News



Frank Mukupa, a cashier at the Paulines Catholic Bookshop, checks available books in stock. "Each time they present what exactly they are looking for, we try by all means to help them because that is our mission," he said. (GSR photo/Derrick Silimina)



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It's past 7 a.m. and Sr. Mary Kioko, a Daughter of St. Paul, is leaving her convent to start the day at Paulines Catholic Bookshop in Lusaka, Zambia.

In this southern African country, the Pauline Catholic Bookshop, which is run by the Pious Society of the Daughters of St. Paul in the country's capital, helps enlighten local Catholics with its diverse Catholic literature aimed at shaping readers' social, moral and spiritual lives.

"We have principles whenever we accept manuscripts, and for as long as it's something that can help people morally, spiritually and physically, it is welcome," said Kioko, who runs the shop.



Daughter of St. Paul Sr. Mary Kioko runs the Paulines Catholic Bookshop in Lusaka, Zambia. (GSR photo/Derrick Silimina)

In their quest to evangelize the word of God, the sisters also produce radio and television programs through the Pauline Catholic Bookshop, as well provide as book exhibitions to reach readers who can't easily find a bookstore. (Pauline bookshops operate in 52 countries and on all seven continents.)

In addition to the bookshop, the congregation prints books through Paulines Publications Africa, Kioko said, noting that the genres go beyond religion and include psychology, self-help and children's books, as well as theology, philosophy and Bibles.

To evangelize through broadcast, the Pauline sisters create a range of radio programs, audiovisuals and music. For example, in September — which they designated the month of the Bible — "we yearn to come up with a radio program to help people enter deeply into the understanding of the word of God, explain our mission, and address pressing issues affecting the youth so that people are drawn to Christ," Kioko said.

Kioko said the feedback to book exhibits is overwhelming and encouraging, suggesting that the Gospel is indeed reaching far and wide.

"The biblical, the catechetical, philosophical and theological books that we have are meant for our people," she said. "It is helping them to grow in their faith because as Christians, what our people need is that knowledge of Christ and how well they can become true friends of Jesus. And that can be found in the word of God, in the doctrine of the church and in all other material they find at the bookshop."

Still, the bookshop also attracts non-Catholics.

"Every now and then we see new people that come to the bookshop to buy not only religious books but also that which affects their daily lives, which is a good sign that people are really growing into this reading culture," she said. (According to recent research by the University of Zambia, historical background, inadequate resources/poverty and disinterest contribute to the country's poor reading culture.)

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Doreen Nkandu, a Lusaka resident who describes herself as an ardent bookworm, said she loves to read Catholic liturgy in particular. "As a devoted Catholic, I like to buy books that are published by Mission Press because they are very informative. I also love the audiovisuals of how Catholic saints lived their lives."

For Moses Siame, also a shop customer, his passion for philosophy has helped transform his outlook on life, and the Paulines Catholic Bookshop nourishes his reading appetite.

"I think this bookshop is one of the best in town because it is well stocked with various books, and most of the materials I find here are up to date," he said. "My reading culture has also improved, thanks to Paulines Catholic Bookshop."