HOPE FOR AFRICA
By Peter Henriot, SJ

I want to offer a perspective, a mindset, that seems to me to be very obvious and very necessary, but all too often, very sidelined. An incident that happened in Zambia last week profoundly influenced the perspective I want to offer . . . During a recent eclipse, during the three hours of partial darkness and the three minutes of total darkness, I prayed strongly that what the scientists had told us would truly be true, that the sun would reappear in all its shining glory. And it did; a new dawn that gave rise to shouts of relief and joy among the people I stood with, that memorable afternoon.

The experience of this eclipse reinforced in me a fundamental perspective that I believe is so very, very important when looking at the continent of Africa and its future. This is the perspective of hope, hope reinforced by careful discernment of concrete instances of hopeful movement into the fullness of God’s Kingdom.

I was struck recently by a phrase that made a lot of sense to me: “We need a globalization of hope!” Let us all contribute to that kind of globalization. I say that because I am reminded of a statement from Gaudium et Spes: “We can justly consider that the future of humanity lies in the hands of those who are strong enough to provide coming generations with reasons for living and hoping.” (31) I believe the future is in the hands of those of us willing to discern movement of hope and then to act to make that hope a reality.

PRAYER OF HOPE
A Prayer from Chile

I believe that behind the mist the sun waits.
I believe that beyond the dark night it is raining stars.
I believe in secret volcanoes and the world below.
I believe that this lost ship will reach port.
They will not rob me of hope, it shall not be broken.
My voice is filled to overflowing with the desire to sing, the desire to sing.

I believe in reason, and not in force of arms.
I believe that peace will be sown throughout the earth.
I believe in our nobility, created in the image of God, and with free will reaching for the skies.
They will not rob me of hope, it shall not be broken.