

CARITAS ZAMBIA'S 61st INDEPENDENCE MESSAGE: HOPE AND INNOVATION

Lusaka, 24th October 2025

Dear Brothers and Sisters, especially the youth, on October 24th, we celebrate 61 years of independence under the banner of "One Zambia, One Nation." This is not just a public holiday; it is a sacred day of reflection, gratitude, and a powerful reaffirmation of our collective destiny.

Sixty-one years ago, our founding mothers and fathers lit the flame of freedom. We celebrate the tremendous gifts they passed on to us: firstly, Peace and Unity, the spirit of "One Zambia, One Nation" across our more than 70 ethnic groups, secondly, Democratic Resilience, marked by peaceful transitions of power, and thirdly, The Zambian Spirit of natural warmth and hospitality. These are the solid foundations upon which our future must be built. We have come a long way, and we must never forget the strength in our unity.

Yet, as we celebrate, we must speak a painful truth: our journey is far from over. We acknowledge the millions of our people, our family, who still struggle daily, who face the harsh realities of poverty, unemployment, and lack of access to basic resources. We have not yet fulfilled the promise of prosperity for all. This is not a moment for despair or regret, but for a fierce, patriotic determination.

To those who are struggling: You are seen. Your struggle is not a measure of your worth, but a measure of the work that remains for our nation. Your resilience is the fuel for our national engine.

Call for Inclusive Leadership

For Zambia to truly rise, those entrusted with the power of appointment must be the guardians of our national motto. To all who are in charge of placing people in positions of public service: Be Sensitive: Our nation is built on inclusion. Every corner of Zambia, North, South, East, and West, must see themselves represented and served by the government. Prioritize Merit and Unity: Appointments must be based on competence, integrity, and merit, but they must also reflect a clear commitment to regional balance.

The Public Service belongs to all Zambians, not just a section, and certainly not just political supporters. Serve All Zambians: The only litmus test for a public servant should be their ability and dedication to serve *all* citizens, regardless of their political affiliation or ethnic origin. A divided government cannot lead a united nation to prosperity.

Message of Faith and Encouragement

To every heart that is heavy and every hand that feels tired, remember that we do not walk this path alone. In the midst of our national and personal struggles, let us cling to the promise of hope:

"Do not be afraid, for I am with you. Do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will make you strong and will help you; I will uphold you with my victorious right hand." Isaiah 41:10

When circumstances are overwhelming, know this: God sees you, God knows your path, and He is a constant presence in your struggle. Do not give up. Your faith, coupled with your work, will move mountains for our nation.

Youth as Catalysts of Innovation

To the young men and women of Zambia, you are the majority, the inheritors of this nation, and its most powerful resource. Our challenges are not roadblocks; they are unsolved puzzles waiting for your genius. Stop looking at the problems and start seeing them as opportunities to innovate: Is the food supply chain inefficient? Become the agri-tech entrepreneur who designs a better storage solution or a digital market platform.

Is it hard to access good healthcare? Become the tech founder who uses mobile apps to connect remote patients with doctors. Is poverty pervasive in your community? Become the social entrepreneur who creates jobs by turning local waste into valuable products. Innovation is simply solving a problem in a new, better way. You don't need a massive investment to start; you need an idea, a laptop, a small team, and the courage to fail and try again. The biggest breakthroughs in history were born out of the biggest challenges.

Let's change the narrative. Let the 61st year of independence be marked not just by remembering the past, but by unleashing the entrepreneurial fire of the youth to build the future.

A Call to Action

On this year's Independence Day, let us put aside the politics of division and the paralysis of regret. Let us embrace the power of hope fueled by hard work. We stand ready, on the shoulders of giants, with 61 years of peace and unity in our history, and a world of innovation at our fingertips. Let us honor the sacrifices of the past by fighting the only battle left: the fight for shared prosperity.

The future of Zambia is not a gift; it is a creation. Go out and create it!

God bless Zambia.



Fr. Dr. Gabriel Mapulanga
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