

NEV CONTACT

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DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, CONTRACEPTIVES DESTROY FAMILIES - PAPAL NUNCIO



The newly wed couples of Dabani Deanery pose for a photo with the Nuncio (Left, with a mitre), Archbishop Obbo (Right, with a mitre) and some priests in Busia Catholic Parish on February 17, 2017. PHOTO BY ODULLAH GODFREY PATRICK Full story on Page 3

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Editorial



March 1st, 2017 is Ash Wednesday, marking the beginning of the Season of Lent, which prepares us to celebrate Easter, the event of the Lord's Resurrection. We prepare by renewing our spiritual life through repentance and practicing the spiritual exercises of fasting, prayer and almsgiving.

As we undertake these Lenten spiritual exercises, The Holy Father, Pope Francis in his message for Lent this year entitled, The Word is a gift. Other persons are a gift", reminds us of the central place of the Word of God in our spiritual growth. He says, "At the basis of everything is the word of God, which during this season we are invited to hear and ponder more deeply". He specifically invites us to reflect on the gospel parable of the rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16: 19-31). The two had contrasting lives both on earth and after death. The rich man blinded by pride and selfishness failed to see the gift of God in Lazarus and thus missed the glory of eternal life. Lazarus who lived a destitute and humble life on earth is blessed with eternal life. The Holy Father notes that "Lazarus teaches us that other persons are a gift" and "A right relationship with people consists in gratefully recognizing their value".

As we observe the Lenten Season, let us be mindful that each and every human being is a gift from God, created in His own image and likeness. And let us have our spiritual eyes open to see and reach out to the Lazarus in our midst - the poor, hungry, sick, distressed, refugees and many others who need our support.

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Fr. Philip Odii Editor/Executive Secretary of Social Communications, UEC

Domestic violence, contraceptives destroy families - Papal Nuncio

By Joseph Wanzusi

The Apostolic Nuncio to Uganda, The Most Rev. Michael August Blume, has spoken out against domestic violence and use of contraceptives noting that it has led to the disintegration of families and the suffering of children in many homes.

Archbishop Blume made the remarks during his six days pastoral visit to Tororo Archdiocese in Eastern Uganda, from February 13 -18, held under the theme "Merciful Parents, Peaceful Families". He presided over the wedding ceremonies of 142 couples at Budaka, Kapchorwa, Nagongera, Busia and Nyangole Catholic parishes and blessed married couples at Nyondo Parish.

The Nuncio told the congregation at all the venues where he celebrated Holy Mass, that "institutions that promote the use of contraceptives as a family planning tool only encourage men to exploit women under the guise of reproductive rights."

The prelate added that the responsibility of educating children on sexuality matters is on the parents and not education institutions, adding that Christian married couples should not treat marriage merely as an agreement between man and woman but as a vocation from God.

"Messages that advocate for contraceptives sometimes hide information from the people such as, the side effects of taking contraceptives which contain poisonous chemicals for the body and encouraging people especially men to engage in multiple sexual relationships," Archbishop Blume said.

The Papal Nuncio further expressed his concern about the increasing abortion rate in the country and yet abortion is illegal and causes health complications in women.

The Nuncio urged Catholic Christian families to teach their children charity, justice, faith and forgiveness, adding that the conduct of Adam and Eve towards their children as contained in the Book of Genesis should be the guiding principle to married couples.

He also challenged the priests and religious serving in the Archdiocese of Tororo to teach and guide the people on matters of sexuality, marriage and family life using the Holy Scriptures and the documents of the Catholic Church, such as the Catechism of the Catholic Church, Pope Francis' Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation "Amoris Laetitia" (The Joy of Love) and Pope Benedict XVI's Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation "Africae Munus" (Africa's Commitment).

Archbishop Blume further said that marriage is not a human invention but rather a

divine institution commanded by God. He echoed Pope Francis' message to married couples to always say to each other, "May I", "Thank you" and "I am sorry", in order to promote harmony in a Christian family.

"Today some married people agitate for divorce when the going gets tough because they think freedom and happiness means abandoning a spouse during difficult times at the expense of the children," the Papal Nuncio said

At Boma Ground in Kapchorwa town where the Nuncio celebrated Holy Mass amidst strong wind and dust, local political leaders decried the moral decay in the community characterized by domestic violence, heavy alcohol drinking, land conflicts, corruption, drug abuse and household poverty.

They commended the Catholic Church for spearheading the struggle to have peaceful families and pledged to be partners in the fight against the cultural practice of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) among the Sabiny community.

Addressing congregations at the venues where the Nuncio visited and celebrated Holy Mass, the Archbishop of Tororo, Most Rev. Dr. Emmanuel Obbo, called on parents to be committed and caring so that their children are not traumatized as they grow into adulthood.

