

Rejoicing at the Diaconate Ordination



**THREE AMR SISTERS
PROFESS THEIR FIRST VOWS**



**Following the star of
Bethlehem**

SYNODALITY AND

**CO-RESPONSIBILITY OF ALL
THE BAPTISED**



This AMR Vestments block was blessed, dedicated to Sister Immaculata Makhalima and commissioned by His Grace, Most Rev Archbishop Alex Thomas SVD on the 07th day of August 2023.

With gratitude to all who contributed. Message by the AMR sisters: Mother Mary Pray For us

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Immaculata Makhalima Vestments and Liturgical Ornaments Block



THREE A.M.R SISTERS

PROFESS THEIR FIRST VOWS

On the 6th of January 2024 a considerable number of people graced Our Lady of Lourdes parish (Khumalo, Archdiocese of Bulawayo) in celebration, as three A.M.R sisters professed their first vows in what the Archbishop, Alex Thomas called a true act of sacrificial love for Jesus and his Church.



Archbishop Alex Thomas celebrated the profession mass on the feast of the epiphany, when the three sisters namely Sr. Petronella Mpfu, Sr. Nyasha Munatsire and Sr. Linnet Mpfu professed their first vows of **poverty, chastity and obedience** while committing to protect and enhance the sacredness of human life as A.M.R sisters who are dedicated to serve the poor.



In his homily the Archbishop mentioned that, amid the innumerable trials and tribulations encountered, religious life requires individuals who are firm and steadfast and always on the move in fulfilling their mandate. Just like what the three wise men did in the face of an obstacle (King Herod), it is imperative for the religious to change their ways especially when those ways deter them from seeking and finding Christ. Therefore, religious people should desist from knowingly and willingly falling on wrong paths and entertaining bad habits, as this may result in their failure to fulfil their

goals. “When God calls us we need to seek the guidance of our superiors in obedience so as to discover the right path leading to our mission in the church”, said the Archbishop. Turning to the professing sisters his Grace reminded them that, the vows they promise are a commitment to give their lives totally and wholeheartedly to the church, while faithfully following in the footsteps of Jesus Christ their spouse. No wonder he said that “when you read your vows do it consciously so that what you say and promise may honestly come from your heart and be sincere before God from today, the day of your first vows.”



During Mass, the sisters professed their first vows and each sister received a white veil as a sign of their full commitment to Christ and the work of the church. On the other hand the silver medals they received represented their faithful respect of the blessed virgin Mary the channel of peace in their new life of working for the church as A.M.R. sisters.



Mother S.Dube

The Archbishop praised Mother S. Dube and the A.M.R sisters responsible for training the new sisters and also expressed gratitude to their parents for giving their daughters to Jesus Christ and the church. Mother S. Dube expressed her gratitude to all who contributed to the occasion and also acknowledged the families of the sisters. Upon being interviewed by Isibane Communications about the significance of the day, she did not hesitate to recall and express her gratitude to the hard work done by their pioneers, who through their sacrifice, resilience and prayers made the congregation of the A.M.R sisters a reality and consequently the profession day of the new three sisters. “No wonder every 6th of January during the feast of epiphany as A.M.R sisters we still continue to follow in the footsteps of our forerunners; to follow the star of Bethlehem which leads to our beloved spouse, our

Lord Jesus Christ,” said Mother S. Dube.

HISTORY OF THE A.M.R SISTERS

The humble beginnings of the congregation of the Servants of Mary the Queen, (in Latin: Ancillae Mariae Reginae): A.M.R. dates as far back as 1928 when a young woman Maria Ndleleni came to Empandeni Mission



school as a student. The granddaughter of Makhwelambila Khumalo, son of King Mzilikazi, she like many children from the whole Matabeleland mission area, came from Filabusi to Empandeni Mission to study at the school. Maria Ndleleni was drawn to join the sisters of Notre dame who at the time worked at Empandeni together with the Jesuits priests. However, at the time Rome had not given the missionaries permission to accept indigenous girls. When Fr. Ignatius Arnoz CMM became the Prefect Apostolic of the Independent Mission of

Bulawayo, Maria Ndleleni expressed her desire to establish a congregation for African women, since the church did not allow indigenous girls to join the Precious Blood Sisters or the Notre dame Sisters. A desire she shared with other young catholic women namely Cecilia Tsambani from Nswazi, Josephine Tilimba from Empandeni, Cathrine Sithwala from Empandeni and Pauline Gore from Rusape.

