

The Role of Spiritans in The Integral Development in Zimbabwe: Key to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

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Abstract: In many previous articles where development was discussed, the authors' emphasis was either on economic development, physical development or personality development. This article focused on the integral development of the people of Zimbabwe by the Spiritan missionaries. The article which narrated the origin of the congregation, also described its charism, and traced the route these Spiritans took up to Zimbabwe as well as the activities they carried out to bring about the expected and the desired development in Zimbabwe. In the course of this discussion, it was discovered that Spiritans were far more ahead of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the United Nation, yet they proved to be in full compliance. It was also discovered that development is a right of everyone and essentially a collaborative activity. Though material and physical development is good, emphasis should always be the development of people both old and young rich and poor alike. Some recommendations were made.

1. Introduction

Central to this article is the development brought about by human beings to their fellow human beings. It is about an integral development encompassing human and rural. The article explores the various ways the Spiritans have tried and continue to bring development to the people of Zimbabwe. This quotation is apt to this article:

Life is enriched when it is nourished by the gifts of God through the services of human beings. In the same way, society grows and develops when people work together with good intentions for a common goal directed by common good. Development, therefore, is very central to human growth as well as to the expansion of any society. Both human and societal developments are collaborative ventures (Amadi, 2019, p.500-501).

The quotation above has brought out the salient points envisaged in the present article namely; the activities of human beings buttressed by collaborative efforts made possible through partnerships. The Spiritans world over and Zimbabwe in particular are members of this collaborative ministries and ventures with some non-governmental organizations and the locals as partners. As members of the Universal Church, Spiritans comply with the directives of the Documents of Vatican II one of which states:

Just as human activity proceeds from man, so it is ordered toward man. For when a man works, he not only alters things and society, he develops himself as well. He learns much, he activates his resources, he goes outside of himself and beyond himself (Gaudium et Spes art. 35).

From what we have said so far, it is evident that development is symbiotic both intrinsic and extrinsic in nature. In practical terms this article sets out to investigate the extent of human, religious and rural developments in Zimbabwe. It must be stated clearly that development is a gradual process. It is this gradual process that we intend to discover in its progression.

In order to achieve these objectives, historical method is adopted. In this historical method, we apply narrative, analytic and critique approach for a balance presentation. This article follows this procedure.

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Spiritans and their Charism

What we know today as the Congregation of Holy Ghost Fathers and Brothers—Spiritans came into existence on May 27, 1703 when it was founded by Poullart des Places a French man. A record of events that day documented by Koren reads:

Mr Poullart des Places ..., then only an aspirant to the ecclesiastical state, began the establishment of the said community and seminary consecrated to the Holy Ghost under the invocation of the Blessed Virgin Mary conceived without sin (1983, p. 10).

A century later the founder of this congregation became a priest but died not long after ordination. The congregation had a second founder in the name of Francis Libermann—a Jewish convert who stabilized the congregation. When Rome discovered that the two congregations Holy Ghost by Poullart des Places and Holy Heart of Mary by Francis Libermann had similar goals, she advised that the two congregations be merged. On the feast of Pentecost, June 10, 1848, both parties in formal session at Holy Ghost Seminary unanimously accepted the merger in principle... The merger was approved by Rome on September 28, 1848 with Francis Libermann as the third Superior General. The document from Rome officially states:

It is your task to bring about this merger of your two congregations in such a way that from now on the Congregation of the Most Holy Heart of Mary ceases to exist and its associates and members are aggregated to the Congregation of the Holy Ghost, thereby becoming its associates and members, sharing the same rights and privileges and being subject to the same disciplinary rules (Koren, 1983, p. 203).

With this letter from Rome, the merger became permanent and Holy Ghost Congregation became stronger. On November 3, 1848 Propaganda in Rome approved the election of Francis Libermann as the third Superior General. This is the history of the congregation that is found in more than eight-four countries of the world including Nigeria and Zimbabwe.

