



Silver Jubilee Celebrations

Sisters Teclar Mukuli and Yeyani Nyoni.

Date: 16/09/2017

St. Ignatius Cathedral, Hwange



Celebrating God's faithfulness for 25 years in His Vineyard as FMDMs

The beginning of the FMDMs journey

The journey began in 1985 when a letter written by Sr. Frances Woolman was read in St. Joseph parish, Makwika village of Hwange. The content of the letter: "THE FRANCISCAN MISSIONARIES OF THE DIVINE MOTHERHOOD SISTERS (FMDMs) are inviting young women who are 16 years and above, for a day of prayer next Sunday at the Convent on Annunciation, by the Colliery Hospital". Those interested were to see the parish priest.

The following Sunday after the parish mass, the four of us made our way to the convent, taken there by the parish priest. The atmosphere there was extremely welcoming. There we met up with other young women from other parishes around Hwange. That first day of prayer was attended by about 15 girls. The striking ambience of the day was the joyful atmosphere which prevailed. The sisters, who mingled, prayed and recreated with us were Frances Woolman, Phyllis Hoey, Seraphina Weston, Catherine Mandy and Alverna Eaton. Other sister, owing to their busy schedule in the hospital met us at tea break. These included Sr. Isabel Courtney, who still is our current member, Sr. Juliet RIP and others. The joy experienced in the sisters made a deep impression on us as to what Franciscan joy was all about. At that first encounter we were made to feel very much at home. By the end of 1985, six of us were received as candidates. As time went along others took other paths.

In January 1989, Yeyani and Teclar made their way to Zambia to join four Zambian candidates and start Postulancy together at our first mission on African soil. Five of the six young women were received into the Postulancy on February 20th, 1989. It is with joy to note that these became the first postulants Sr. Ann Kelly accompanied on their formation journey.

In 1990 four of these women proceeded to Victoria Falls in Zimbabwe to continue their formation journey as Novices. These four young women became Eileen Byrne's second lot of novices to accompany in their formation journey, prior to that Eileen had journeyed with Helen Doyle's group her first lot of Novices.

The reception into noviciate coincided with the opening of the noviciate chapel on the 8th of September 1990. Bishop Prieto RIP, who was then the Bishop of Hwange, was the main celebrant at the Eucharistic celebration. This was a day to remember indeed as Ann Kelly and Eileen allowed the ceremony to be deeply acculturated while they both took on the role of being Aunt and in-law respectively at the reception into the noviciate. The procession to the chapel resembled the reception of the bride from her home to the husband's home, who in this case was Jesus in the chapel, who would become their spouse. The four brides of Christ were veiled until they entered the Lord's sanctuary.



In the sermon, the bishop admonished us by saying that the noviciate is a real place of encounter with the Lord in prayer, as well as a place, of great temptations. He exhorted us saying, “You need to be focused on the Lord in prayer and in all you do. Listen to Him in his word, your formators and in the poor, you will serve.

On the 2nd of October 1992, three of these women made first profession to religious life as FMDMs.

The journey as professed FMDMs began and in this journey both Yeyani and Teclar become Missionaries to both Zambia and Nigeria respectively. These years have been filled with a lot of joyful and at times very trying and challenging experiences. Sometimes the journey was so clear and other time quite obscure. Amidst all these experiences, the joy in realising and experiencing the Lord’s faithfulness on the journey underscores the jubilation of looking back on how the Lord carried us on eagle’s wing through it all. God has faithfully carried us on the eagle wings for 25 years of daily celebrating His Love.



On the 16th September of 2017, all roads led to St. Ignatius cathedral in the Hwange Diocese. Both Teclar and Yeyani began their journey as FMDMs in that coal mining town of Hwange as first FMDMs in the diocese. Hence the reason it was said to be a diocesan event by the current bishop of Hwange Rt. Rev Albert Serrano. The bishop was

the main celebrant with 21 priests concelebrating with him.

