



SPEECH

BY

**THE PRESIDENT, HIS EXCELLENCY
CDE, DR E. D. MNANGAGWA**

AT

**THE COMMEMORATION AND
CELEBRATION**

**OF 100 YEARS OF ST. JOSEPH MISSION'S
SERVICE TO JESUS CHRIST AND THE
PEOPLE
OF SEMOKWE**

MATOBO, MATABELELAND SOUTH

19 MARCH 2023

Director of Ceremonies;

Our Host, His Grace, the Archbishop of Bulawayo
Archdiocese, Archbishop Alex Thomas;

Vice President and Minister of Health and Child Care.
Hon. Gen. (Rtd) Dr C. G. D. N. Chiwenga;

Vice President and Second Secretary of ZANU PF,
Col (Rtd) K. C. D. Mohadi;

Chairman of ZANU PF and Minister of Defence and War
Veterans Affairs, Hon. O. C. Z. Muchinguri-Kashiri;

Minister of State for Provincial Affairs and Devolution
Matabeleland South Province, Hon. A. Ncube;

Other Honourable Ministers here present;

Our Traditional Leaders;

ZANU PF Provincial Leadership here present;

The Parish Priest of St. Joseph's Mission and Dean of
St. Joseph's Deanery, Fr. Innocent Makawule Ndlovu;

Priests, Deacons, Religious Brothers and Sisters, Lay Faithful in
the Archdiocese of Bulawayo;

Parishioners and fellow Christians from other Denominations;

Ladies and Gentlemen.

I greet all of you in the name of Our Lord Jesus Christ **Mabuyani Mose, Salibonani Lonke, Ndinokukwazisai Mose.**

It is my singular honour and privilege to have been invited to join this esteemed gathering to offer our gratitude to God the Almighty, for the past 100 years that St Joseph's Mission has been rendering service to the people of Semokwe as well as the whole of Matobo District. The long-standing relations between Government and the Roman Catholic Church dates back since time immemorial and continues to endure across the areas of education, health, social protection and human development, among others. **Siyabonga imisebenzi yenu.**

On behalf of the people and Government of Zimbabwe, my family, and indeed on my own behalf, I heartily congratulate the Roman Catholic Church for this Centenary of the St. Joseph's Mission. This 100 years of service to the Lord and the spiritual support of the Church to our communities is applauded. **Amhlophe, Makorokoto.**

I also extend my gratitude to the entire Catholic family for the development work the country continues to benefit across all sectors of our economy

Dear Congregants, Ladies and Gentlemen;

The relationship amongst the Church Zimbabwe's liberation history as well as our political economy cannot be over-emphasised.

Empandeni Mission, which was established on land given to the Catholic Church by King Lobengula Khumalo in 1887, has benefited the people of Matabeleland South Province, as well as many from across the whole nation and beyond.

During our protracted liberation struggle, Catholic Missions, together with other communities across our country, became the proverbial *water' in facilitating and assisting our freedom fighters. St. Joseph's Mission was one of the spiritual beacons of freedom fighters. It is noteworthy that, the father of our late National Hero and former Vice President Dr J. M. N. Nkomo, ubaba uThomas Nyongolo Nkomo established relations with St Joseph's Mission.

Today we, therefore, re-visit and connect with the enduring symbolism of the Semokwe area, the birth place of our Founding Father, the Late National Hero, **Umdala Wethu**.

Throughout his political career and great service to our nation, **Ubaba uMqabuko**, preached peace, unity, love, harmony, equity, justice as well as total empowerment for the Black Majority.

The Land Question was the, centrè-piece of our liberation struggle. I remember, he would say `... **the land belongs to the**

people; everything on that land is theirs" This rich heritage and the founding ideals of our motherland, Zimbabwe, must be defended, promoted and entrenched by all of us, in every community throughout the county's provinces.

In honour and memory of **Umdala Wethu**, the Late National Hero, and former Vice President, Dr J. M. N.Nkomo and other sons and daughters of the soil, I urge us all to diligently utilise the land towards ensuring food security and food sovereignty. The call for increased production and productivity should be heard right from the ward level upwards. All of us have a responsibility to build our motherland, brick by brick, stone upon stone.

"Ilizwe lakhiwa, libuswe ngabanikazi balo. Nyika inovakwa, igotongwa nevene vayo". It is us Zimbabweans who must build Zimbabwe and lift many out of poverty into prosperity.

As our country scales up efforts- to accelerate the realisation of Vision 2030, I urge our nation to remain inspired by the wise counsel in Proverbs 16:3; which says **'Commit your work unto the Lord and your plans will be established.'** We are assured that **'the Lord blesses the work of our hands'** and **"with God, all things are possible'**.