Holy Ghost as a Religious Missionary Congregation has a mandate to take the Word of God to places where the church finds it difficult to send workers. Thus in 1885, some priests and brothers from France came to Onitsha in Nigeria. The year 1885 was a remarkable year in the history of the Catholic Church in Nigeria when Holy Ghost Fathers and Brothers came to Onitsha. Obi et al (1985, p. 11) describe this memorable year thus:

September 19, 1885, was a special date in the annals of the Holy Ghost missionary history. That was the day when Father Joseph Lutz, till then the Superior at Rio Ponge, left Paris in company of the newly

professed Father Horne and Brothers Hermas and Jean-Gotto, formerly of the station at St. Coeur de Marie. They had a well-defined objective—to plant the Catholic faith in South-Eastern Nigeria, at that time referred to as the lower Niger.

The narrative above shows the beginning of Holy Ghost Congregation and its first outreach to Nigeria. Let us now examine the Congregation's Charism.

Our Spiritan Charism

Concerning 'charism,' Our Sunday Catholic Encyclopedia (1991:203) states: "Our English word 'charism' is from the Greek *charisma (ta)*, which refers to 'free gift.' Charisms (*charismata*) are those special gifts, when properly directed as services to the Lord, manifest the work of God through the Holy Spirit. These services, therefore, are for the common good of the body of Christ—the Church (1Cor. 12:8-10, 28). Our Spiritan Rule of Life (SRL) article 25 spells out an aspect of what we can call our charism thus:

One basic characteristic of the Spiritan call is availability for the service of the Gospel, a readiness to go where we are sent by the congregation. We accept to free ourselves from an engagement in order to respond to new and different calls from a local Church or from the universal Church. Attentive to the signs of the times, we reexamine periodically the reasons that underlie our present commitment and our present apostolate.

This SRL 25 agrees with the explanation given above. Namely, the gifts must be properly directed as services to the Lord and they must be for the common good of the Body of Christ—the Church. There are two aspects of this availability namely: "availability before our Lord" (Koren 1990:15), who called us to his service. In other words, we must be ready to submit whole-heartedly to him and in union with him—personal holiness so as to be able to do God's will appropriately. There is also the "availability before our fellowmen [human beings]" (1990:16). In both aspects, our response is here I am Lord send me! This becomes our watchword—our maxim. Teaching how this availability is to be realized, Libermann explains:

All you have to do is keep yourself docile and pliable in the hands of the Spirit of life, whom our Lord Jesus has placed in your soul... It pertains to him alone to give you any impetus or impression whatsoever, and it pertains to him also to get you to put that impetus or impression into practice, for if you mix violent activity with it, you will only spoil everything (Gilbert, 1983 p. 39-40).

In response to this call—here I am Lord send me, some of us in Zimbabwe mission have stayed twenty years and above, some ten and those who are just starting, are also ready and willing to be 'pliable in the hands of the Spirit,' and to the demands of the mission in Zimbabwe. It is the same spirit of availability that urges us to stay in a country where one is sure where to get or buy what one needs to survive the next day at a time when Zimbabwe was in its political and economic crises. It is, as it were, not to 'spoil the activities of the Holy Spirit with our violent actions,' as Libermann feared, and with the grace of God, that we remain always available with our eyes open to the signs of the times. It is this availability that enables us to be with our people in Zimbabwe at this time of their suffering where we participate and share in their sufferings. As St Paul (1Cor. 9:22-23) said:

To the weak I have become weak, so that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all people that I might by all means save some. I do it all for the sake of the Gospel, so that I may share in its blessings.

It is this availability that enables us to sit many hours on end to listen to the plight of our people both young and old alike. It is the same availability that motivates Spiritan confreres to carry in their vehicles very sick people from the rural areas to the provincial hospital in town. In some particular cases, the sick ones died before reaching the hospital. It is the same availability that encourages us to rush expectant mothers in labour to hospitals with their babies delivered at the arrival on the spot. It is said that there is risk in every adventure. However, the risk to save life is more honourable. There are those who have celebrated moments of joy in their lives and we made ourselves available to them. We have also tried to console those who mourned their dead, those depressed and those displaced especially during the 'operation clean up campaign—*murambatsvina*.' We

try to be available to ourselves—Spiritans at prayers, at table and at play. That is at community exercises and at individual levels.

