

WHEN THE SUN BRINGS LIFE BEHIND PRISON WALLS
*How Faith, Solar Energy, and Solidarity Restored Dignity
at Nkambe Principal Prison*
"We now have water every day." — Inmates of Nkambe Principal Prison

On Thursday, 18 December 2025, the high walls of Nkambe Principal Prison bore witness to an unexpected joy. They resounded not with lament, but with prayer, song, and thanksgiving, as parishioners from Christ the King Parish, Nkambe Town, St. Joseph's Parish, Binshua, and the Sisters Daughters of the Cross from St. John the Apostle Parish, Misaje, came together for a pastoral visit that revealed the true face of missionary solidarity.

The visit began with the celebration of Holy Mass at 10:00 a.m., in the presence of the Diocesan Chaplain for the Prisons Apostolate. Inmates, prison authorities, religious sisters, and lay faithful formed one worshipping community. For many prisoners, this Eucharist was a powerful reminder that—even behind bars—they remain members of the Body of Christ. *"The Church has not forgotten us."* The Gospel that day was proclaimed not only from the ambo, but through running water, light, and cleanliness — simple realities that now speak loudly of hope.

Both the prison inmates and the Superintendent repeatedly expressed heartfelt gratitude for the steady supply of water now available in the prison. Thanks to the solar energy system installed at Christ the King Parish, Nkambe Town, electricity is now reliably available to pump water for both parish and prison use. This project was made possible through the generous support of the Mission Office of Bolzano and its benefactors.

"What changed our lives is simple: water that flows." — *Prison Superintendent* The results are visible to all: the prison is cleaner than ever before, personal hygiene has greatly improved, and the general health and dignity of the inmates have been restored. What once was a daily struggle has become a daily blessing.

"Light and water have given us back our dignity." The Parish Priest of Christ the King Parish, Nkambe Town, was publicly thanked for his tireless concern for the prison community. Yet this gratitude rightfully extends far beyond Nkambe — to Bolzano, to generous hearts who believed that renewable energy could become a channel of mercy and evangelization.

Encouraged by this transformation, the inmates shared their hopes for the future. With humility and trust, they expressed their longing for basic amenities — such as light, beds and decent mattresses — that would help them to live more humanely, even in confinement.

“We are prisoners, but we are still human beings.” Their appeal is not for comfort, but for dignity. This pastoral visit reminded all present that mission is lived where faith meets concrete human need. When the Church brings light, water, and care, the Gospel becomes visible. The sun itself becomes a missionary.

“You did not just install solar panels. You restored hope.” To the Mission Office of Bolzano and all benefactors: your generosity has crossed borders, broken barriers, and entered prison walls. Because of you, water now flows where it once did not, darkness has given way to light, and forgotten lives have been remembered. You are part of this mission. You are part of this story. You are part of this hope. We assure you of our continued prayers and deep gratitude.

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