

FROM FATHER JOHN: *“And the king will say to them in reply, ‘Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me.’”*
(Matthew 25:40)



Many people in our parish have come to know Fr. Dennis Phiri of the Diocese of Zambia over the past few years. We are fortunate to be able to welcome him back this summer. He will be with us for two weeks, beginning on July 15th. Fr Dennis is the Director of the Department of Systematic Theology at St. Dominic’s National Seminary in Lusaka. He is also one of the priest professors and formation deans at the seminary.

I received an email from him recently. He said, in part, ***“It has been a very tough semester because of the drought last rainy season, we did not have enough water, and therefore, affecting the flow of electricity. We reached a stage where we only received power for 3 hours a day. That affected water supply. With a population of 173 Seminarians and 10 resident formators, it was terrible. Anyhow, we managed to finish the semester. The seminarians were very understanding, bearing in mind that it is a national disaster.”***

To make matters worse, I recently read an article about how China polluted the main waterway in Zambia. The article was entitled *China Kills A River In Foreign Country With Acidic Waste Spill, Leaving Millions In Emergency* and stated that ***“A massive acid leak from a Chinese-owned mine in Zambia contaminated the country’s most important waterway, threatening the livelihood and health of more than half the country’s population.”***

Zambia relies heavenly on water for power, hydration, farming etc. Naturally, I began to worry about the people of Chipata and how this disaster might affect them. Luckily, it did not affect the people of Chipata as directly as it did other parts of the country. Fr. Dennis told me via email that ***“the Kafue River is one of the largest rivers in Zambia, that is where the Kariba Dam is, on which lies the biggest Hydro-power station for Zambia. And so, if a tributary of the KAFUE was “killed”, it will definitely affect the KAFUE river, and will affect the Kariba Dam, and ultimately the hydro-power station.”***

Fr. Dennis has the unique ability to bring awareness to our parish about the poverty and difficult conditions that exist in many parts of the world. In doing so, we are reminded about how fortunate we are here in Channahon. The needs of the people of the Diocese of Chipata (in the Eastern Province of Zambia) are many.

We have held a Mission Appeal for the poor people of the Diocese of Chipata each of the last three years and have raised over \$32,000 to help them in their need. Supporting the people of Chipata cannot just come from me, it cannot just be something that I think is important. To be successful, it has to be something that the people of our parish, in its entirety as a community of faith and individually as faithful Catholics, support.

Sixty percent (60%) of the population in Zambia live below the poverty line, with 42% living in extreme poverty. Food insecurity and chronic under-nutrition remain critical issues, with almost half of the children under 5 years of age stunted in growth because of malnutrition. Also, many people must walk miles each day to obtain water from the streams and rivers which are often contaminated. This and unsanitary conditions cause cholera and typhoid. Malaria is a common illness. All of this contributes to the high morbidity rate.

Fr. Dennis will be staying at our parish and celebrating all our masses beginning July 15th until July 27th. We will have a Mission Appeal for the people of Chipata on July 26th and 27th. This will include a second collection which will afford everyone in our parish the opportunity to help the people of Chipata.

Our Lord Jesus said from the Cross, "I thirst". We can't help but see that same cry coming from the people of Chipata. We can slake Christ's thirst, by loving our neighbor as He has asked us to do. Through prayer and financial support, we hope to improve the lives of the people of the Diocese of Chipata and truly make a difference in their lives.

May God Bless you and all those who love the Lord.