Proper catechetical training of our Catholic members and the encouragement for self-reliance are other important characteristics of our apostolate. In order to teach self-reliance in practice, the Spiritans in Mutare diocese initiated the idea of bringing gifts to the diocesan bishops at Chrism Mass. The idea is now circulating progressively. To teach a proper and thorough catechism needs patience and presence in imitation of what Jesus did in some of his itinerant journeys where he sat to teach the people by himself. We also take time to teach our members so that they become well instructed and properly informed. We encourage our people to aim at self-reliance through micro projects. This explains why we have such projects as: youth tile making, grinding meals, cattle rearing and many others.

Development: Meaning, Analysis and Significance

It is instructive and helpful to begin this section with this illustration by Byrne (1983, p. 5) who says:

While it is true to say that buildings, equipment and money are useful and often necessary for development, nevertheless we must be careful to remind ourselves that development is concerned primarily with people and not just things like institutions and projects. The main reason for development work is the development of people. The means we use to help development of people are projects.

This illustration has brought to the fore the explanation and meaning of development emphasizing that development is concerned primarily about people not things like institutions and projects. However, it recognizes the means through which development is realized as 'projects.' Accepting the development of people as necessary, Catholic Encyclopedia states: "The concept that society must meet the needs of the people if all are to reach the true fulfilment—spiritually, individually, economically and socially which God intends (1991, p. 304). It is disappointing that though God intends full development of all people by blessing the world with abundant resources, yet there is massive underdevelopment. The Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Catholic Church explains the causes of this underdevelopment by saying:

It may seem that underdevelopment is impossible to eliminate, as though it were a death sentence, especially considering the fact that it is not only the result of erroneous human choices but also the consequence of economic, financial and social mechanisms and structures of sin that prevent the full development of peoples (2008, p. 240).

It is regrettable that the wrong choices made by few human beings especially political leaders affect many people. The Social Doctrine of the Catholic Church goes on to suggest how this problem is to be solved by saying:

These difficulties must be met with strong and resolute determination, because development is not only an aspiration but a right that, like every right, implies a duty. Collaboration in the development of the whole person and every human being is in fact a duty of all towards all, and must be shared by the four parts of the world: East and West, North and South (p. 240-241).

Two critical points have emerged namely on one hand, development is considered as a right of every human being. On the other hand there is need for a collaborative work. From our discussion so far, it is evidently clear that development is integral in the sense that it is for the whole person and for every person on earth. Ideally in development work there is no segregation between Blacks and Whites or Christians and Muslims. Byrne (1983) is right when he advises, as Christians we must be interested in the development of every person, the youth, the elders, the rich, the poor and the middle class. Since we are still talking of integral development, it is helpful to bring into this discussion this aspect of development expressed by Bourdillon who argues:

Development certainly involves an improved standard of living, but this improvement must apply to a large number of people. Criteria for development involve not simply average income, but also the provision of

services for the majority such as health and education, as well as widespread access of material resources (1990, p. 140).

Boudillon's argument is necessary because he forestalls the danger where some countries increase their production in such a way that few people become rich while the majority remain destitute. In the minds of such political leaders, they claim that they have achieved development in the whole country. This claim is faulty because that development is for the few privileged people. True development should be for the poor and the rich. Giving an example of development in his town—Ngugo Amadi (2019) comments, it is interesting to visit the orphanage run by Daughters of Charity of the Precious Blood (DCPB) sisters at Ngugo. The visitor will observe at the first instance the atmosphere of peace and love that characterizes the orphanage. The good relationship existing between these orphans and the sisters is very impressive and contagious. Development is self-manifesting and visible. The discussion on development challenges us with the practical aspect of it. That is the aspect of practical involvement.

