

March 2026



INTERNATIONAL DAY OF THE SICK: 11 FEBRUARY – MESSAGE FROM POPE LEO XIV

The Pope chose the theme for the 34th World Day of the Sick, ***“The Compassion of the Samaritan: Loving by Bearing Another’s Pain”***.

The Pope's message for World Day of the Sick 2026 focused on the parable of the Good Samaritan, encouraging us to show compassion and mercy to those in need, especially the sick. He emphasised that loving our neighbour is tangible proof of loving God. The Pope urged Christians to adopt a "Samaritan" spirit, being welcoming, courageous, and supportive, rooted in union with God.

[Read the Pope’s message HERE](#)

ORANGE FARM GOES PINK!

On February 4 an exciting commemoration of World Cancer day took place in the Orange Farm Community.

Pink Drive together with the Department of Health, **CATHCA/Inkanyezi** and other stakeholders were part of this amazing event.

The MEC for Health & Wellness, Nkomo Nomantu and the Deputy Minister of Health, Dr Joe Phaahla also attended the event which focused on **raising awareness of cancer and the importance of prevention, early detection and access to treatment**.

Also attending were the Khoroni Mens’ Forum, Community Support Moms, Masetjhaba Homebased Care, Sizanani, Clean Touch, LifeLine, Avbob, Prestige and SAPS.

The THEME was: **UNITED BY UNIQUE**



CATHCA LAUNCHES NATIONWIDE MEMBERSHIP VERIFICATION INITIATIVE

The process is to ensure every health organisation on the CATHCA database is truly part of our Catholic family. The process is backed by our bishops and the CATHCA Board, so it matters, but don't worry, we'll keep it friendly. If your organisation hasn't heard from us yet, your phone may ring soon!

Here's how it works

- Friendly phone check-in: A CATHCA staff member will call to confirm your contact details and your connection with the local diocese.
- Diocese chats: Diocesan offices get a call too, so we can explain the process and ask which health organisations are active in their area.
- Follow-up email: After the calls, we'll share with the diocesan offices the information we have on record about CATHCA members, so they can kindly confirm or update the details.
- New additions welcome: We're also asking you and the dioceses about any Catholic health organisations we may have missed, so we can include them too.

This verification drive is about keeping our member database accurate so that we are in a better position to journey together in our shared health ministry.

CATHCA
CATHOLIC HEALTH
CARE ASSOCIATION



"I was sick, and you visited me" (Matt, 25:36)



WHEN HIDDEN STORIES MEET HIDDEN DISABILITIES

In February, an important gathering at **Kopano Lerato OVC** Project in Winterveldt, Pretoria brought together partners from the SACBC Migrants, Refugees and Human Trafficking Office, the Sisters of Mercy, the Catholic Health Care Association, the National Freedom Network and Fula Africa. The focus was a hidden reality: the link between human trafficking, trauma and the developing brain.

Discussions highlighted how conditions such as Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder and Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder can increase vulnerability to exploitation, especially where children face learning challenges and limited support. In South Africa, where FASD rates are among the highest globally, this raises serious concerns for prevention.

Participants also reflected on the experiences of trafficked and undocumented women, who often face fear, violence and barriers to antenatal care—factors that increase the risk of alcohol-exposed pregnancies and long-term challenges for their children.

The gathering emphasised the need for strong partnerships, compassionate care and stigma-free support. Through these small but meaningful steps, cycles of trauma can begin to be broken, opening the way for healing and protection.

NOT JUST HEALTH CARE, HUMAN CARE

Some visits stay with you long after you've left.
This was one of them.

In a quiet rural corner of Nkwezela in KwaZulu-Natal, we met a small Catholic health provider called **Thandukuphila**. There, we saw that people are known by name, trust is built quietly and no one has to face hardship alone. A reminder that true care is relational, not only clinical.

We were surrounded by women whose compassion and resilience form the quiet backbone of community health, holding families together in ways that are rarely seen. What struck us most was not what they had, but what they carried within them. So much commitment and joy that bring healing and sustain health services where resources are limited.

This kind of care reaches beyond treating illness. It is close to home and holistic, restoring a sense of hope within everyday life.

Moments like this show us why walking together, learning from one another and remaining rooted in compassion and faith lie at the heart of the shared journey within the Catholic health network.