In 1933 these young women and a few others whose names were not recorded, met with the Prefect Apostolic of Bulawayo, who listened to them and raised them to the status of a **Society of Mission Helpers**. He called them **Daughters of St Theresa the Little Flower**, placing them under her patronage. Since Fr. Arnoz CMM had called them Mission Helpers, he sent them to the existing missions to work with the missionaries. These young women were an **asset** to the missionaries in the Matabeleland prefecture, since they knew the language, the customs and culture of the Ndebele people. The Theresians wore a brown dress, with a blue rosette with a medal of St Theresa (their patron saint) fixed into it and a short white veil. They had a simple constitution, that had been written by Fr. Conrad Artwanger CMM and took private vows of Poverty, Chastity, and Obedience, which they renewed annually after a community retreat, usually at Empandeni mission. The Missions where they operated in, took care of their food, clothing and other needs. The Theresians worked well with the Precious Blood Sisters, the Notre Dame sisters, the Marianhill missionaries and the Mission Doctors.

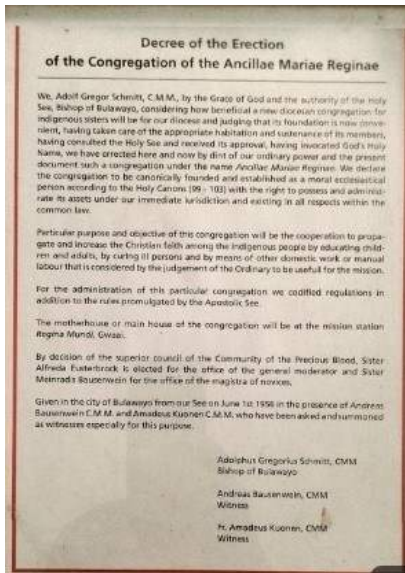
The Growth of the Society of St Theresa.

The determination and zeal of the young society of mission helpers was so visible that a few more young women were attracted to it. In 1934 Veronica Holonga and Clara Moses from Kerela in Bechuanaland (Botswana) joined the group. They too had come to Empandeni as students. Teresa Mhletshwa also joined the group from Empandeni area in the same year. In 1935 Emmah Ndiweni daughter of chief Ndiweni joined them together with Margaret Mkhontweni. The Theresians worked at the mission stations as teachers, nurses, cooks, boarding matrons, pastoral workers and gardeners.

The Life of the Theresians

The life of the Theresians was hinged on their spiritual life which focused on continual prayer, spiritual sacrifice of mortification and trusting in God.

Communal life : The Theresians longed to live in a community but since there were still only a few of them, they lived in pairs or as individuals at mission stations. They loved and supported each other in times of difficulties. A spirit of sharing, responsibility, availability to the needs of others, praying for each other, encouraging each other, humility and hard work are among some of the communal principles they strongly upheld. Through the assistance of Fr. Artzwanger C.M.M. those who could, were trained as teachers at Monte Cassino. Maria Ndleleni, Veronica Holonga and Pauline Nkobi were the first to train as teachers at Monte Cassino. Subsequently the rest of the sisters such as Sr Catharine Makhalima, Sr Josephine, Sr Cecilia Sale, Sr Majoko were trained later at Empandeni. Sr Maria Bango and Sr Clara were trained as nurses. Sr Emmah and Sr Teresa were often sent to boarding schools to oversee the school kitchens.



When Bishop Adolph Schmidt became the bishop of Bulawayo diocese, he greatly facilitated the establishment of the Theresians as a formal congregation. After a couple of applications to Rome his application was final accepted and the Theresians were accepted as a canonically approved congregation . On June 1 1956 Bishop Adolf opened the Novitiate of the newly founded congregation in Regina Mundi. In 1954 Bishop Schmidt gave the new congregation the name of **Servants of Mary the Queen**. His main intention regarding this name was to shape a spirit of simple, humble, persevering and hardworking sisters in the vineyard of God, ready for any type of work be it in the hospitals, schools, missions and wherever they were needed.