Areas of Developmental Concentration: Zimbabwe Mission Proper

The previous discussions have established a fundamental fact that development is primarily about people. Before we go into the areas of developmental concentration, it is instructive to give a sketch of Zimbabwe Mission proper.

Zimbabwe Mission Proper

One of the decisions taken during the Nigerian Provincial chapter of 1981 was to establish missions outside Nigeria as well as to consolidate the existing ones within. It is said that when a child is begotten, he or she must also beget others. Our previous chapters show how the French and Irish confreres brought the Good News to us in Nigeria. The time has also come for the Nigerian Holy Ghost Fathers and Brothers to carry the same message to other nations though in their own way and style.

It was on April 22, 1984 when the first Nigerian contingents arrived in Zimbabwe. They were Fr. Isaac Madu and Brother Joseph Ofomadu. Their designation was St. Andrew's Marange. Coincidentally, one common characteristic to their family name was 'Madu,' a word that is very much revered in Igboland. Generically it means 'human being.' In its syntactic form, it could be said that there is 'beauty in human being.' It was not by chance; rather, it was by God's Providence that these first two missionaries came to start the Zimbabwe mission. With the presence of human being—Madu (the former), and with the justice and integrity of human being—Ofomadu (the latter), the mission of the Lord must continue to prosper. This is evident in Zimbabwe mission. At the time under discussion, the local bishop was His Lordship Most Rev Alexio Churu Muchabaiwa who invited the Spiritans through his Auxiliary Bishop His Lordship Most Rev Patrick Mutume who visited Nigeria to ask for Spiritans to come and work in Mutare Diocese of Zimbabwe. The contingents of two Spiritans in 1984 rose to twenty a decade later. From this number, two came from Holland, and one from South Africa the rest are Nigerians. This was the number that was on the ground/spot when Rome made Zimbabwe a District in 1995 having its Major Superior with Fr. Amadi as the first Major Superior. It is important to mention that the Spiritans expanded beyond Mutare Diocese to Harare Archdiocese and Gokwe Diocese. In other words, the Spiritans are in three Provinces: Manicaland, Harare and Midlands. From 1995, the number of Spiritans increased progressively that enabled us to embark on human and rural developments.

Development in Zimbabwe

The accounts below present the various ways Spiritans embarked on the development work in Zimbabwe. In order to develop the people we were conscious of 'reading the signs of the time' as enshrined in our Spiritan Rule of Life. We followed these basic fundamental principles. With this we embarked on the following.

Seminars and Trainings

In order to respond to the demands on the spot namely the development of the people of God whom we have come to serve, we embarked on series of seminars beginning with the catechists of the parishes and outstations.

We conducted seminars for these catechists on basic knowledge of human development: cognitive, language, psychological and socio-economic development. Catechesis was another area of emphasis at the seminar sessions for the catechists. At the completion of the seminar series for the catechists, new bicycles were given to those that attended and completed the seminar and training. The bicycles were sourced from Nigeria, our home base. The emphasis on training these catechists was on the understanding that catechists are the direct helpers through whom we reach the majority of the people of God and non-Christians at the grass-roots in their rural areas and villages.

Seminars for the youths were also organized for them such as personality traits, moral rectitude, responsible living, vocations, self-reliance and character formation. The youths from other parishes outside our own became interested. After admitting them to take part in the seminars, they organized in their parishes and invited us for further seminar trainings. While we were conducting these seminars, we also had our eyes on the prospective ones who could answer the call to priesthood and religious life. From time to time we organized 'come and see program' for such interested candidates though unofficial because the local ordinary had not given permission for that venture at that time.

