

## **Lightning strikes six girls at St Pius Parish of Malawi Catholic Church**

February 10, 2014 Lucky Mkandawire, Nyasa Times National No comments

Six girls sustained minor injuries at St Pius Parish gardens in Blantyre after a lightning struck them Sunday afternoon.

The girls, aged between six and 13, belong to the church's St Clara group (flower girls) and were doing their routine practices when the lightning struck.

St Pius Parish Council Vice Chairman and Secretary, Christopher Chirwa and Dr Gertrude Chapotera respectively, confirmed the incident to *Nyasa Times*.

"The girls were doing their routine practices around 15:00hrs when a sudden burst of lightning occurred. It hit six girls who were immediately rushed to the hospital for treatment," said the vice chairman.

Parish Priest, Father Benito Masuwa, led the lifesaving efforts by transporting the first five girls to the hospital before other responders arrived at the scene of the strike to pick the remaining victim.

Chirwa said five girls were treated as outpatients but the oldest (13-year-old) was admitted for an overnight observation.

"We are hopeful that she will be discharged today [Monday] because she was not in a critical condition. Actually, at the time we were leaving the hospital she was in a stable condition," he told *Nyasa Times*.

After the treatment (at Chitawira Private Hospital- Dr Gombwa), the five girls were taken to their parents by church officials who explained to them what had happened.

Names of the six girls' victims have not been released by church authorities.

In December last year, a lightning strike killed eight Seventh Day worshippers in Malawi's capital Lilongwe.

The natural phenomenon, which claimed the life of seven adults and one child, was described by authorities as the worst ever lightning case to be reported in Malawi.