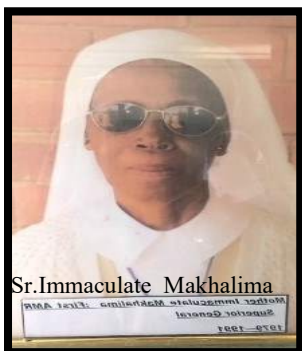
The first group of Novices were: Maria Ndleleni who became Sr. Joan Ndleleni, Pauline Gore (Sr. Hildegard Gore) Veronica Holonga (Sr. Philomena Holonga) Clara Moses (Sr. Clara Moses), Teresia Mhletshwa (Sr. Teresa Mhletshwa), Margaret Mkhontweni (Sr. Rita



Mkhontweni), Emmah Bhidi (Sr. Pelagia Bhidi) ,Pauline Nkobi (Sr. Auxilia Nkobi) Maria Bango (Sr. Inviolata Dube).

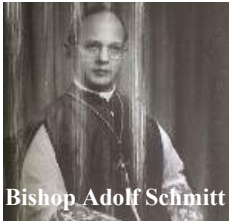
Sr. Alfreda Eusterbrock C.P.S. became their Superior General and Sr. Meinradis C.P.S. their Novice Directress. The first nine A.M.R. Novices made their first profession in Regina Mundi on the feast of Mary the Queen on 22 August 1958. Eight of the sisters soon received their assignment, to take over the full responsibility of the New Mission Stations. Some sisters were sent to Magama Mission which was built in 1957 by Fr. Conrad Simmeth CMM. The community was placed under the protection of Mary Help of Christians. A new group was sent to St Luke’s Mission in 1959 and the last group of sisters was sent to St Pauls Mission in 1960.

The second Vatican Council encouraged the international congregations to incorporate the indigenous congregations that were willing to join them. Therefore, the C.P.S. sisters offered to incorporate the A.M.R. Sisters under the condition that they agree to repeat postulancy and novitiate. The A.M.R. sisters refused although they faced the crisis of their numbers constantly decreasing in the groups that followed the first nine sisters. In 1968 the C.P.S. sisters offered once again to incorporate the A.M.R. sisters into the C.P.S. Congregation and again the sisters turned down the offer. However, one postulant, four novices and 2 professed sisters decided to cross over. One of the professed sisters later returned to the A.M.R. congregation in 1970. In 1971, fifteen years after the formal foundation of the A.M.R. Congregation, Sr. Alfreda resigned as A.M.R. Superior General on account of old age and Sr. Meinradis Bausenwein C.P.S., who had been Novice Directress from 1958-1971 was appointed Superior General of the A.M.R. Congregation. She was Superior General from 1971 to 1979. In 1973 Sr. Philomena Holonga A.M.R. was appointed the first A.M.R Novice Directress. In 1979 Bishop Karlen bought the Dominican convent in Khumalo for the AMR sisters. This became the motherhouse for the A.M.R sisters since Regina Mundi was neither safe nor central.



The leadership moved to the new Motherhouse after the first A.M.R. General Chapter in 1979 when Sr.Immaculate Makhhalima was elected the first A.M.R. Superior General. Mother Austin opined that, “ *it was like the congregation had been pregnant for 46 years to get its first leader.*” The first General chapter took place in January 1979 under the moderation and direction of Fr. Marianus Renk C.M.M. The following were the elected delegates: Sr. Austin Tshabalala, Sr. Auxilia Nkobi, Sr. Barbra Majoko ,Sr. Christine Shulila ,Sr. Getrude Sale, Sr. Joan Ndleleni , Sr. Scholastica Ntakana Mlilo, Sr. Teresa Mhletshwa and Sr. Meinradis Bausenwein C.P.S. Sr. Meinradis C.P.S. returned to the CPS provincial house in Bulawayo on 22 January 1979. She continued to collaborate with the A.M.R. sisters

on the writing of their new constitution. May God reward her for the dedicated labour in the foundation of the congregation.



Bishop Adolf Schmitt

How did the Bishop envisage the AMR congregation?

The Bishop wanted the congregation to be young at heart with youthful valiant women. He would always encourage them to forge on even when the sailing seemed impossible. "Come what may! Forge ahead little flock". For him academic education for the sisters was a necessity but loving God and being of service to the church was a priority. The Bishop did not worry about quantity but about the quality of the Sisters.