Library Services for Pupils and Students

Between 1993 and 1994, there was a flourishing library in Florida Mutare. With the help of a female religious Congregation of Germany and the Church in Need, some money was made available to build a rural library called "Wisdom Library Learning to Grow." The local bishop Most Rev Alexio Churu Muchabaiwa blessed and opened it with these exhilarating words: "Our children are blessed they have found a place to improve themselves and to gain more knowledge about God and society." At this juncture, I would like to associate this library with what Shirley says about rural resource centre and community development: "A resource centre is a place where members of a community can find information about subjects of interest to them—take part in learning activities (1988, p. viii). Like what Shirley said, I affirm that this wisdom library helps pupils and students find materials that enable them retain and improve their literacy and numerical skills resulting to human development. As a result, the library is equipped and furnished with pictorial and picture story books for little kids so as to take care of their of their own interest and development. Korb (2011) captures the aim of this library in these words:

In other words, literacy instruction is most successful when young children read high quality texts that are relevant to their everyday lives and cultural experiences, as would be the case with oral stories adapted into picture books. Therefore literacy instruction in Nigeria needs to make a transition to using meaningful tests as picture story books (p. 53).

In the context of our discussion I will like to borrow the same words and apply them to Zimbabwe in the same original words. Therefore literacy instruction in Zimbabwe needs to make a transition to using meaningful texts as picture story books. As rightly observed by Korb, the shelf containing picture story books are the busiest shelf because the pupils always scramble over the books. At the closure of the school days work, the pupils moved down to 'wisdom library learning to grow' so as to select those interesting pictorial books to occupy themselves till the library closes its doors for the next day. Weekends offer the pupils and students more time to utilize the library from morning till evening. The library helped the pupils even at their tender age to acquire reading skills thereby developing their minds intellectually, psychologically and spiritually.

Finally, as a teacher and the organizer of wisdom library, Baird's comments speak to my heart when he argues:

Setting up and running a school library is one of the most satisfying jobs a teacher can perform. As a teacher-librarian you will be able to develop children's love of books and encourage them to read. This in turn will increase their literacy skills which they will enjoy, remember and share long after their school days are over (1994, p. 1).

Indeed seeing children develop their literacy skills at the early stages of their lives is really and truly what developing people is all about and this is what we as Spiritans stand for which for us, is a fulfilling apostolate from the heart.



(Pupils and Students reading in the library supervised by Fr. Amadi C. S. Sp)

A Brief History of Sunrise Foundation

Our Spiritan Rule of Life (SRL, No. 4) states that our aim and purpose is the evangelization of the poor and a willingness to accept tasks the church has difficulty in finding workers. With this in mind the origin of Sunrise Foundation is based on the care of the poor; which by implication involves offering them an integral development. By 2001, the number of poverty stricken families in Zimbabwe increased astronomically and the children were the worst victims of this circumstance. It was in 2001 when the founder Fr. Sylvester Igboanyika a student of Gregorian University Rome came back to Zimbabwe on holidays that he experienced the pains and difficulties of these children who dropped out of school. Some of these children at their tender age started selling pop-corns, banana, sugarcane, vegetables and tomatoes. The sufferings of these children not only disturbed Fr. Sylvester but also spurred him to action. In his own words he explains:

The urge became a strong force within me that would define my missionary involvement with orphans in Zimbabwe and other places for many years to come. When I went back to Italy I took the initiative and invited some of my friends to help many orphans that are suffering in my place of [missionary] work. Together with some of them I founded the charitable trust called in Italian “Alba della Sperana” which means Sunrise for Hope. The idea behind this name was that these suffering children should not be left to wallow in socio-economic darkness. In other words, there should be sunrise in their lives to end the long dark night of misery and desperation. In Italy where it was started, it was registered as non-profit charitable organization recognized by the Italian government. Thus, sunrise in Zimbabwe is the first branch of this organization in Italy. Our discussion below centers on the activities of sunrise to bring about development in Zimbabwe.

Vision, Goal and Activities of Sunrise Foundation

The vision of Sunrise Foundation is to empower orphans and other vulnerable children through adequate material and psycho-social support so that they can be liberated from all hindrances to normal growth and development. This vision is directed towards the goal of ensuring that orphans and other vulnerable children receive holistic care and attention that will enable them to overcome the stigma of orphan hood and poverty and consequently achieve their God-given natural potentials. Activities aimed at achieving this goal include the following:

Supplementary feeding Programme.

