

## Anglican Church in Southern Africa

### Bishop Michael's visit to Zimbabwe and Mozambique, July 2009

Travel in Africa is always interesting. There is an element of risk that makes the experience most memorable and that keeps the driver on his toes! My recent trip covered 4,500 kilometres of bad roads in Zimbabwe and Mozambique and allowed me to be the first TAC Bishop ever to visit Mozambique. Both Fr Murinda and I were very aware of the historical nature of parts of our journey together.



The situation in Zimbabwe is improving, albeit slowly. The Zimbabwean Dollar has been scrapped and replaced by the US \$ and the SA Rand. Shops are quite well stocked and there is enough petrol – it is just that the Zimbabwean people don't have the cash to buy! Our churches are very hard-hit as most of our people are in the rural areas and are therefore amongst the poorest members of the population. On one occasion, at the Offertory, the collection comprised of two small coins – I was humbled to consider how much that must have meant to the givers. The 'widow's mite' in Mk 12:42 sprang to mind.

#### **Baptisms and Confirmation at St Patrick's Pro Cathedral**

St Patrick's is a rural Pro Cathedral built on a sizable piece of land in a village between Masvingo and Mutare. The community walks to church and the women of the parish built the structure themselves. It is a vibrant and dedicated congregation. On Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> July, 25 people (mostly adults) were Baptized and 9 adults were Confirmed. The atmosphere was filled with excitement and the singing was glorious. About three months ago, a Bishop from another Anglican church had arrived and laid claim to the Pro Cathedral; he was literally chased away by the fiercely devoted congregation! The site of the Pro Cathedral is very large and Fr Murinda and I are looking at ways to begin a school that will be attached to the church. The community will benefit tremendously by such a development. I presented the Pro Cathedral with an 'Altar Pack', comprising a beautiful set of altar linens, glass cruets, lavabo dish and jug, a large decanter, 1,000 wafers and some wine for Holy Communion, incense and charcoal for many services. The 'Altar Pack' project has now fully equipped more than 50 parishes throughout Southern Africa. My wife, Dalene and our housekeeper, Nthombi make all the stoles and linens and the Diocese

supplies the other 'goodies'. We are standardizing all parishes in Southern Africa and allowing poor rural parishes the chance to have excellent quality church requisites – something they could simply never get hold of, let alone afford. I carried 5 full 'Altar Packs' to Zimbabwe, together with stoles, chasubles, amices, girdles and many other 'bits and pieces' for the parishes of Zimbabwe and Mozambique. My car looked a bit like the pickup in the first photograph!



*Walking to church*



*Those who were Confirmed at St Patrick's*

### **A land of contrasts**

As Fr Murinda and I traveled, I was made aware of the enormous contrasts in the country. I had eaten a meal of beans in a squatter settlement in the evening of one day and we had visited the Vumba Mountains the next and come across the Leopard Rock Hotel. The difference couldn't have been more profound!



Whilst in Mutare, in the Eastern Highlands of Zimbabwe, I paid an important visit to the Roman Catholic Bishop. The Roman Catholics have given our church an office in Mutare and we are deeply grateful for their assistance. We were able to discuss matters of the unity talks with the TAC and fellowship between our churches. Fr Murinda was pleased that we had been able to meet, as the Bishop has been a real comfort to him. We were also able to discuss the feud raging between rival Anglican Bishops in the

Eastern Highlands. This is an often violent confrontation, affecting many Anglican parishioners, and I was able to meet the Bishop of Mutare, Bishop Jakazi, and had a friendly and fruitful discussion followed by a time of prayer. He is on the receiving end of the disagreements and was very glad of the fellowship. He and his priests have been regularly assaulted by the opposing party! The next day, we almost literally bumped into Bishop Hatendi, his bitter rival – it was a *very* interesting couple of days! Bishop Hatendi was most put out to meet a TAC Bishop in Zimbabwe, as he had recently been putting a lot of pressure on Fr Murinda, assuming him to be a ‘lone ranger’ without any outside support.

The congregation in Mutare (Ramganvura) has been growing steadily. I was able to visit some homes, anoint the sick and enjoy wonderful fellowship there. I also met the candidates for Ordination from Mutare, Deacon Stephen Maengamhuru and Pilane Nyoni and spent some time with them and their families prior to the Ordination.



Deacon Pilane Nyoni, Fr Murinda (Vicar General) and Father Stephen Maengamhuru in front of the parish church in Ramganvuru, Mutare

**Into Mozambique:**

Fr Murinda has pioneered the work in Mozambique, and the Parish of St Stephen in Munene is now well-established. The Catechist, Steven Chidza, has learned well and the young men of the parish have already made 9,500 large mud bricks in order to build a church on a piece of ground that has been given by the village elders.

We arrived – down an impassable road - to a sung welcome and the community swung into gear to set up for our service. The church was beautifully decorated with purple bougainvillea we enjoyed an excellent Mass and Confirmation and later sat with the community to eat and fellowship. It was lovely to watch Fr Murinda chatting to his friend of many years as they shared memories of ministry together. We

then travelled to where the bricks are being made and saw the site for the new church. It is very exciting to be part of the beginnings of what is going to be a strong parish.

Fr Murinda has been invited to travel to Beira (a coastal port and the second largest city in Mozambique) to begin a congregation there. The church is now officially registered in Mozambique and we are certain that the work will flourish. Fr Murinda is sure that once Steven Chidza is made a Deacon, the growth will accelerate in the rural areas.