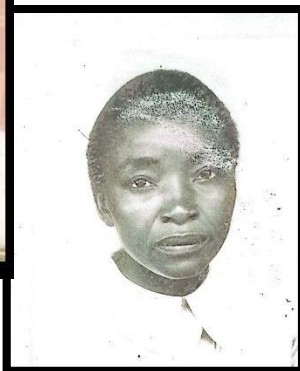
PHOTO GRID OF THE A.M.R PIONEERS



Indigenous Mother Superiors of the A.M.R Sisters (1979 - 2024.)



Mother Makhallima



Mother Austin



Mother Petronella



Mother Margaret



Mother Siqualisso Dube

Up to this present day the A.M.R sisters owe a great deal to the sacrifices and hard work of their pioneers for the many successes in their numerous works in the Archdiocese of Bulawayo, such as pastoral work, administration, nursing, teaching e.t.c. As a symbol of honour and respect to their founders and pioneers, the sisters built a block for vestments and liturgical ornaments in Khumalo named after their first indigenous Mother Superior Sr. Immaculata Makhalima. Lately, under the trust of Archbishop Alex Thomas the A.M.R sisters have been assigned with the care and administration of Ekusileni mission school in Filabusi. A move directed towards improving the school's educational and academic standards. We wish them all the best.

THE PROFESSION IN PICTURES



Rejoicing at the Diaconate Ordination



On Sunday the 14th of January 2024 there was rejoicing as Archbishop Alex Thomas ordained minister Thabo Gumede to the diaconate at St Peter and Paul parish in Mpopoma.

A considerable number of priests from the Archdiocese concelebrated the Mass. They were joined by family and friends of the ordinand, who filled St Peter and Paul parish with prayers and joy for him, as he took the next step in his journey towards priesthood.

Archbishop Alex Thomas gave thanks for all who had accompanied the ordinand as he discerned the movement of God's Spirit in his own heart over many years of formation.



Addressing all present and the ordinand, he centred his homily on the aspect of all being called and chosen to be children of God. "Just as God called prophets, priests, kings and ordinary people in the bible we are all called to various and specific missions in the church", said his Grace. This is evident in the call of John the Baptist (called to prepare the way for the Lord), Mother Mary (called to be the mother of our Lord Jesus Christ), Joseph the husband of Mary (called to be the protector of Christ) to mention a few. The highlight of the Archbishop's homily was the **call to Holiness** which should be radiated through our bodies the temples of God. "Let us glorify God through our bodies and not destroy God through our bodies *Dumisani uNkulunkulu ngemizimbayenu hatshi ukubulala uNkulunkulu ngemizimbayenu.*" emphasised the Archbishop to all present.

Since we are called to be holy, it is of paramount importance for us to lead others to holiness and not evil. Great admonishment from the Archbishop resounded in him warning adults to stop leading the young into sin and devastating tendencies that destroy their faith and livelihood.

Moving on His Grace elaborated clearly that there are many vocations in the catholic church that one can be called to, such as marriage which encourages parents to bring up their children in line with catholic principles; religious life (sisterhood and brotherhood), and diaconate the day's main event.

In their work for the church the Archbishop said that, "deacons promise to keep a celibate life, a prayerful life, and a life of listening to the elders of the church in obedience". Celibacy according to his Grace makes priests dedicate their thoughts and strengths to the work of the church and this is highlighted in **1 Cor 7 v 32 – 35:** *The unmarried man gives his mind to the lord's affairs and how he can please the Lord; but the man who is married gives his mind to the affairs of this world and how he can please his wife, and he is divided in mind. So, too, the unmarried woman, and the virgin, gives her mind to the lord's affairs and to being holy in body and spirit; but the married woman gives her mind to the affairs of this world and how she can please her husband. I am saying this only to help you, not to put a bridle on you, but so that everything is as it should be, and that you are able to give your undivided attention to the Lord.*

Consequently, the Archbishop cautioned some Catholics to stop being stumbling blocks in the vocation of priests and deacons by violating their vows and encouraging them to live undignified lives.