The organisation runs a supplementary feeding programme that provides essential food items to the children.



Roller Meal produced by Sunrise Foundation for supplementary feeding of children



Children carrying their food stuff home to their various families

Better quality education

Educating the orphan is one of the primary objectives of Sunrise Foundation. The organisation tries to make sure that no orphan registered with it is deprived of the opportunity to go to school. This task has become very expensive since the country switched to the multi-currency platform and started using the United States dollar

as the dominant legal tender in business transactions. However all orphans in the programme who have no relatives to train them are given the opportunity to go to primary school. The very successful ones among them proceed to secondary school and are paid for by the organisation. After their secondary school, those with very good results proceed to higher institutions. There are several beneficiaries of the organisation who have either finished their University Education or are in the process of doing so. There are also orphans training to become doctors, lawyers, Social workers, teachers and others in technical schools.



Holy Ghost College Marange built by the Spiritans from the scratch

Access to protected water source.

There are areas where little ones trek for a long distance in search of water. In the absence of good water supply they resort to the use of surface water that is contaminated and unhealthy. Sunrise assists such communities by providing good water supply through sinking bore holes and deep wells in these areas. With water available, families can engage in gardening to improve the quality of their food.

HIV/AIDS prevention and alleviation

Periodic training is held to promote behavioural change and capacity building in the children. The areas emphasised include HIV/AIDS prevention and alleviation.

Skills training

Beneficiaries of the programme who have finished school but did not come out with good results are helped with skills training aimed at making them self-reliant in life. There are training programmes in dress making, food and nutrition, secretarial studies for females. For the boys there is training in areas such as metal works, and technical skills, motor mechanics etc. Many boys and girls have benefited from the post-secondary training scheme.

Better housing conditions

The services given by Sunrise Foundation in the communities where it operates include the provision of better houses for very indigent families. This programme because it is finance-intensive, is targeted at very special cases. In conclusion we can say that Sunrise Foundation, therefore, stands elegantly as social contributions made by Spiritan Missionaries to the development of the people in Zimbabwe.



New House built for this woman and her children by Sunrise Foundation.

Apostolic Ministries of Spiritan Priests and Brothers in Zimbabwe

The first part of this discussion takes its bearing from the Decree on the Ministry of Priests in the Documents of Vatican II. The second part relates to the practical and theoretical aspects of development with particular reference to Zimbabwe. Article 3 of the Decree on the Ministry and life of Priests states:

Priests are taken from among men and appointed for men in things which pertain to God in order to offer gifts and services for sins. Hence they deal with other men as with brothers. This was the way that the Lord Jesus the Son of God, a man sent by the Father to men, dwelt among us and willed to become like his brothers in all things except sin. ... They cannot be ministers of Christ unless they are witnesses and dispensers of a life other than this earthly one. But they cannot be of service to men if they remain strangers to the life and conditions of men.

The last sentence of this quotation captures the essence our discussion on development of the people, a task the Spiritans set for themselves for the good of the people of Zimbabwe. It also touches on one aspect of our Spiritan charism namely availability to people at all times. Article 2 of the same Decree highlights other duties of priests in this order:

Since in their own measure priests participate in the office of the apostles, God gave them the grace to be ministers of Christ Jesus among the people. They shoulder the sacred task of the gospel so that the offering of the people can be made acceptable through the sanctifying of the Holy Spirit. ... Through the ministry of the priests, the spiritual sacrifice of the faithful is made perfect in union with the sacrifice of Christ the sole mediator. Through the hands of priests and in the name of the whole church, the Lord's sacrifice is offered in the Eucharist in an un-bloody and sacramental manner until He Himself returns.

