

16 July 2025

Br Lawrence Makonora

02 February 1938 – 16 July 2025

He was 87 years old, in his 88th year of life; in his 63rd year in the Society; and in his 50th year of Final Vows.

Ort. 02 February 1938
Loc. Nat. Trelawney, Diocese of Chinhoyi
Ingr. 30 July 1962
Loc. Ingr. Silveira House, Zimbabwe
Mag. Mvurwi ('64-'66), St Ignatius ('67-'68)
Stud.

Tertiaship. 1974-1975, Mazoe
Grad. Formed Brother (FF)
Loc. Grad.
Dies. 19 April 1976
Transcribed. BRI->ZIM 05 November 1978
Defunc. 16 July 2025

Loc. Defunc. Harare, Zimbabwe
Date of Funeral. 19 July 2025
Place of Funeral. Chishawasha Mission, Harare, Zimbabwe
Place of Burial. Chishawasha Cemetery, Harare, Zimbabwe
Prov. SAP



Br. Lawrence Makonora, SJ passed away at Richartz House, Harare, Zimbabwe, on Thursday, 16 July 2025. He was 87 years old and 62 years in the Society of Jesus. The Lord blessed him during all these years of joyful dedication to the Society's mission and made him a blessing to all of us.

Born on 2 February 1938 in Trelawney in the Chinhoyi Diocese, he qualified as a teacher from the Marist Brothers at Kutama Mission in 1958. After teaching at Kaondera Primary school in Zvimba, also in the Chinhoyi Diocese, he entered the Society of Jesus on 30 July 1962, at the new novitiate in Silveira House, Harare. After his vows in 1964, he continued teaching, now at Mvurwi, for another 3 years. He then continued his studies at St. Ignatius College, from 1967 to 1968 and at St. George's College from 1968 to 1969. He also spent some time at Gweru Teachers Training College.

In 1970, he worked as a Pastoral Assistant at St Peter's Mbare in Harare. During his tertiaship, from 1974 to 1975, he spent some time in charge of the formation of candidates to the Society of Jesus in Mazoe. After his final vows, in 1976, he started working with Christian Life

Communities (CLC), a work he continued until 1979. He then did pastoral work, from 1979 to 2003, successfully at St. Peter's Mbare, being involved in the Better World Movement, then as director of the Leper Camp at Mutemwa, again with CLC until 1994, as chaplain to the Catholic teachers in the Diocese of Chinhoyi, and being responsible for the Jesuit pre-novitiate at Silveira House. In 2003, he went for a deserved sabbatical at Hawkstone Hall in the UK.

Since 2004, he was involved in the ministry of the Spiritual Exercises in different places, such as Emmaus house in Mount Pleasant, Canisius House in Marlborough, Benin City in Nigeria, and again Silveira House in Harare. He was also the national director of the Pioneer Association from 2004 to 2010. In 2010, he was appointed to the Province Retreat Team based at Peter Faber Spirituality Centre at Silveira House. In 2013, he moved to Chishawasha Mission but remained involved in retreat work. A couple of years later, he was sent back to Mbare.

In April 2015, he felt that his physical condition was no longer ideal to continue working in Mbare and requested to be moved to Richartz House. Although slowed down, he continued with his ministry of giving the spiritual exercises. He was also often called upon to assist companions who were carrying the burden of various ailments.

In the same year of 2015, he wrote that his sense of really belonging to the Society of Jesus as a brother grew slowly with time. In every Province Assembly his question was: "Is the Society of Jesus a priestly society or a society of priests?" The spirituality he saw around him was often incarnated to fit the needs of the Jesuit priests. It was only after a course he did in Rome on Ignatian Spirituality that he understood and chose to live the "layman-Ignatius's spirituality" rather than trying to observe how that spirituality was incarnated in the priests of the Society of Jesus and be content to live as an extension of the priests. He was deeply touched by Fr General Adolfo Nicolás's comment on the spiritual state of the provinces. He used to comment on what the General had written in a letter to the whole Society on "Apostolic discernment and profundity", pointing out the lack of real spiritual emphasis in the reports sent to him. And in the reports about persons, stress was put on external factors without paying due attention to the "interior man" as if we have difficulty in perceiving the "authenticity and profundity of persons." This deep perception of the true person was something that Br Makonora was able to excel in.

He was a deeply thoughtful and spiritual person with exceptional talents in spiritual direction and retreat giving. His long association with CLC, and other movements, were typical of his ability to work with lay people, particularly in formation. He was a true facilitator of retreats, workshops on community building and formation in the early stages of religious life. He also gave workshops on "dialogue" and on "how to give retreats" and on "counselling" and many others.

We praise the Lord for Brother Lawrence Makonora's many years of dedicated ministry. May he rest in God's eternal peace.