



77 Catechists Gather in Torit for Advanced Formation

From June 8–12, 2026, seventy-seven catechists from across the Diocese of Torit gathered for five days of intensive training, marking the successful second phase of the Catechists' Training Programme. Organized by the Solidarity Pastoral Service and generously supported by Missio München, the initiative builds upon the foundation laid during the first phase conducted in 2025 to deepen understanding of the Catholic faith and strengthen grassroots ministry. This year's sessions focused on two core themes: "Knowing, Living and Teaching the Faith: A Catechist's Journey through the Apostles' Creed" and "Understanding and Living the Sacred Liturgy: A Catechist's Guide to Teaching the Faith".

During the event, the Bishop of Torit highlighted the indispensable role of catechists, reminding them that the Diocese depends greatly on their dedication to bringing the Gospel to families. "The Church needs catechists who are strong in faith, courageous in service, and ready to



face challenges with confidence," he emphasized, encouraging them to stand firm in their vocation.

The tangible fruits of this formation emerged clearly through the inspiring testimony of Catechist Luka Obura Claudio. Having participated in the first phase, Luka was so transformed by the experience that he actively recruited and brought two new catechists from his community to this training, sharing: "We need more catechists to spread the Good News and serve our communities." Another participant, Catechist Lokang Charles, expressed his deep gratitude for the experience: "I am very happy to be here with the catechists who first taught and formed me in the faith. This programme has renewed my commitment to serve the Church and my community."



Many other participants echoed these feelings, noting how the lessons increased their pastoral capability. One catechist commented, "Now I can explain the Creed with greater confidence and help others understand what we profess every Sunday," while another remarked, "The liturgy sessions helped me realize that every action in the Mass has meaning. This knowledge will help me teach others more effectively."

Fr. Jacob Odawa, Parish Priest of Sts. Peter and Paul Cathedral, highly commended the systematic, phase-by-phase approach of the curriculum, noting that continuous training is essential for developing competent catechists who can respond to local pastoral needs. As the week concluded, the high level of enthusiasm was reflected in the participants' strong request for a third phase, proving that well-formed catechists remain vital pillars of faith and transformation in Torit.



Strengthening Parish Leadership in the Diocese of Torit



From June 15–17, 2026, thirty-six members of Parish Pastoral Councils from the Diocese of Torit participated in a transformative three-day workshop titled "Called to Serve: Parish Councils in the Life and Mission of the Church." Supported by Missio München, this event marked the very first formal formation that almost all the participants had ever received in their roles, focusing on deepening their vocation, fostering collaborative leadership, and equipping them to serve their parishes effectively.

The workshop covered five essential themes: The Identity of a Council Member; The Shared Mission of the Parish; Structural Roles and Duties;

Synodality and Teamwork, and Spirituality rooted in Accountability. To bring these concepts to life, the training featured highly participatory group exercises. "The Web of Mission" (inspired by Romans and Corinthians) helped participants appreciate the diversity of gifts within the Church as "One Body," while "Building the Tower" challenged them to practice hands-on communication, resource management, and servant leadership. The impact of the training was clearly reflected in the participants' testimonies. For many, it completely reframed their understanding of their roles. One participant remarked: "For the first time, I understand that being a Parish Pastoral Council member is not simply attending meetings but sharing in the mission of Christ and serving God's people together with the parish priest." Another participant highlighted the power of the interactive format, sharing: "The group activities helped us experience what teamwork and unity really mean. We discovered that every member is important, and together we can build a vibrant parish community." Fr. Mathias Ukpong, MSP, Parish Priest of Our Lady of the Holy Rosary Parish, expressed his sincere appreciation for both the content and methodology, noting that the formation encouraged deep personal reflection. He shared his confidence that these newly acquired skills will significantly strengthen parish leadership and promote greater collaboration in evangelization, leaving the council members renewed in their commitment to building vibrant Christian communities.



Witnessing the Fruits of Formation: Follow-up Visit to MCA Groups in the Diocese of Tombura-Yambio

By Fr. Christy John CMF, Solidarity Pastoral Service Project Coordinator

One of the greatest joys in pastoral ministry is to witness the fruits of seeds planted through formation and accompaniment. During recent visits to the Diocese of Tombura-Yambio, I had the opportunity to meet Missionary Childhood Association (MCA) groups at St. Mary's Cathedral and Christ the King Parish, where I witnessed firsthand the positive impact of the MCA Animators Formation Program supported by Friends in Solidarity (USA).

The visits took place on different occasions during May 2026 and formed part of our ongoing commitment to accompany, monitor, and encourage those who participated in the MCA Animators Training held from 1st to 7th September 2024.



The training aimed at equipping catechists and parish leaders with the skills and knowledge necessary to guide children in their faith journey and missionary vocation.

At Christ the King Parish, three trained animators currently accompany 156 children who gather every Saturday for prayer, catechesis, missionary activities, Bible sharing, songs, and games. The atmosphere was vibrant and joyful as the children actively participated in the various activities prepared by their animators.

At St. Mary's Cathedral, eight animators, six of whom are regularly available, accompany 280 children. The children are organized into eight groups, each named after a patron saint. They meet every Saturday and Sunday for faith formation, prayer, missionary awareness, and

community-building activities.

What impressed me most was the enthusiasm and commitment of both the children and their animators. The animators shared how the training strengthened their confidence and equipped them with practical methods for engaging children in meaningful faith formation. Despite limited resources, they continue to dedicate their time and energy to nurturing the spiritual growth of the young members entrusted to their care.

The children themselves offered inspiring testimonies. Many spoke about how they have learned to pray regularly, participate actively in the Holy Mass, help others, and share the love of Jesus with their friends and families. Some proudly explained how they encourage other children to join the MCA and become young missionaries in their communities.



These encounters reminded us that the Missionary Childhood Association is not merely an activity for children; it is a school of discipleship where young people learn to know, love, and serve Christ. Through prayer, catechesis, friendship, and missionary outreach, these children are growing into committed Catholics and responsible citizens who can contribute positively to the future of South Sudan.

The follow-up visits also highlighted the importance of continuous accompaniment. Monitoring and encouraging animators on the ground helps sustain their motivation, strengthens parish programs, and ensures that the benefits of the training continue to reach more children. It also provides valuable opportunities to listen to their experiences, celebrate successes, and identify areas where additional support may be needed.



As we witnessed the joy, discipline, and missionary spirit of these young people, we were reminded that investment in children's faith formation is an investment in the future of the Church and society. The enthusiasm visible in these MCA groups stands as a testimony to the lasting impact of quality formation and dedicated pastoral accompaniment.

We extend our sincere gratitude to Friends in Solidarity (USA) for their generous support of the MCA Animators Training Program. Their partnership is helping to form a new generation of young Catholics who are growing in faith, leadership, service, and missionary commitment.

Together, we continue to build hope, one child, one animator, and one parish at a time.

