



ZIMBABWE CATHOLIC BISHOPS' CONFERENCE

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ZCBC Pastoral Statement on Cyclone Idai

“Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others,” Phil.2:4

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Like so many people in our country and outside, we are most disturbed at the devastation and loss of life caused by the recent cyclone Idai in Malawi, Mozambique and Zimbabwe, especially in Chipinge and Chimanimani districts. We pray for all who have died from the effects of the cyclone, pleading with God to show Mercy to them, to forgive their sins and failings and to receive them into their homeland in heaven.

We think of all the people who have been left homeless and as well as losing loved ones have also lost all their possessions, including their crops and livestock. As Jesus tells us during this season of Lent: “Be compassionate as your Father is compassionate,” let us try to open our hearts to those anguished people. In whatever way you can, try to assist them through your prayers, your love and through whatever material resources you can share with them in their time of much suffering.

In the Catholic Church, the relief effort is being co-ordinated through our development agency, CARITAS. Parishes and Church groups are encouraged to deliver their items to the CARITAS offices in their dioceses. Your generous donations will then be transported to Mutare where CARITAS are leading the relief effort from their offices at St Dominic’s High School.

Among the forty-one schools damaged by cyclone Idai in Chimanimani district alone, we have our own St. Charles Lwanga Secondary School that was hit by a mud and rock slide on Friday evening 15 March, 2019, resulting in the deaths of two students and one member of staff.

We encourage all sectors in the country, the Government and different Churches, the civic society groups, corporate business, Development Agencies, to work together in a harmonised way to bring immediate and long-term relief to all the unfortunate people whose lives have been devastated by the cyclone Idai.

Such disasters can remind us that we are all brothers and sisters, that we all share the great dignity as beloved children of our loving Lord. Our life on earth though very precious is very fragile and any day can be our last day. Let us use each day to show love to others, to value the gift of human life and to believe that our lasting home is in heaven, where there will be no more tears and sadness.

We express much appreciation for all the assistance being offered those affected and continue to pray that the deceased may rest in eternal peace.

God Bless you.

- +Robert C. Ndlovu, Archbishop of Harare** (ZCBC President)
- +Alex Thomas, Archbishop of Bulawayo** (ZCBC Vice President)
- +Paul Horan, Bishop of Mutare** (ZCBC Secretary/Treasurer)
- +Michael D. Bhasera, Bishop of Masvingo & Pontifical Administrator of Gweru**
- +Albert Serrano, Bishop of Hwange**
- +Rudolf Nyandoro, Bishop of Gokwe**
- +Raymond Mupandasekwa, Bishop of Chinhoyi**