"Be agents of life in a child's growth, because children need to grow up in a peaceful family where there is love, guidance and protection," the Archbishop said.

In his remarks, the dean of Budaka deanery, Rev. Fr. Jacob Patrick Ochwo, said that the Christianity in the area is still faced with several challenges that include high poverty levels, low education standards, poor catechetical formation and early child marriages among others.

At the Uganda Martyrs Cathedral parish, Nyangole in Tororo town, where the Nuncio concluded his pastoral visit on Saturday, February 18, two cultural leaders His Highness Moses Owor of the Jopadhola community and His Highness Augustine Lemukol Osuban of the Iteso used the occasion to call for unity and harmony between the two ethnic groups.

Owor appreciated the contribution made by the Catholic Church in several sectors in Eastern Uganda while Osuban expressed concern that some people have not put into practice the civilization brought about by religion and education. **NEW CONTACT** February 2017 **ISSUE 2** VOL 5 DIOCESAN

Pictorial for the visit of the Nuncio to Tororo Archdiocese



The Nuncio blessing the people with Holy Water at Budaka Catholic Church.





The Nuncio receives offertory from the Christians at Nyondo Catholic Church



A section of the congregation that attended the Holy Mass presided over by the Nuncio at the Uganda Martyrs Cathedral in Tororo



The newly wed couples cut the cake as The Nuncio (centre), Archbishop Obbo (Left) and Archbishop Kiwanuka (right) look on.



A boy (carried by a Christian), carries the Book of the Gospels in Kapchorwa



Christians of Dabani Deanery welcome the Nuncio and Archbishop Obbo to Busia Parish



The Nuncio (holding a crosier) and Archbishop Obbo (second-left) pose for a photo with His Highness Osuban (left) and His Highness Owor (right). PHOTOS BY ODULLAH GODFREY PATRICK

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HISTORY THE APOSTOLIC NUNCIATURE IN UGANDA

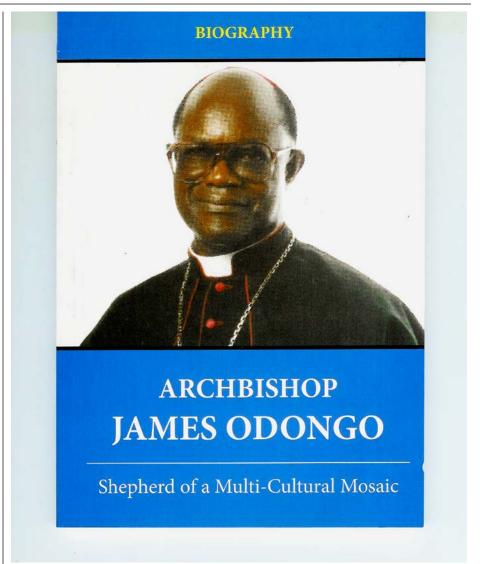
Source: www.uecon.org

The Apostolic Nunciature in Uganda was set up after diplomatic relations between the Holy See and the Republic of Uganda were formally entered into on 2nd September 1966. Before this date, the Catholic Church in Uganda was under the Apostolic Delegation of Kenya. The Apostolic Delegates, resident first in Mombasa, then in Nairobi, were:

- 1. His Excellency Msgr. Arthur HINSLEY, 1930-1934
- 2. His Excellency Msgr. Antonio RIBERI-McCARTHY, 1935-46
- 3. His Excellency Msgr. David MATHEW, 1946-1953
- His Excellency Msgr. James Robert KNOX, 1953-1957
- His Excellency Msgr. Gastone MOJAISKY-PERELLI, 1957-59
- His Excellency Msgr. Guido DEL MESTRI, 1959-67

The first Papal Representative to Uganda after the establishment of diplomatic relations was appointed on 6th August 1967. Up to 1999, the Representative of the Holy Father in Uganda was known by the title of "Apostolic Pro-Nuncio"; since then he carries the title of "Apostolic Nuncio". The following are the previous Apostolic Nuncios to Uganda:

- His Excellency Msgr. Amelio Poggi, Titular Archbishop of Cercina (1967-1969, Italian)
- His Excellency Msgr. Luigi Bellotti, Titular Archbishop of Voncariana (1969-1975, Italian)
- His Excellency Msgr. Henri Lemaître, Titular. Archbishop of Tongeren (1975-1982, Belgian)
- His Excellency Msgr. Karl-Josef Rauber, Titular Archbishop of Giubalziana (1982-1990, German)
- His Excellency Msgr. Luis Robles Díaz, Titular Archbishop of Stefaniaco (1990-1999, Mexican)
- His Excellency Msgr. Christophe Pierre, Titular Archbishop of Gunela (1999-2007, French)
- His Excellency Msgr. Paul Tschang In-Nam, Titular Archbishop of Amantia (2007-2012, Korean)



Archbishop James Odongo releases his biography

His Grace James Odongo, Archbishop Emeritus of Tororo has released his biography entitled, "Sheperd of a Multi-Cultural Mosaic".

