**Companion Relationship with the Anglican Diocese of Harare**

Three events took place in 2017 regarding our companion relationship with Harare.

First, three Harare priests and Bishop Gaul Faculty members, Fathers Cleophas, Ishanesu, and Naboth received Master of Arts in Theology degrees from Nashotah House on June 1. Friar Joshua who is Principal (Dean) of Bishop Gaul Seminary is on schedule to receive his Doctor of Ministry degree from Nashotah this May. Their departure from Nashotah was hard for many of us in the Diocese. They became warm friends to us, especially at St. Mary’s in Tomah where all four came two Sundays of each month through the 2016-2017. The priests called St. Mary’s “Their Altar.”

Second, Fr. Mike Greene, Fr. Peter Augustine, May Ruth Lambert, and I went to the Diocese of Harare in June. My niece, Charlotte Smith, also came. She is from Atlanta and a student at the University of Alabama. In addition to making new friendships and strengthening older ones, we also were there in support of our Presiding Bishop, Michael Curry, who preached at the Mizeki Festival.

This event which is held annually in a rural part of Zimbabwe had an attendance of 20,000 people. It is a three day (Friday to Sunday) mixture of camping, singing, and acting, and games with the central event being the Saturday morning Eucharist. This crowd fired up Bishop Curry, and he in turn fired them up. It was a wonderful explosion of the Holy Spirit! At the offertory there was an outpouring of singing. I remember this in 2015 lasting about 3 minutes. In 2017 it lasted 20 minutes! I asked Bishop of Harare, Chad Gandiya, what was going on. He said, “They are responding to the preacher!” Michael Curry has told me repeatedly that he was so thankful to be there. He spoke at length about the trip in his closing sermon at the House of Bishop’s meeting in September. As for me and May Ruth, Fr. Mike, Fr. Peter, and Charlotte, it was a high point of our lives. All of us felt Bishop Curry was an outstanding representative in a foreign land of both our Episcopal Church and of the United States.

The third event regards a shipment of books to Harare. In late August Fr. Steven Peay, Dean of Nashotah, donated most of his library to Bishop Gaul Seminary in Harare. This is a marvelous collection of 35 boxes of books ranging from the Complete Writings of Jeremy Taylor, to Anglican Church Histories, to Biblical and Patristic Commentaries. They are the treasured books of a well rounded scholar, for Fr. Peay has been a Benedictine Monk, a Roman Catholic Priest, a United Church of Christ Pastor, and now an Episcopal Priest and Academic Dean and Dean of Nashotah House. The Diocese of Eau Claire has taken charge to insure these books will get to Harare where they will become the treasured cornerstone of a quality library that will help form future clergy in Zimbabwe and beyond. At this writing the books are in transit. The cost of getting the books into the hands of the Diocese of Harare is $4000. The good people of St. Mary’s Tomah in thanksgiving for the service of their beloved priests, have donated $750 to help. Other donations are welcome.

As your bishop, I have treasured our relationship with Harare. The friendships made and maintained have been wonderful. I am proud of Nashotah for helping in the education of the four priests. The seminary provided free tuition, room, and board. My daughter and son in law donated a car to Nashotah for them to use. May Ruth watched over their health needs and cut through any medical red tape. The priests knew that the Diocese of Eau Claire would support them in the event of any emergency or difficulty. Today they are settled in strong Harare parishes and reconnected with their families or, in Fr. Joshua’s case, with his religious community.

 —Bishop Jay Lambert