

# Speech of the Superior General during the inauguration of Matema Parish, Tete, Mozambique

Tete, 8<sup>th</sup> October 2016

My Lord [Bishop Inácio Saure](#), Fr Felix J. Phiri, Provincial of the Missionaries of Africa, Fr Boris Yabre, Provincial Delegate of the Missionaries of Africa for Mozambique, Reverend Fathers and Sisters, distinguished guests, distinguished members of the newly erected parish of Matema, brothers and sisters. It is with great humility that I stand before you today to thank and praise God Almighty for the grace of witnessing to the birth of a new parish in Tete.



The Society of the Missionaries of Africa, also known as the White Fathers, was founded in 1868 by Cardinal Charles Lavigerie in North Africa, in Algeria. This means that soon, in 2018, we will be celebrating the [150<sup>th</sup> anniversary](#) of the foundation of our congregation, and I take this opportunity to invite you to accompany us with your prayers as we draw closer to this important event for our congregation. In the past 150 years, members of the Society of the Missionaries of Africa left their homelands in Europe and North America to bring the Good News to many parts of Africa. Today, there are more and more Africans ourselves who are doing missionary work among our fellow African brothers and sisters. One of the bishops of Mozambique, [Bishop Francisco Silota](#) of the diocese of Chimoio, originally from Tete, is a member of our congregation, the current Superior General of the Missionaries of Africa, and as was his predecessor, is an African. The words of Pope Paul VI when he visited Uganda in 1969, that Africa will be evangelized by Africans, are being fulfilled today, not just because of African missionaries, but more importantly because of the vitality and vibrancy of lay involvement. The official inauguration of the parish of Matema here in Tete is yet another testimony that the Kingdom of God is indeed growing among the people of this Town.



The Missionaries of Africa first came to Mozambique in 1946 and opened their first parish in Murraça, in Beira. Since then, over 100 members of our congregation have served as missionaries, at different moments and in different parts of the country. They conducted their ministry mostly along the river Zambezi. This is the fourth parish that we have opened in the diocese of Tete. In the early fifties, parishes were opened in Inhangoma and Charre in the district of Mutarara, and a parish and the seminary of Zobue along the border with Malawi were started too. In 1967, the Centre of Nazare in Beira was founded as a catechetical and pastoral renewal Centre. Following the events of 1971, our predecessors were expelled from the country by the Portuguese, only to come back after the Independence of Mozambique. In the 1980s we restarted the Major Seminary in Matora, Maputo, where Don Inácio was once a seminarian.

During our long stay we have started up new parishes and handed over some, mostly due to the expulsion of our members from the country. At present we are still working in the diocese of [Chimoio](#), in the parishes of [Sussundenga](#) and [Dombe](#), and we are also continuing with our commitment in [Nazare Centre](#) where one of our confreres Fr. **Fidel Salazar** is also the Chairperson of the Justice and Peace



Commission for the diocese of Beira.

Our long stand missionary experience in many parts of Africa has brought us closer not only to the joys but also the pains of the African people. As our founder once said: "I am a man, and nothing human is foreign to me." It is in this spirit and at the occasion of the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our presence in this country that we felt challenged to come back to the diocese of Tete where we once were some years back.

We rejoice with the people of Tete for the peace and rapid development being experienced at the moment. As we all know, development cannot be measured only in terms of material gains; more cars in our streets or more new shops. Satisfactory development has to be integral, taking into account all the dimensions of the human person, the respect for human rights and dignity, equal accessibility to opportunities of life. Similarly, the preaching of the Gospel cannot just limit itself to getting more people into our church buildings, counting their numbers, administering to them the required sacraments. As missionaries, we are called especially to reach out to those that the so called prosperous society has no time for; the poor, the neglected, those whose rights are trampled upon because of the greed of a few. We are also to bring spiritual solace to those who appear to 'have it all' and yet inside of themselves they are empty, yearning to give true meaning to their lives, to experience the mercy of God.

We are grateful to Don Inácio for welcoming us back to this diocese and to the town of Tete where we hope to be his faithful collaborators. We look forward, together with all the other members of the Church, and by the grace of God to render the message of the Gospel a reality in the day-to-day life of the people. As Missionaries of Africa, we emphasize on working as a team in our pastoral undertakings. It is to be expected that Fr **Pierre Lukusa**, the newly installed Parish Priest, will promote this Missionary of Africa spirit and collaborative ministry approach. We thank him and Fr Julian Kasiya for having accepted to take on this great responsibility. We would like express our gratitude also to the Comboni Missionaries who welcomed us in Martyrs of Uganda Parish, Matundu, and from which is born this new parish of Matema. The encouragement and support that we have received from the Christians of the parish of Matema re-assure us that we will not walk alone. May Our Lady Queen of Africa intercede for us so that we may remain truthful and faithful to the Good News of her Son, our Lord Jesus Christ.



**Stanley Lubungo (M.Afr), Superior General**

**Link: [Matema Parish, Tete, Mozambique](#)**