There were about 700 people at the celebration including all our FMDM sisters from Zambia and Zimbabwe, family members and friends. The occasion ended with a beautiful meal and cutting of the cake.

Not having a house in Hwange anymore meant no FMDM gathering in the evening to celebrate as a family. However, we made up for lack of this on the actual day 2nd October in Bulawayo. We had a community celebration where we invited the community friends and our staff who were not able to come to Hwange. The beautiful meal was prepared by both Tec and Yeyani. We had about 20 guests in all.





Teclar celebrating with her family and parishioners at home in Kariyangwe Mission.

Teclar with her Mum and dad.



Teclar went home for a break on the 27th October. On 29th October, Teclar had thanksgiving Mass in Kariyangwe Mission, her home parish. The Eucharistic celebration was very joyful and colourful. In the Liturgy of the day, the word of God invited us to meet the compassionate God who hears the cry of the poor and wants us to exercise the same virtue in the first reading. In the second reading, the Thessalonians converted upon hearing God’s word and allowed themselves to be instruments of God’s word, to ensure God’s love is experienced by

God’s people through interaction and service. Jesus in the Gospel brings these sentiments of the first and second reading to the crux by saying the two greatest commandments are Love of God and neighbour, when we embrace love we respond to his invitation to follow him and serve and love him in the poor. “This, the priest said, is what Sr. Teclar has been doing in the last 25 years as a religious. At the end of prayer for 25 years she has been saying Amen! Each time you say Amen you are saying;

I agree with God, I move with God, I end with God and I never doubt God” (Matthew 22:34-40).

One of the religious from Kariyangwe, Sr. Otilia Mudimba (Daughter of Calvary) composed a Tonga song (Tec’s language) dedicated to Teclar for her 25 years of service in the Lord’s field. The song became the epic of celebration, singing it with great Jubilation during the Eucharistic celebration. The words of the song based on scripture are as follows in English:

- 1. We thank God, our Father who chooses workers to work in his field; (chorus)**
- 2. We thank God, we bless God, we praise God for his for His great work!**
- 3. You chose Teclar to work for you in your field as an FMDM in our district.**

All of who are full of zeal for God’s work, in God’s house be strong in your faith and strengthened in his Love and Mercy.

After the Eucharist there was a simple meal for all which the parish had organised. The afternoon was full of joyful entertainments, where people sung, had dramas, and just celebrated together. Sisters Yeyani, Fidelia and Concilia graced the joyful occasion.

Entertainment





Yeyani Jubilee Celebration with her family at the Parish of Sacred Heart Mission.

The 12th of November was the day set aside for the thanksgiving Mass in Sacred Heart Mission which is home to Yeyani. It was lovely to have Teclar and a visiting Nazareth Sister Tumulumbe, arrived at home, the day before the big day, to help set up the place and create a real ambience of Jubilee in the church. With help of the sisters Clotilda and Yeyani Ndlovu the Missionary Daughters of Calvary had the church beautifully done up for the celebration. All was set for the Eucharist celebration

in the beautiful parish church which was followed by the lovely celebration at home for everyone. The parish Church which had visiting choir member's from the neighbouring outstations was pulsating with great song and dance.

The Parish Priest Fr. Nemisio SMI had emphasised the point that this was the day for the parish to celebrate with Yeyani and to thank God for his goodness and faithfulness to Yeyani over the years. The liturgy was planned in such way that the celebration was form of sharing with the parish of the story and the journey that had culminated in the 25 years of how God had led Yeyani to date. There was recommitment to the vows made 25years ago and lastly the time to day thank you to God for the gist of faith, the biological family and the FMDM family and the companionship of sisters who have helped as support to Yeyani over the years. It was such a privilege to have Martha, Concilia as well as Ruth, Balbina and Magdalene the first year novices grace the occasion and brave the heavy down pour that followed the celebration. It was as though the Lord was pouring forth these showers of Blessing on wonderful day of encounter with him though he parishioners of Sacred Heart Mission.

