

# St Josemaría in Zambia and Ossomala

Joy Odimegwu works with farmers of rural Africa, providing them with high yielding crops and a little extra...

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## Zambia

I visited Zambia while working on my PhD (Doctor of Philosophy). While there, I was attending Mass at St Theresa's Catholic Parish,

Livingstone. One day after mass, I met some ladies. I spoke to them and gave them prayer cards of St. Josemaría whom they have never heard about. I also left some of the prayer cards in the pews of the church for whoever may want some remembering how the miracle that clinched the Canonisation of St. Josemaría was from a doctor who picked up saint Josemaría's prayer card from a church!

The next day, I was pleasantly surprised to see one of the prayer cards inside a lectionary kept on a small altar in front of the main altar of the church. I wondered who had taken it up there and prayed that as our Father is now keeping an eye on the congregation from there, he will intercede in our prayers. A day later, there were now two cards on the side altar! They were placed on the pages of the gospel to help the congregation focused on the aims of the Mass.

On going for an excursion to Victoria Falls, we visited a nearby village, Bikini to say hello to the chief. We were surprised to meet a young lady of about 40 years as the 'Chieftan' female Chief who shares governance equally with the male chief. She received us very graciously and told us the history of their village, her duties and challenges in her position. She then told us that most of them were Christians and she and her family are Catholics. I was thrilled at this news and at the very next opportunity, gave her the prayer card of Saint Josemaría. She told me that she has a vague idea about Opus Dei and was very happy with the prayer card. She then took pictures with members of the group holding unto her card which of course appeared in all the photographs!

St. Josemaría has certainly arrived in Zambia.

## In Ossomala

Part of my professional duties involves giving out high yielding varieties of crops to rural farmers especially women. I was invited to Ossomala, about 550km from Lagos; to help the women farmers improve their methods of farming.

There were 40 women at this meeting. I commended the women on their hard work. Using the opportunity I explained about the teachings of St. Josemaría on working well for God and that they could transform their farm work into prayer. This was a novel idea to most of them. I gave them prayer cards of St Josemaría.

Later on, some of them who were illiterate met me later to ask how they should say the prayer of the prayer card and I advised them to look at the face of St. Josemaría as if having a conversation with him and

after telling him what to intercede for, they should then say the Our Father, Hail Mary and Glory be to the Father in vernacular. This way the can transform farm work into prayer.

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