*The congregation at St Stephens, Munene*



*Deacon Steven and Fr Murinda survey 9,500 bricks!*

### **Nyanga:**

In Nyanga, we met Tofara Saruthanhi. He will move to St Patrick's Pro Cathedral once he is ordained Deacon. We met several parishioners, blessed a house and paid a visit to Clifton Farm School, where one of the church co-coordinators is a teacher. This area is spectacular and there is great potential for the growth of the church there. It is also the area where the inter-Anglican conflict is fiercest.

### **Ordination:**

It is four years since there was an Ordination in Zimbabwe. The Deacons, Gerard Madanhi and Stephen Maengamhuru have exercised their ministry with patience and have supported Fr Murinda in his work. The presence of seven new Deacons and two Priests is going to raise the profile of the TAC tremendously and enable Fr Murinda a new measure of freedom to establish congregations throughout Zimbabwe, Mozambique and Botswana. We were grateful to use the Presbyterian Church in Mutare for our service, and it was a joyful celebration. As a result of the Ordination, a whole group of Christians that is without any oversight decided to join ACSA. We welcome them most warmly.

The Deacons all received stoles, cassocks and clergy shirts from the church. They were so proud and looked excellent in their new attire. One of those to be made Deacon was unable to attend, due to a serious accident involving some of his family. I ask you to pray for Dennis Godo and his family in their disappointment. His time will come.

I would like to tell you about Deacon Stephen Chidza. We had organized that all the candidates for Ordination meet at the church at 3pm on the Friday afternoon. When I arrived at approximately 2.45pm, Stephen was sitting at the church waiting for us. He was the first to arrive, and had *walked* 45 kilometres to the Mozambique border and then taken a shortcut of 20kms to Mutare; and all on what was probably the most basic nutrition. I was humbled to learn this and deeply impressed by his determination not to miss any part of his Ordination experience. Deacon Stephen is a quiet and dedicated Christian and I am very proud to have men of his calibre in the ministry of the TAC. I wonder how many of us would put ourselves through such rigours in order to get to our Ordination? I am pleased that we have people in our own TAC communion who can challenge us as to our comfort and our luxuries in life. I was able to give Deacon Stephen a lift back to the Mozambique border after the Ordination, but he insisted on walking home from there...



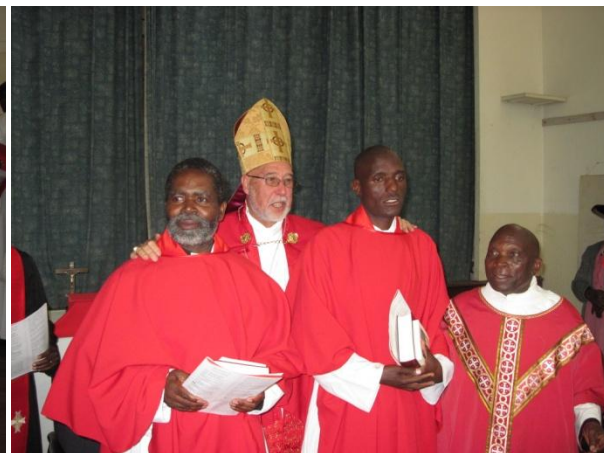
*The Altar Party forms up for the Ordination*



*Just some of the stoles brought from South Africa*



*Fr Gerard Madanhi receives his Bible*



*Fr Stephen Maengamhuru and Fr Gerard Madanhi*



*Dn Tapiwa Nyangoni receives his Licence from Fr Murinda      Dn Michael Madanhi receives his Deacons Orders*

**Marondera and Harare:**

Deacon Stephen walked his 65 kilometres to Ordination – Fr Murinda and I walked one and a half hours (probably 7kms) to Mass carrying the ‘church’ to the community of St Mark’s, Marondera. Not much in comparison, I know, but once there, we had the most glorious service. I was privileged to Baptize 30 adults and Confirm 15 and this was followed by a wonderful, noisy and enthusiastic High Mass. 10 ladies were admitted to the Mothers Union, and were ‘clothed’ in their new uniforms. A goat had been slaughtered (a singular honour amongst such poor people) and the whole community sang outside the house as we ate, thanking God for sending us to visit them! Then...the walk back!

*Members of St Marks, Marondera*

*The new members of Mothers Union*



I reminded myself that the work of Fr Murinda is *always* like this, and I appreciated even more the dedication he has shown to his Priesthood and to the church over many years. I am yet to meet anyone prepared to *do* what he does for the sake of the Gospel and the people he serves. I am blessed to have such a Vicar General!



*Traffic control*



*Fr Murinda, a true disciple, and his good wife, Benita*

In Harare, we followed up on negotiations for a city-centre church building for Fr Gerard Madanhi and paid a visit to ZANU PF headquarters. We had a wonderful Mass in the home of Deacon Michael Madanhi and were able to deepen our friendship with all those who had come so far to the Ordination service in Mutare the week before.

**Great Zimbabwe Ruins:**

In Africa it is always a very long drive to anywhere, and so we set off to Masvingo to complete our journey. No visit to Zimbabwe is complete without having been to the Great Zimbabwe Ruins. Fr Murinda and I spent several hours talking and exploring this remarkable set of buildings, thanking God for the amazingly fruitful ministry we had shared together. We rejoiced that we had been so blessed and had enjoyed the best of fellowship. Our Lord Jesus Christ had protected and guided us throughout our journeys and we were tired, but elated; part of a dynamic and growing church! Praise be to God!



*Two wrecks at the Zimbabwe ruins!*



*The sun sets on a remarkable missionary journey*

Thank you to all whose love and prayers support the ministry of the church. Thank you also for the time you have spent reading this report. Please continue to pray for us and for our work in Southern Africa.