

By Rachel Namukolo

ARCHBISHOP Paul Richard Gallagher says he is in Zambia to see the contribution that the Catholic Church is making to the country's development.

And Archbishop Gallagher says there is always a political dimension to what people do in life, what they say and the actions they take.

Speaking on arrival at Kenneth

There's always a political dimension to what people do in life - Archbishop Gallagher

Kaunda International Airport yesterday, Archbishop Gallagher, who is Secretary for Relations with States, said he was also in the country to celebrate 50 years of diplomatic relations between the Vatican and Zambia.

"We are here to celebrate 50 years of diplomatic relations. 50 years means that there is goodwill on the part of the Holy See to Zambia, its government and people and obviously as we know historically, diplomatic relations

followed on from the independence of your country and so it's a celebration, it's almost like a birthday for us, and we hope always that relations mature and grow strong," he said.

"I have come to participate in

the celebrations but also to renew our understanding of Zambia. We have to say that it is not very often that we get the opportunity to send someone down here on a special mission. It is a good opportunity for us who are working in Rome and in the Vatican to be able to see for ourselves, to witness the work of the Catholic Church here, to see the good relations that exist and to offer support to those relations."

Archbishop Gallagher, who indicated that good relations will continue to exist between the Vatican and Zambia, said the Church would continue to make a social contribution to the country's development and encouraged all citizens to work for the common good.

"Now in some ways, if that is politics, then there is always a political dimension to what we do in life and what we say and the actions that we take. The questions that are in regard to the Church and politics should never be motivated by ideology but by the Gospel and the teaching of the Church," he said.

Archbishop Gallagher said the Church had for the last 50 years continued to be committed to offering social support towards Zambia's development.

He said although the Church could not run away from the political dynamics of life, men and women of the Church should not be engaged in party politics.

"Mahatma Gandhi said that if people who say that religion and politics have nothing to do with each other, that indicates that they don't understand either religion or politics. Life is a little bit politics and so whatever we do has consequences politically; that doesn't mean that the men and women of the Church should be engaged in party politics," said Archbishop Gallagher.



Catholics welcome Vatican Archbishop Gallagher at KKIA yesterday - Picture by Tenson Mkhala