Implicated in his homily about the office of diaconate were the following sentiments: A deacon is someone called to a ministry of the word, a ministry of the altar, and a ministry of charity. Diaconate ordination is a significant shift calling one to make a constant movement from being a listener of God's word to being its preacher. The Word that a deacon preaches is not his own, it is the Lord himself who proclaims through the deacon. Therefore, he offers the Word of God not his. This word is manifested in the Scriptures, and in the Tradition, handed down to us in the teaching office of the Church.



At the end of the ordination mass the Archbishop took the opportunity to introduce to the faithful present the new Archdiocese of Bulawayo pastoral council chairperson Mr. Blessing Marwa from Our Lady of Lourdes together with his vice chairperson Mr Augustine from Our Lady Queen of Peace and the ex-officio Mr. Mugadza from Our Lady of Fatima. However, his main point was to drive home the theme of the year to all present, that is, Synodality and co-

responsibility of all the baptised. A theme that fosters working together and giving each other opportunities to showcase our talents for the growth of the church.



JUNIOR PASTORAL COUNCIL 1ST MEETING 2024



On the day preceding the ordination the junior pastoral council held a full council meeting with the main agenda being strategic planning for the year 2024. After welcoming the Archbishop and acknowledging his presence the Archdiocese of Bulawayo J.P.C chairperson Andrew Ncube also welcomed the advisors and all the young people who attended the meeting.



Reports for the year 2023 were read by the parishes. Lack of cooperation, motivation and a lot of focus on social and less spiritual activities reflected major problems that the youth encounter against the many good



contributions and activities they display in their respective parishes.

Commenting on the low attendance the Archbishop in his remarks encouraged active participation from all parishes in such meetings. Advising all present his Grace told them to be time conscious as this is a reflection of their reliability and commitment to the cause of the association. Moving on the Archbishop encouraged the youth to preserve their physical and intellectual beauty and to always be confident and smart in whatever they do. The J.P.C was also reminded by his Grace that in every month, one Sunday must be dedicated for J.P.C meetings where all the youths are brought together to discuss matters that pertain to their interests.

The Spiritual Director for the youth ministry, Fr James Batsirai, made it clear that, the Junior Pastoral Council is not an association and should not be reduced to the Catholic Youth Association. ***However, it is for all the associations and individuals that do not belong in any association.*** Concerning the progress made by the committees, the spiritual director was pleased by the achievements made in a short space of time. He urged all the members to keep working hard and he stated that the Junior Pastoral Council is not competing with the Catholic youth association but they both complement each other. Cautioning the youth against drug and substance abuse the spiritual director encouraged them to rather set their minds and hearts more on spiritual matters and liturgical involvement in their respective parishes. In his conclusion the spiritual director mentioned that there will be holy programs on dating that will be done for the youths starting from the ages of 18 going upwards. An evaluation of the year 2023 marked the end of the meeting.



C.Y.A.A. OPENING MASS 2024

MY ASSOCIATION, MY RESPONSIBILITY, TOGETHER WE BUILD.

The Catholic Young Adults Association of the Archdiocese of Bulawayo gathered on the 21st of January 2024 at Holy Family parish in Nketa for their opening and theme launching Mass.

Inline with the Archdiocese theme of the year: Synodality and co-responsibility of all the baptised the C.Y.A.A. came up with a mission statement geared towards revamping their group in 2024 which is, **My association, My responsibility, Together we build.**



The vibrant Mass was celebrated by the Parish Priest Rev. Fr. Sony SVD alongside Fr. Maciek SVD and Fr. Clement Maqanda Moyo.

Fr. Clement in his Homily reminded the Young Adults that they are different from

every other Young Adults as their

are Catholic Young Adults and that whenever they gather they should gather to read the word of God.



Furthermore, he encouraged the C.Y.A.A members to remember the oaths they took on their induction day, to journey together by being available for each other and to prioritise their association, while admonishing them against drug and alcohol abuse, power struggles and recklessness.

The opening Mass was followed by an address by their Spiritual Director Fr James Batsirai

Ruswa, who after applauding the well attended event, warned the Young Adults to guard against habits that cause them to drift away from God and the church such as excessive drinking and drug abuse especially during their meetings and congresses. However, like Mother Mary Fr. James encouraged the C.Y.A.A members to always be a **Yes people** that is, a people who always answer to God's call at all times. He encouraged them also to have faith building workshops and to promote Christian dating workshops which in turn promote the sacrament of Holy matrimony in the Church.

