

## Day different from others in Mansa

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*FEBRUARY 1 2014, was like any other day...but it will remain a memorable day for the most people of Mansa, particularly members of the Catholic Church. Hundreds of the church members from all over Zambia and from the neighbouring countries gathered at Don Boscoe's grounds of St James Parish in Chimese, just almost a kilometer away from Mansa central business district. The aim of the gathering was to witness the consecration of a Catholic priest, Father Patrick Chisanga as the Bishop of Mansa Diocese. The diocese had no bishop for five years.*

*Business in Mansa central business district almost came to a standstill as all roads led to Chimese. There was also a heavy flow of traffic much to the amusement of children in the usually quiet Chimese rural community. The event attracted Catholic faithfuls, Government officials and Minister of Lands, Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Harry Kalaba who represented President Sata. There was also a sizeable presence of local and international media who were apt at documenting the consecration of Bishop Chisanga.*

*President Sata in a speech read for him by Mr Kalaba, thanked the Catholic Church for its continued endeavour to improve living standards of the people through numerous amenities that the church offers in different communities. The President noted that in Luapula alone, the Catholic Church was running three hospitals namely; Lubwe, Kasaba and St. Paul's in Samfya and Nchelenge. In the area of education, the church was running three schools in Luapula – St Clement's and Charles Lwanga Secondary Schools in Mansa as well as St Mary's for Girls in Kawambwa. Mr Sata assured the people of Luapula that the government was going to work together with the church to uplift living standards of the people.*

*"As government we are very grateful for the continuous endeavours that the Catholic Church offers to the people, particularly the people of Luapula Province where the church has three big hospitals and three schools. As such, this government will also continue assisting the people of Mansa Diocese, because the same people that are in the diocese are the same people found in the province," President Sata said.*

*The Zambia Episcopal Conference (ZEC) was represented at the consecration ceremony by its president Bishop Ignatius Chama. Bishop Chama expressed gratitude to attendees who graced the occasion, including senior government officials, among them ministers and district commissioners.*

*"I pay tribute to the government and President Sata through Minister Kalaba for witnessing this occasion. On behalf of the conference (ZEC), I am saying that we are very happy for this gesture," Bishop Chama said.*

*Bishop Chama was also happy that President Sata had stated that his Government was ready to sit with the church and discuss issues concerning the nation.*

*“We have heard that the government is ready to meet us and discuss matters that concern the nation. We also want to take this opportunity and say that the conference is more than ready to meet the President and discuss national issues. We believe that we can discuss and dialogue as brothers to find lasting solutions,” Bishop Chama said.*

*Furthermore, he said ZEC was glad to join in the celebration of Mansa over the consecration of Bishop Chisanga as the diocese had no bishop for five years. Bishop Chama thanked God for blessing Mansa Diocese with a good shepherd. He urged Bishop Chisanga to be strong during his assignment and always stand firm during times of challenges because God would always be with him.*

*“Be strong and stand firm, the Lord God will always be with you. Today you are in the new family as a person [coming] from Franciscan family, Bishop Chama said.*

*Bishop Chisanga thanked God for appointing him as the Bishop of Mansa Diocese. He observed that with God, nothing was impossible, and as a servant of God, he was ready to forge ahead with the work of the Lord.*

*“Nothing is impossible with God. I am a servant of God, let it be done as you have said,” said Bishop Chisanga amid ululations from the audience.*

*“In the presence of you gathered here, I say... I do... I do say that my soul is at peace. I am very much at peace...the Lord has blessed this day.”*

*Bishop Chisanga pledged that with the help of God, he would be a good steward who would guide the flock in a manner expected of him by the Lord. He commended the Pope for the appointment, all the priests in the country and all those who supported his work.*

*The bishop also thanked his parents – his mother and late father whom he said must have been smiling in Heaven as he saw his son being consecrated a bishop. He also extended his thanks to all his siblings for the support rendered to him. The consecration ceremony was indeed a joyful occasion; full of pomp and splendour and witnessed by people from all walks of life. Bishop Chisanga had two requests to his flock: “Support and prayers because the work of the Lord is not easy. As a result I need continuous prayers from you so that the Lord could guide me.”*