

PETER CHANDLER`S CONTRIBUTION TO TEAMS IN MALAWI

Teams couples and Spiritual Counsellors in Malawi really appreciate the wonderful contribution that Peter Chandler made to Teams in Malawi. Without him Teams of Our Lady would not have started in Malawi. As of now we are very pleased to see that we have over 30 Teams in Malawi. Since Teams of Our Lady started in Malawi in 2005 there has been a tremendous expansion of the movement. The families that belong to Teams have experienced a great change in the way they live and they are enjoying the wonderful family life. Now they are able to pray together, go for a retreat annually, share the word of God together, doing the endeavor of sitting down and in this way families are able to grow spiritually. They are enjoying their family life. All this is so because of Peter Chandler`s tireless support of Malawi and the first Team.

We, Prosperous and Lucy Chilewani and Fr. Ignatio Bokosi , are part of the very first Team in Malawi called Zomba 1 Team. Mavuto and Christina Mandala went to Sitima Parish to visit their friend, Fr. Andrew Kaufa in 2004. While there they found a magazine called the Tablet. In the magazine there was an article entitled `Supporting Marriage`. After reading this article they learnt that there is a movement that helps couples to grow spiritually as they meet every month and pray together and discuss about their family life. They got the information that if they want to learn a lot about this movement they must contact Peter and Anna Chandler whose email address was indicated in the Tablet. Mavuto and Christina were very much interested and they wrote to Peter and Anna Chandler to ask about this movement.

Peter and Anna responded and explained to them about Teams of Our Lady and how they could start the movement in Malawi. Peter encouraged Mavuto and Christina that it is possible to start the movement in Malawi. These two couples started corresponding to each other about Teams of Our Lady through letters. Among the documents that Peter Chandler was sending to Malawi was a document on how to pilot a new Team as there was need for 7 meetings of piloting for the couples to understand the movement and later make a decision to actually go ahead and form a new Team.

Mavuto and Christina found 3 other couples who were very willing to join them in forming a Team. In March 2005 the very first Team of 4 couples namely Mavuto and Christina Mandala, Prosperous and Lucy Chilewani, Christopher and Gift Chagwayapa, Patrick and Rabecca Moyo conducted the very first meeting. Before each meeting Peter and Anna Chandler were sending them documents on how the following pilot meeting was supposed to be conducted. Both worked tirelessly in sending them the right documents until they went through the pilot stage. After the pilot meetings they started meeting as a Team and the very first Team of 4 couples began in Malawi. At that time they had Father Callistus Baluwa, a Montfort Father, as their Spiritual Counsellor. They got postal addresses of all the 4 couples plus that of Fr. Callistus and continued sending them documents of Teams of Our Lady including the GB News Letter. However, in 2006 Fr. Callistus was sent to Canada by his superiors. Then members of that first Team contacted Fr. Ignatio Bokosi and asked him to be their Spiritual Counsellor, a responsibility which he accepted and he joined Teams in November 2006. Teams received a big boost when Prosperous and Lucy Chilewani went to Lourdes, France in September 2006 to attend an International Gathering of Teams of Our Lady.

Unfortunately, Mavuto Mandala passed away on 31st December 2006 and was laid to rest on 2nd January, 2007. Peter and Anna Chandler sent a message of condolences to Christina Mandala and to all members of Zomba 1 Team. Thereafter, they tirelessly continued corresponding with all members of Zomba 1 Team including Fr. Ignatio Bokosi and giving them all the necessary support. We still remember the very first email that they sent to Fr.

Ignatio Bokosi in January, 2007 when the Spiritual Counsellor for Zomba 1 Team received a very big encouragement from them. In the email they explained to Fr. Ignatio what Teams of Our Lady is all about and in the final paragraph of the email they extended an invitation to Fr. Ignatio and one couple to go to Swanwick, England to attend the first Transatlantic Super Regional Gathering which was scheduled for 29th June to 1st July 2007. Father Ignatio went to attend the conference together with Patrick and Rebecca Moyo.

Peter Chandler worked tirelessly in linking Teams couples here in Malawi with couples in the Transatlantic Super Region including Great Britain and Ireland. When Florian Denmont who was a member of Teams in Ireland visited Malawi she decided to meet Teams couples and that was a great encouragement. When she went back to Ireland there was a great link between members of Zomba 1 Team and members of Florian`s Team in Ireland.

Teams couples and Spiritual Counsellors in Malawi have been going to attend Transatlantic Super Regional Gatherings as well as International Gatherings of Teams of Our Lady in Lourdes-France, Swanwick-England, Brazil and Ireland. All this has helped us to appreciate the fact that Teams of Our Lady is a wider movement.

In 2007 the expansion of Teams of Our Lady in Malawi started with the formation of Zomba 2 Team. Thereafter we began piloting new Teams and several Teams were formed in Zomba to the extent that Zomba had to become a Sector. It was so wonderful when a new Team was established at Namwera Parish in Mangochi Diocese called Mangochi 1 Team. Peter Chandler together with his wife Anna started corresponding with members of this Team and giving them all the necessary support. The Spiritual Counsellor of this Team was Father Francesco Perico. Thereafter several Teams were born in Mangochi Diocese to the extent that we decided to form Mangochi Sector. As of now in Zomba Sector we have over 15 Teams and in Mangochi Sector there are over 10 Teams.

When Father Francesco Perico moved to Kalichero Parish in Chipata Diocese in Zambia he decided to start Teams of Our Lady there. Prosperous and Lucy Chilewani, Father Ignatio Bokosi (from Zomba Sector) and one couple from Mangochi Sector went to Zambia to visit Teams there. It was so wonderful to see that Teams expanded to our neighboring country of Zambia.

Thereafter Teams of our Lady expanded to Dedza Diocese where a new Team was formed in Ntcheu, Dedza Diocese called Dedza 1 Team. Their Spiritual Counsellor is Father Augustine Kadzilawa. As of now Teams of Our Lady has expanded to Mzuzu Diocese where we have a new Team.

It was a blessing for us when Paul and Helena McCloskey, the then Transatlantic Super Regional Couple came to visit Teams here in Malawi in 2009. They encouraged Malawi Teams. Thereafter, Antony and Janet Denman who succeeded Paul and Helena as Transatlantic Super Regional Couple also visited Teams in Malawi together with Father John Udris.

We were very happy to celebrate the 10th anniversary of Teams of Our Lady in Malawi during the weekend of 14th - 16th August, 2015 in Salima. This memorable occasion was graced by the visit of Paul and Helena McCloskey. It was a wonderful occasion which we will never forget. We attribute all this achievement of Teams of Our Lady in Malawi to Peter and Anna Chandler.

We really appreciate Peter Chandler`s contribution to Teams in Malawi and his tireless support of Malawi and the first Team. We will continue praying for the restful repose of his soul and may his soul rest in peace.

Prosperous and Lucy Chilewani and Father Ignatio Bokosi