We thank their leadership and Holy Family parish for planning and hosting this landmark event in their diary for 2024.



POPE FRANCIS

APPOINTS NEW APOSTOLIC NUNCIO TO ZIMBABWE



His Holiness, Pope Francis, on 25 January 2024 appointed Monsignor Janusz Stanislaw URBAŃCZYK as his envoy to Zimbabwe. Monsignor URBAŃCZYK takes over from Archbishop Paolo Rudelli who was transferred to Colombia on 19 July 2023 after his three-year mission from 2020-2023 in Zimbabwe.

He was born in Kraszewo, Poland on 19 May 1967. He was ordained as a priest for the Diocese of Eblag on 13 June 1992. After concluding his Doctorate in Canon Law, he entered the Diplomatic Service of the Holy See on the

1st of July 1997, serving as Attaché and then as Second Secretary to the Apostolic Nunciature in Bolivia.

He was then appointed as First Secretary of the Apostolic Nunciature in Slovakia (2000-2004), First Secretary of the Apostolic Nunciature in New Zealand (2004-2007), Second Counsellor of the Apostolic Nunciature in Kenya as well as Counsellor of the Permanent Observer Mission of the Holy See to the United Nations Programmes of Human Settlements and Environment (UN-Habitat and UNEP) in Nairobi (2007-2010), First Counsellor of the Apostolic Nunciature in Slovenia (2010-2012) and First Counsellor of the Permanent Observer Mission of the Holy See to the United Nations in New York (2012-2015).

On 12 January 2015, he was appointed Permanent Representative of the Holy See to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), to the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), to the Preparatory Commission for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO); as well as Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) and to the United Nations Office in Vienna (UNOV), Austria.

On 25 January 2024, Pope Francis appointed Msgr. URBAŃCZYK as Apostolic Nuncio to the Republic of Zimbabwe.

He speaks Polish, Italian, English, Spanish and Slovak.




welcome
TO ZIMBABWE

ARCHDIOCESE OF BULAWAYO

PASTORAL RESOLUTIONS OF THE YEAR

Theme: Synodal and Co-responsibility of all the Baptised.



1. PERSONAL LEVEL

- ✚ Learn the catechism of the church well.
- ✚ Commit yourself to a specific role or ministry in the church and civic activities
- ✚ Implement all the 5 precepts of the church
- ✚ Commit to a clean neighbourhood

2. FAMILY LEVEL

- ✚ Witness the catholic faith in the neighbourhood by leading an exemplary life
- ✚ Keep the surroundings clean
- ✚ Follow the correct traditions of the catholic church
- ✚ Prepare well for Sunday liturgy

3. PARISH/MISSION/ASSOCIATION

- ✚ Learn and understand well the catholic church
- ✚ Ensure commitment of all the members in the church through various ministries
- ✚ Clean up campaigns (parish level).
- ✚ Establish a database of all the skills in the parish
- ✚ Workshop on co-responsibility of all the baptised
- ✚ Regular bible studies
- ✚ Workshop on the meaning of liturgy and each sacrament.
- ✚ Assist in dealing with mental health.



Biblical - Pastoral Course

for Missionary Disciples of the Word



Remain in my Word
(Jn 8:31)

Dei Verbum Course

22 July - 16 August 2024

ILIZWI BIBLICAL CENTRE
PLUMTREE, ZIMBABWE

International Bible Course

Who Can Apply

The course is open for all who are/will be engaged in Biblical apostolate ministry (priests, religious, and laity – both men and women). Its specific aim is the formation of missionary ministers of the Word.

Conditions of Acceptance

The basic requirements are (1) desire to study and live the Scriptures (2) basic catechetical orientation (3) good command of English. Since the course is primarily for the training of leaders in biblical apostolate ministry, the **formal recommendation** of a bishop/major religious superior/ parish priest / director of a Catholic Church institution who wants to make effective use of the participant's training for future ministry is required.

Fee

The total fee for boarding and lodging for 1 month, as well as course expenses is USD \$100 per participant. It does not include any personal expenses. Mass stipends will be available, on request, for Priests who need to sponsor participants.

Deadline for Registration

All applications must be submitted latest 15 June 2024.

