

Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops' Conference

The FAMILY

The Local Church in Zimbabwe has embarked on promoting the family spirit in the church. The family is the core to the sacrament of marriage. It is the love share by all for the well-being of the other. In Zimbabwe the family builds the domestic church. The Laity as they live family life are a unity in the church that reflects the love of God shared in the Trinitarian life.

The Trinitarian life of the Father Son and the Holy Spirit reflects the heavenly life which is also reflected in family life on earth. It is the same spirit of respecting and sharing that binds the family unity but above all it is the sacrament of marriage that is God given binding two people together man and woman for pro-creation in their unique ways.

STRUCTURE OF FAMILY

In Zimbabwe the family is often seen as extended family. This is normally the concept from the African setup where when two are married they automatically join the extended family from both sides (the male and the female). Marriage is considered as a unifying factor of two families that builds values such as love, kindness, generosity, care, concern, sharing, working hard to earn a living etc. These values are engrained in children as they grow up. Hence, in the family setup there is a sense of belonging. This sense of belonging also makes the community to love each other and share in times of joys and sorrows.

The same is true of our Spiritual life. The church is strong where there is a community which cares for each other. The local church in Zimbabwe has established structures to support family life from Small Christian Communities to Parishes to Deaneries and to Arch/Dioceses. These structures helps the individual to benefit spiritually by joining prayers and to translate that same spirit to their own particular families (father, mother and children) as a small unit.

How the local church is evangelising the Family

At Diocesan level the Families have received –**Pastoral visits**, from Bishops, Priests and religious

-Families are prepared for marriages and also receive education of the importance of Christian marriage as a sacrament that helps parents to bring up their children in love as god would want them.

-Prayer –families are encouraged to pray together in homes.

The impact of HIV/AIDS on a family

✓ nuclear family is not - disintegration

✓ loss of values Family & Vocations Commission

-Education- parents are encouraged to teach their children Faith. They are the first teachers.

-Development- parents taught the importance of education to their children for future life to be able to be self-reliant.

-In different Parishes- young couples receive instructions that help them to remain faithful to their marriage.

-Joining of different Guilds

Challenges

-Diseases like HIV/AIDS have brought fear to married couples.

-Negative attitudes – lack of true love

-Cultural problems- married couples (polygamy and inheritance)

-Small house (unfaithfulness in marriage) extra marital relationship.

-Married couples without children (causes problems in the family)

-The Youth marrying without any support (too young to marry) dependency

-Youth lack proper preparation to marry (wrong choice) lack of commitment

The above problems are being addressed in Zimbabwe in order to make people respect marriage and for them to benefit from this sacrament. They are being prepared to understand and to appreciate the importance of marriage.

+Bishop Michael Bhasera

ZCBC Family and Marriage Commission in Zimbabwe 2014

Africa Synod House

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