



Luntha Television increases its Viewership amid COVID-19 Pandemic

LILONGWE, Malawi – Following the emergency meeting held by the Catholic media houses at ECM Secretariat in Lilongwe on 21st April 2020 concerning the COVID-19 response, Luntha TV embarked on improving its programming by airing and streaming live Masses, COVID-19 and religious programmes.

The emergency meeting of all Catholic radios and Luntha TV as the only Catholic Station in Malawi was held to plan effectively following the directives on COVID-19 response by the Episcopal Conference of Malawi (ECM). The bishops asked all Catholic radios and Luntha TV to air live Masses and other spiritual programs.

As a result, the priests, the laity and the people of goodwill are coming to Luntha TV to pray, produce programmes and visit the studios. Archbishop Tarcizio Ziyaye of Lilongwe archdiocese has also appealed to Christians to support Luntha TV. We are receiving numerous positive and constructive feedbacks as compared to previous years. For example, one parent, as they were watching Mass on Luntha TV, sent us a message from their daughter who said, *"Dad, I want to be a nun. I want to serve God like those Sisters in their robes serving God"*. We feel consoled with such messages despite the challenges Luntha TV is facing.

It was on the 14th of January 2020 when fire gutted the hub of TV broadcasting in Malawi where Luntha TV's broadcasting equipment at the headend was not spared alongside with the equipment of other TV stations in Malawi. From then, Luntha TV was off air for a month and 5 days. With this long time being off air, we had to improvise and send our signal through Blantyre which is about 300 km away from Lilongwe.

With this temporary measure, our services in Luntha TV have been greatly affected due to lack of all that is needed for TV broadcasting, both in Lilongwe and Balaka studios. Despite of our loud cry appealing for support, we haven't received anything towards solving this problem yet. More demand came in at the outbreak of COVID-19, when on 16th April, the

Episcopal Conference of Malawi (ECM) directed all Catholic radios and Luntha TV as the only Catholic TV station in the country to air live Masses and other spiritual programs. We indeed started and the feedback is overwhelmingly positive as many are spiritually nourished through Luntha TV.

This being the case, since the fire had incapacitated us and now with many added programs, TV equipment such as more cameras, microphones, more computers, LiveU gadget for outside live broadcasting to mention a few are more needed than ever before.

According to Fr. Jailos Mpina, SMM, the Luntha TV Deputy Director responsible for operations and programs, LiveU Solo (LU600HEVC) live - streaming gadget which is needed for Masses costs about 1,500 Euros. The LiveU gadget will help us having Masses from all dioceses of Malawi aired live on Luntha TV.

We appeal for support in order to serve the Lord better through this powerful tool of evangelization.

*Fr. David Niwagaba, SMM
Director of LUNTHA TV*