabwe Catholics Bishops Conference, 2011. P. 26

<sup>7</sup> Likhucha, Steven, Alfred. *Biography of Bishop Patrick Kalilombe. Missionaries of Africa*. <https://www.ecmmw.org/new/2012/09/25/biography-of-bishop-patrick-kalilombe-missionaries-of-africa-m-aft/> P. 1

<sup>8</sup> Likhucha, Steven, Alfred. P. 1

<sup>9</sup> John Paul II. *Slavorum Apostoli*. June 2, 1985. N\* 19