Having highlighted the duties of Catholic Priests, let us examine how the Spiritans in Zimbabwe exercised some of these duties pastorally in order to bring about the development of the people and their environment. Pastorally, Spiritans served the people of God in Zimbabwe in the following parishes in the three provinces:

St. Andrew's Marange
St. Thomas Marange
St. Patricks' Nyanyadzi
St. James Chipinge
St. Charles Chimanimani
St. Martin's Florida
Immaculate Conception Chikanga
Holy Trinity Kuwadzana Harare
Immaculate Heart Snake Park Harare
St. Michael's Siakobve.

Among these parishes, Spiritans started three namely Immaculate Conception Chikanga in Manicaland, Immaculate Heart Snake Park Harare Province and St. Michael's Siakobvu Gokwe Midlands Province. The rest were established before we came. However we tried to use our Spiritan charism to bring about development in them. In the parishes we worked, self-reliance, preferential option of the poor, promotion of vocation and youth ministry were visibly emphasised and practised. These parishes are now administered by the diocesan priests. They are St. Charles Chimanimani, St. James Chipinge and St. Michael's Siakobvu.

It is a thing of joy to say that Nigerian Spiritans have helped to train more than ten Zimbabwean Spiritan priests most of them still working in Zimbabwe. Like John the Baptist who said that Christ will increase and he will decrease. In the same the Nigerian Spiritans have decreased in number. There are four Nigerian Spiritans working in Zimbabwe at present. On a sad note, two priests from Nigeria and one from South Africa who worked in Zimbabwe have died. May their souls rest in peace!

Correlation to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

My point of departure in this section begins with article 64 of Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World which says:

Today more than ever before, progress in the production of agricultural and industrial goods and in the rendering of services is rightly aimed at making provisions for the growth of a people and meeting the rising expectations of the human race. Therefore, technical progress must be fostered, along with a spirit of initiative, an eagerness to create and expand enterprises, the adaptation of methods of production, and the strenuous efforts of all who engage in production—in a word, all the elements making for such development.

Certainly for a noticeable and an outstanding development to take place, initiative is required as well as the ability to key into that initiative. This is where Sustainable Development Goals come into play in this discussion. It is instructive to bring in here the four crucial points highlighted by UNDP outlined thus:

“The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), also known as the Global Goals, were adopted by the United Nations in 2015 as a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure that by 2030 all people enjoy peace and prosperity. The 17 SDGs are integrated—they recognize that action in one area will affect outcomes in others, and that development must balance social, economic and environmental sustainability. Countries have committed to prioritize progress for those who're furthest behind. The SDGs are designed to end poverty, hunger, AIDS, and discrimination against women and girls. The creativity, knowhow, technology and financial resources from all of society is necessary to achieve the SDGs in every context.”

Though our Spiritan mission in Zimbabwe started many years before the formulation of SDGs in 2015, our missionary work in Zimbabwe was ahead in promoting some of these SDGs. These areas where we were inspired by the Holy Spirit and driven by our Spiritan charism correspond to the following SDGs:

SDG 1 No Poverty
SDG 2 Zero Hunger
SDG 3 Good Health and Wellbeing
SDG 4 Quality Education.

Our missionary activities as explicated in the discussions above indicate that these four SDGs are visibly noticeable in our works in Zimbabwe. Christ told us his followers that we are the light of the world. In our own little way, the Spiritans in Zimbabwe have kindled that light those who are still there are trying to see that it glows so as to give all the warmth of development and salvation to the glory of God.

2. Conclusion

This article described the role Spiritans played to bring about development of the people of Zimbabwe down to the rural areas. The discussions adopted historical approach detailing the long route Spiritans took to come to existence world-wide, to Nigeria then to Zimbabwe. The same process led us to recount and narrate the various activities the Spiritans used to reach out to the people of Zimbabwe even to the grass-roots. It was discovered that Spiritans were far more ahead of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the United Nation, yet they proved to be in full compliance. Finally, it was discovered that development is a right of everyone and it is also a collaborative activity. Though material and physical development is good, emphasis should be the development of people both old and young rich and poor alike.

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