SMALL CONVERSATIONS, STRONGER FUTURES

Some days at a clinic feel routine.
And then some days feel different.
Pregnancy Awareness Day at Barney Molokoane Clinic in Orange Farm was one of those days.

Community Health Advocates from **Inkanyezi**, a CATHCA member organisation, joined the clinic team, and the space quickly filled with energy. Mothers, caregivers, babies and toddlers came for antenatal and child health services, and conversations flowed easily.

Together we spoke about Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) and Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) in ways that connected to everyday life: booking early in pregnancy, making healthy choices, and knowing you do not have to walk the journey alone.

What stood out most was the openness. Mothers shared their stories, people listened, and questions were asked freely. It was a reminder that prevention and knowledge often grow through simple conversations.

Days like this show that community health is not only about services. It is about presence, relationships, and walking alongside families as they build healthier futures for their children.



A LITTLE GIRL WITH A BIG FIGHTING SPIRIT.

Zobuhle was just 18 months old when she was admitted. Diagnosed with meningococcal sepsis, she underwent bilateral below-knee amputations and lost fingers on her right hand. She came to St Joseph's for specialised wound care and rehabilitation, and she has not stopped fighting since.

When she arrived at **St Joseph's** Intermediate Paediatric Care, she was quiet and withdrawn — a toddler carrying the weight of a devastating diagnosis. Meningococcal sepsis had led to bilateral below-knee amputations and the loss of fingers on her right hand. Through daily scar massage, pressure garments, and the patient dedication of our occupational therapists, physiotherapists, and rehabilitation care workers, she slowly came alive.

She began crawling through the ward, playing with other children, and searching for shoes to place at the ends of her stumps. After a full year of commitment, she was cast for prosthetics.

Today, she stands proudly on her stubbies, decorated with Baby Shark stickers. They cannot wait to see her walking in her own shoes.



A SIMPLE SERVICE, A POWERFUL DIFFERENCE

Sometimes the most meaningful health care happens close to home. At Albini Mission in Ntshongweni, west of Durban, **Lulisandla Social Outreach Organisation**, a CATHCA member, offers exactly that.

Every Thursday the centre operates as a Chronic Central Medicine Dispensing and Distribution (CCMDD) pick-up point for patients stable on treatment for conditions such as HIV, hypertension, diabetes and asthma. In partnership with Ntshongweni Clinic, medication is prepared and delivered to the centre, allowing patients to collect their treatment locally rather than travelling long distances or waiting in clinic queues.

But the service offers more than medication. Patients receive health information, encouragement to stay on treatment, and access to psychosocial support when needed. In simple but powerful ways, Lulisandla is helping bring primary health care closer to the community it serves.



FAITH AND COMMUNITY IN THE FIGHT AGAINST TB

CATHCA recently joined Radio Veritas' "Matins with Khanya Litabe" to raise awareness about Tuberculosis (TB) and the role communities can play in addressing it. During the discussion, Bonginkosi Mthembu highlighted that TB remains a serious health challenge in South Africa, but it is both preventable and curable when detected early.

Listeners were encouraged to recognise symptoms such as a persistent cough, weight loss, night sweats, and fatigue, and to seek testing early. The conversation also emphasised the important role of faith communities in reducing stigma, promoting compassion, and supporting those undergoing treatment.

Together, through awareness, early action, and community support, we can help ensure healthier and stronger communities

Listen to the broadcast:

<https://cathca.org/cathca-on-radio-veritas>



SEEDS OF HOPE AT AKANANI CENTRE, BUSHBUCKRIDGE

At **Akanani Centre** in Mkhuhlu Village, Bushbuckridge, something hopeful is taking root. With support from a local agriculture company that donated a greenhouse net and planting materials, the centre has begun growing vegetables to strengthen food security and support its feeding programme for children and families.

But Akanani offers far more than food. The centre provides a safe space for orphans and vulnerable children, offering after-school homework support, learning activities with Good Work Foundation Open Learning Academy, and games during school holidays that build confidence and friendship.

Despite limited resources, the spirit at the centre is one of determination and care. Meals are currently provided several times a week, and there are hopes to expand this support and assist with essentials such as school uniforms and sanitary products.

Places like Akanani remind us that community care often begins with small, faithful steps and the quiet determination to keep nurturing hope.



Catholic Health Care Association