Ladies and Gentlemen, Fellow Congregants;

My Government recognises that there are many parishioners from St. Joseph's Mission who joined other freedom fighters in Zambia.

I recall that in 1978, I met a delegation from the Catholic Bishops Conference. Their mission, among other issues, was to brief us on the War of Liberation within the country. They also sought to know the future of the Church-State relationship.

As it was during the liberation struggle, I want to assure the church community across Zimbabwe that the longstanding relationship between the Church and the State is inseparable. The constitutionally enshrined freedom of religion will be protected and guaranteed under the ZANU PF Government. Further the Second Republic will continue to work with the Church, other stakeholders and progressive non-state entities towards modernising, industrialising and developing our great motherland Zimbabwe.

From Plumtree to Mutare, from Beitbridge to Chirundu, we are one people, united by one national flag and one national anthem.

No person or groups should ever be allowed to sow seeds of hate, division and disunity among us. Under my Administration, We reject the notions of "us and them" Tribalism and regionalism, among other divisive tendencies, which act against the realisation of our collective development aspirations are not acceptable. There is no **"bambazonke"**; Zimbabwe is our home together, given to us by Almighty God without us asking Him. As we develop our country, no one and

no place will be left behind. Every single Zimbabwean is important no matter where they live.

Fellow Congregants, Ladies and Gentlemen;

In addition to the footprints of St Joseph's Mission. Embakwe and Brunapeg Missions are other examples of how the Roman Catholic Church has over the years been closely working with the Government of Zimbabwe in shaping the livelihoods of communities.

Many lives have been saved at Brunapeg Mission Hospital. Its School of Nursing, Primary School and Community Information Centre are playing critical roles in training and skills development.

Other Catholic Institutions here in Matabeleland South Province are helping in moulding the moral, religious, intellectual and entrepreneurial values in our communities. We are grateful.

I appeal to the Clergy, together with all those involved in spreading the Good News of Jesus Christ, to stay true to the Word of God: **1" Corinthians 15:58** is instructive: "**Be firm, steadfast, always fully devoted to the work of the Lord, knowing that in the Lord your labour is not in vain.**" The Church throughout the country is also exhorted to pray without ceasing for us in the country's governance architecture

This will see us making further gains with regards to rowing our economy, including enhancing agriculture, mining, manufacturing tourism, as well as science and innovation capabilities.

I am aware that Matabeleland South Province is prone to low rainfall and mid-season droughts, with some households presently food insecure. My Government will ensure that food is availed to the vulnerable.

To mitigate the impact of climate change, Tuli-Manyange Dam is now under construction and more dams will be built in the future, taking advantage of the abundant rivers in the Province. The Beitbridge border post is now open to traffic, while modalities for the Beitbridge-Bulawayo-Victoria Falls road are being finalised and construction will commence soon.

To enhance the human capital skills base of the young people of Matabeleland South, and my Administration's policy that education should be accessed by our citizenry no matter where one lives; the Gwanda State University is now fully operational. Its focus is on mining engineering, veterinary sciences, engineering and agriculture. Our young people in the Province must be nurtured to utilise this important higher learning institution.

Equally, schools within the Province must strengthen the teaching of science subjects as well as construct laboratories and other facilities that will enable students to advance into the fields of science, technology and innovation.

Dear Congregants, Ladies and Gentlemen;

I am hopeful that following 100 years of evangelism, we will continue to see growth in faith, wisdom and love among you the Catholic family in this community. Let us continue to support the needs of our communities.

Our faith must be seen in our kindness, generosity, righteousness and hard honest work after all, "faith without works is dead.

I Once again urge the Church to be mindful of the social ills which are threatening the very fabric of our society. The Church and other social institutions must join the fight against bullying as well as drug and substance abuse. As families, communities and churches, we must continually intercede for our children. They are our hope and future.

As Proverbs 22:6 says: train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it.

In conclusion, I call upon the Church to foster peace, unity, love and harmony within our communities, more so in view of the upcoming Harmonised General Elections Violence has no place in our society. Peace, unity and harmony must be maintained before, during and after the election season.

Indeed, the bible in **Genesis 13:8** emphasises that ***we are brethren.**' Where there is unity, God commands His blessings

With these remarks, I once again congratulate St. Joseph's Mission and the Catholic Church at large, on your centenary

celebrations of the establishment of this Mission. Amhlophe!
Makorokoto! Congratulations!

God bless you all.

God bless Zimbabwe.

I thank you.