

BRIEF HISTORY OF THE RELIGIOUS SISTERS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

The Religious Sisters of the Holy Spirit (RSHS), were founded by Bishop James Corboy S.J. in the diocese of Monze in 1971. Born in Limerick, Ireland, Fr. James Corboy S.J. became the first Bishop of Monze when the diocese was first established in March, 1962. When James Corboy was appointed Bishop of Monze Diocese, the Second Vatican Council was already in session. The council as it gave him a better understanding of what lay ahead of him. Among the interventions he actively participated in at the general sessions of the council included one on the liturgy, one on the nature of the Church and two on the Church in the Modern World.

Bishop Corboy was later to say that his participation at the Vatican Council completely changed his whole outlook on the Church. Among the things that made a deep impression on him was the role of lay people in the Church. He used to say that the Church in Zambia needed to become a Church of the laity in order to free itself from too much European influence. He, therefore, set up St. Kizito Pastoral Centre where lay evangelisers were trained. The Diocesan Council of the Laity also came into being around this time.

In order to set up all the necessary structures in the new diocese, the work that needed to be done was enormous. With only one Tonga priest, Fr. Dominic Nchete and only a few Zambian sisters at the time, Bishop Corboy needed the assistance of expatriate priests, brothers and sisters. Fortunately, due to the contacts that Bishop Corboy made with other bishops at the Council such as Bishop Burke of Waterford in Ireland and Archbishop Montini of Milan, many priests and religious from different congregations came to evangelise and help the bishop set up the new diocese. The Religious Sisters of Charity and the Handmaids of the Blessed Virgin Mary were already In the Diocese. Those that came to the diocese included the Presentation Sisters, the Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Mary, the Holy Rosary Sisters, the Sisters of Mercy and the Sisters of Charity of Sts. J. Capitanio and V. Gerosa. They all made significant contributions in the areas of pastoral work, health care and education. The Christian Brothers, the St. John of God Brothers and the Holy Ghost Fathers also contributed to the life of the diocese in their various ministries. Many of Bishop Corboy's former students from Milltown Park also came and worked in the various parishes in the diocese.

It was within this atmosphere of change and renewal that the idea of establishing a local congregation of sisters was born. Bishop Corboy began making consultations with priests and religious who were working in the diocese at the time. When asked about the exact date he got the inspiration to found the congregation, Bishop Corboy had this to say:

I don't recall now clearly all the events of these past years, but I do remember calling a meeting of priests and sisters to decide whether we should start a new congregation for the sisters or encourage our girls to join the existing congregations. We decided to start a new congregation and set up a committee of priests and religious to begin the plan.

This newly founded congregation of sisters was formed by an already established congregation, the Religious Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Mary (RSHM). The RSHM sisters continued their work of formation and offering leadership to the congregation until 1995, when the Sisters of the Holy Spirit became autonomous.

The Religious Sisters of the Holy Spirit have since inception been involved in teaching, pastoral work, medical work and formation among their own people. Special emphasis in their ministries has been on uplifting the livelihood of the poor especially women and children.

Over the past fifty years, the Religious Sisters of the Holy Spirit have been an integral part of the Diocese of Monze. The main aim of the congregation is to continue Christ's mission to the world, through the sisters' dedication, and openness to the personal action of the Holy Spirit. This is done through their various ministries in service to the people in various parts of the diocese.

The first community of the Religious Sisters of the Holy Spirit was established in Chivuna in 1978. This was followed by the establishment of the second house in Mukasa in Choma in 1984 and Mazabuka in 1989. Due to a shortage of personnel, the Mazabuka house was closed in 1995 when the congregation opened a house in Monze and took over the management of Monze Mission Hospital. At present, the sisters are spread across ten communities in eight different parishes in the diocese of Monze.

TIME CHART

It is with Christ that we journey and we walk placing our steps in his footprints. He is our Guide, the Burning Flame which lights our paths. (St. Cyprian of Carthage)

- 1962 March 21st – Monze Diocese created and James Corboy designated as first bishop.
- June 24th – James Corboy consecrated as bishop.
- 1971 Congregation of the Sisters of the Holy Spirit founded by bishop James Corboy.
- First postulants Romana Maumbu and Rosemary Mudaala enter the congregation.
 - Sr. Catherine Dunne becomes the first Novice Mistress.
- 1972 Marcellina Haazele and Christetta Kaduku enter as postulants.
- 1973 1st profession, Romana Maumbu and Rosemary Mudaala.
- 1974 Evan Kachakwale and Christine Mwanza enter the congregation.
- June 3rd Christetta Kaduku dies tragically in a road accident.
 - Romana Maumbu leaves the congregation.
- 1975 Christetta Kapapa and Anna Haakaloba enter the congregation as postulants.
- 1978 August, Chivuna community opened.
- September 9th new chapel at the novitiate is blessed by Bishop Corboy.
- 1981 February 21st -10th anniversary celebration of the foundation of the congregation.
- June 6th Sr. Catherine Dunne leaves Zambia and Sr. Pierre takes on the responsibility of being the novice mistress.
- 1984 May 11th Sr. Christine Mwanza named as first superior of Chivuna community.
- September 6th new community opened in Mukasa, Choma.
- 1985 Rosemary Mudaala leaves the congregation
- 1989 Shalom and Mazabuka communities opened.
- 1992 Bishop James Corboy retires as bishop of Monze and succeeded by Bishop Paul Lungu.
- 1994 Sr. Christine Mwanza elected as first Holy Spirit Superior General.
- Sr. Anna Haakaloba appointed as first Holy Spirit novice mistress.

- 1995 Mazabuka community closed and Monze community opened.
- RSHS take over Monze Hospital from the Holy Rosary Sisters as new managing agency.
 - Postulancy moved from Trinity House to Monze.
 - Sr. Sheila Morgan, the last RSHM Superior General of the Holy Spirit Sisters leaves Zambia.
- 1996 April 30th Bishop Corboy returns to Ireland due to ill health.
- 24th August Silver Jubilee of the congregation.
 - Postulancy moved to Choma.
- 1997 Dec. 29th Mazabuka community re-opened.
- 2001 May- 1st session of the second General Chapter of the congregation.
- Sr. Evan Kachakwale elected as Superior General.
- 2002 May- 2nd session of the Chapter.
- Sr. Beatrice Malambo elected as assistant Superior General.
- 2004 Lumen community opened.
- 24th November Bishop Corboy dies in Ireland.
- 2005 August 7th Bishop Corboy's remains brought back to Zambia.
- August the 9th second burial of Bishop James Corboy at the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart in Monze.
 - August 28th Monze Diocese Centenary celebrations, in Chikuni.
- 2006 June 29th – Chilalantambo community opened.
- 2007 December- Sr. Mariana Bbalo elected as Superior General at the 3rd General Chapter.
- 2011 29th October- 40th anniversary celebration of the founding of the congregation
- 2012 6th February- James Corboy School opened in Mazabuka
- 2013 13th May- Formal approval of the congregation of the Religious Sisters of the Holy Spirit
- 27th July- Thanksgiving mass of the Canonical Erection of the congregation

- 2013 December- Sr. Mariana Bbalo re-lected as Superior General at the 4th General Chapter.
- 2019 August- 5th General Chapter of the Congregation. Sr Rosalia Sakayombo elected as Superior General
- 2020 Sr Catherine Dunne, 1st Novice Mistress dies in Ireland
- 2021 16th October- Golden Jubilee celebration of the foundation of the congregation.