



Department of Social Development and World Peace

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April 12, 2007

Most Reverend Robert Christopher Ndlovu, Archbishop of Harare
President, Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops' Conference
Africa Synod House
P.O. Box CY 738
Causeway, Harare, Zimbabwe

FAX: 263-4-704001

Your Excellency:

At this time of great suffering and uncertainty for the people of Zimbabwe, I write to express the solidarity of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops with the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops' Conference. Your Conference's recent Pastoral Letter, "God Hears the Cry of the Oppressed," is a powerful testimony to the prophetic leadership of the bishops of Zimbabwe and to the tragic situation of the people in your country.

We were particularly moved by the description of suffering and the humanitarian situation of the people of Zimbabwe. The present situation has eroded the provision of shelter, health, and education as well as the foundations of what was once a diverse and vibrant economy.

Your Pastoral Letter describes the deep crisis facing your people—a crisis that is at once a crisis of governance, a crisis of moral leadership and a spiritual and moral crisis. The courageous and strong cry for justice and nonviolence at the conclusion of your Pastoral Letter deserves to be heeded by all involved:

We conclude our Pastoral Letter by affirming with a clear and unambiguous Yes our support of morally legitimate political authority. At the same time we say an equally clear and unambiguous No to power through violence, oppression and intimidation. We call on those who are responsible for the current crisis in our Country to repent and listen to the cry of their citizens. To the people of Zimbabwe we appeal for peace and restraint when expressing their justified grievances and demonstrating for their human rights.

We offer our profound respect to you and our brother bishops in Zimbabwe for your brave and faithful pastoral ministry in these difficult days, and we acknowledge and accept the bishops' invitation to join with you in prayer for Zimbabwe. In the challenging times that lie ahead for your nation and your people, I want to express and reaffirm our solidarity with you in action and prayer.

We are sharing your Pastoral Letter with officials of our government and are calling on our nation and the international community to build effective support for a process of genuine

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negotiation and reconciliation to bring an end to the political and economic crisis which undermines the dignity of all, especially the poor, in your suffering land.

May God bless you in your ministry as teachers and pastors as you faithfully proclaim the Gospel and seek to guide your nation into a future free of oppression.

Fraternally yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Thomas Wenski". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial "T" and a distinct "W".

Most Reverend Thomas G. Wenski
Bishop of Orlando
Chairman, Committee on International Policy
United States Conference of Catholic Bishops