

Pastoral Programme Newsletter

July 2025



A Journey of Formation, Faith, and Fellowship in Maban:

In a special initiative requested by the Bishop of Malakal and the Diocesan Pastoral Office, a pastoral outreach program was conducted in the Maban Pastoral Region, formerly part of the Kosti Pastoral Region under the Diocese of El Obeid before the independence of South Sudan.

This unique mission, facilitated and animated by Fr. Christy John, CMF, Pastoral Coordinator of the Solidarity Pastoral Service Team, was carried out in collaboration with Deacon Michael, Diocesan Pastoral Coordinator, and with the supportive presence of Jesuit priests serving in Maban through the Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS).

Over the course of two weeks (3rd – 16th July), four major pastoral activities and formation programs were conducted, offering spiritual, theological, and pastoral enrichment to key groups within the region. Despite great challenges—especially transportation difficulties and long walking distances—participants responded with deep enthusiasm, joy, and renewed commitment to their mission.



A. Training for Parish Council Members

Two-day (3-4 July) training session for 12 parish council members. The workshop, titled "Called to Serve - Parish Councils in the Life and Mission of the Church" explored topics like the meaning of their vocation, co-responsibility, sinodality and the importance of spirituality and accountability within their ministry.

The impact was clear. As one member shared, "I never knew my service in the Parish Council had such meaning and weight. Now, I see myself as a servant leader, not just a representative."



B. Youth Leadership & Animator Formation

Over a powerful weekend from July 5th to 7th, 30 young Catholics gathered for a workshop themed "Catholic Youth: Rooted in Christ, Serving with Purpose."

The sessions were designed to help young people explore their identity, vocation, and role in the Church. They delved into key topics such as morality, spiritual life, and navigating the challenges they face today, including relationships and the importance of the sacraments.

The impact of the training was immediate and deeply personal. As one participant shared, "For the first time, someone helped me see how valuable my life is in the eyes of God. This training has given me courage to say no to things that harm me."



C. Small Christian Communities Formation



27 participants dove deep into the meaning and structure of Small Christian Communities (SCCs). Over three days, they explored the biblical foundations of this model and learned how it can transform a parish from the inside out, even practicing a simple seven-step method for sharing the Gospel.

The workshop left a powerful impression. As one catechist shared: "SCCs are no longer just a 'group' in the parish. They are the way of being Church. I want to start one in my chapel."

D. Catechist Training – Phase One

Over five days in July, fifty catechists from 53 different chapels gathered for a training that deepened their faith and pastoral skills. The workshop explored everything from the catechist's personal vocation to practical ways of building up their communities.

"We walked for days to attend this training. But now, we are going back not just with legs tired but hearts on fire," one catechist said, while holding up the handouts he received.



The recent training program in Maban highlighted both significant challenges and signs of hope. Many participants, some of whom walked for days to attend, received structured training and new materials for the first time. A key challenge raised was the lack of catechetical materials in local languages, a concern that will be addressed in future programs. Despite long distances, limited transport, and a shortage of priests, the catechists' joy and gratitude were overwhelming, showcasing their deep faith and resilience.

To build on this progress, each group received a six-month action plan, and follow-up will be coordinated by the diocesan pastoral office. This mission was made possible by the financial support of Missio München, whose solidarity has strengthened the Church's presence in one of the country's most remote regions.

Diocesan Annual Retreat: A Time to Renew All Things in Christ



From July 21st to 27th, 2025, the Diocese came together for its Annual Retreat under the uplifting theme: “To Renew All Things in Christ” (Ephesians 1:10). The retreat brought together diocesan clergy, including His Lordship Bishop Stephen Nyodho and the religious men and women serving within the Diocese, for a week of spiritual renewal, reflection, and fraternal communion.

The retreat was preached by Rev. Fr. John Loboka, Apostle of Jesus, whose insightful and prayerful reflections guided participants to return to the heart of their vocation and mission. His meditations emphasized the centrality of Christ in the life of the Church and the ongoing call to renewal in pastoral ministry and personal holiness. Responding to the request of Bishop Stephen Nyodho and the Vicar General, Solidarity Pastoral Team was privileged to support and accompany this important spiritual moment in the life of the Diocese. It was a time of grace, silence, and listening to the voice of

God—fostering unity and a renewed zeal for service among the participants. We give thanks for the success of the retreat and continue to pray that the fruits of this spiritual encounter may strengthen the Church’s mission in the Diocese.

Healing of Memories for IDP in Juba

A transformative Healing of Memories Workshop was held at Good Shepherd Peace Centre from July 22 to 24, 2025, focusing on emotional and spiritual healing for internally displaced persons and local refugees.

The three-day workshop, led by Ms. Loret Mogani and a team of facilitators, included reflective activities, small group sharing, role plays, creative expressions, and celebration sessions—each tailored to help process deep-seated wounds caused by conflict, displacement, and trauma.

A second phase of the workshop was held on July 26 for an additional group. The initiative concluded with symbolic gestures of peace and a strong recommendation to create a WhatsApp group for ongoing support. This program is seen as a vital tool for building resilience and hope in South Sudan.



Welcome Bro. Thomas Mutuku

We are pleased to warmly welcome Bro. Thomas Mutuku, a member of the Brothers of St. Peter Claver (BSPC)—a local congregation founded in Kenya—into the Solidarity Pastoral Service (SPS) Team.

Bro. Thomas first joined Solidarity with South Sudan on 1st February 2021, serving faithfully as Deputy Director of the Sustainable Agriculture Project in Riimenze (SAP-Riimenze). On 1st July 2025, Bro. Thomas officially became part of the Good Shepherd Peace Center (GSPC), where he continues his commitment to mission. We thank him for his spirit of service and collaboration, and we look forward to the gifts he brings to our shared ministry of peace, healing, and pastoral formation in South Sudan. Welcome, Bro. Thomas!

