

Update from Harare, Zimbabwe May 18, 2020

Greetings from a bit chilly Harare. The lockdown has been extended by two weeks more. COVID-19 has infected 45 people with 4 deaths since it was discovered in this country. Mining activities are taking place. Precautionary measures put in place are observed. Essential services like health delivery systems, funeral services, food outlets, and public transport are operating. Social distancing and putting on of masks is observed.

Industry, before it opens its doors to its workers, must make sure every worker has been COVID-19 tested. To get tested it costs \$25 USD. This is compelling some small businesses to scale down or remain closed. Public gatherings are authorised by responsible authorities as long as the gathering is below 50. All precautionary measures should be in place.

Church gatherings are restricted. Church services are conducted on Zoom, whatsapp and other media platforms. If we are going to have this lockdown for a year or more we may lose a lot of members especially the new members and those where communications networks are a challenge. We conduct our Diocesan councils through Zoom or whatsapp.

This is a year of electing new leadership in the church, if the situation does not change for the better, we may face a big challenge.

Schools may delay opening except, students who are candidates for examinations. Still conditions set may not allow some schools to open if set conditions are not met. Examination fees are high, parents have no income to support the educational needs of their children due to lockdown. Schools must be well equipped to meet the health precautionary measures. For schools to meet the set standards, parents should pay the fees raised by the institution of learning. This will affect students whose parents have no income.

COVID 19 deaths have remained low since its arrival, but since winter is coming, they authorities have anticipated a heavy upswing and decided not to lift the lockdown. If after winter the death rate remains low, the lockdown will eventually be lifted.

The food situation continues to be unbearable. While there are promises to assure people that no one is going to die of hunger, if these are not fulfilled soon, people may starve to death.

However, we have encouraged our members to share what they have with others, and fulfil God's command. Please continue to pray for us, as we fight the invisible enemy.

Be blessed.

ELCZ Presiding Bishop Chemist Faindi