Archbishop Odongo was the first person in Uganda and one of the very few in the world to celebrate an Episcopal Golden Jubilee. He participated in the Second Vatican Council, which marked a transformation of the Church all over the world.

As the first African Bishop of Tororo Diocese, Odongo played a key role in post-independence growth of the Catholic Church in Uganda, including the difficult days of Idi Amin. He increased the number of indigenous priests, united the many ethnic groups in his diocese, promoted self-reliance and increased participation of the laity in the Church. He was among the key players in the establishment of Centenary Bank, which grew into one of the leading commercial banks in Uganda. Twice, he was chairperson of the Association of Member Episcopal Con-

ference in Eastern Africa. [AMECEA].

Odongo and his twin brother, the late Fr. Alfred Opio, were born in Tororo, Uganda on March 27, 1931. He was ordained a priest in Rome on December 22, 1956. On November 25, 1964 he was appointed Bishop and ordained on February 16, 1965, as the Auxilliary Bishop of Tororo.

He was appointed the Bishop of Tororo on August 19, 1968. On January 2, 1999 he became the first Metropolitan Archbishop of Tororo Ecclesiastical Province and retired in 2007

The book is being sold at a cost of Ush20,000 and is available at the following places; St. Paul's Book Shop in Kampala (0783476597), Uganda Catholic Secretariat-Nsambya (0782746812) and at the Archbishop's residence in Mbale (0772655892).

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Lira Diocese holds inaugural Personal Growth training for the Clergy

By Fr. Tobby Okello



Uganda Martyrs Cathedral, Lira Diocese

The Diocese of Lira hosted its first training in Personal Growth and Group Transformation for the Clergy from January 22-28, 2017 at Ngetta Catechetical and Pastoral Centre.

The week-long training was organized by Lira Diocese in collaboration with St. Francis Uganda Family Helper Programme (FHP), a charity organization based in Mbarara Archdiocese.

According to the team coordinator for the Psychosocial Project of St. Francis Uganda FHP, Bernadette Orikiriza, the training was initially designed for social and development workers, primary school teachers, families in the communities and pastoral agents like catechists. However, upon the request of Rt. Rev. Joseph Franzelli, the Bishop of Lira Diocese, the training was held for the first time for the Clergy.

"This training was offered to help the participants become aware of current values, beliefs, attitude, cultural influences and the power to make individual choices as well as help to challenge and to constantly review them," Mrs Orikiriza said adding that other Dioceses like Gulu, Nebbi and Mbarara have also expressed the desire to have similar experience for their Clergy.

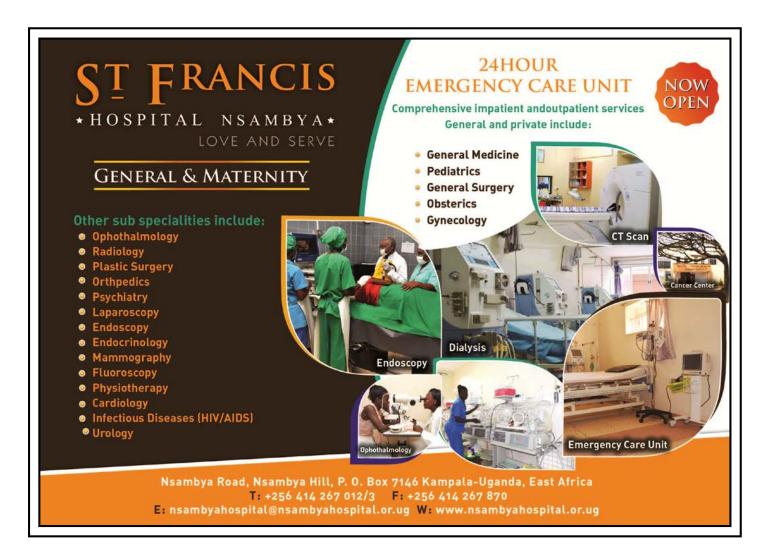
The training provided the participants with self-awareness, self-resilience and self-confidence values.

In his speech, Bishop Franzelli hailed the course as a step in the right direction since it is in line with the Pope's intention of promoting ongoing formation. "We are equipped but there is always bound to be challenges. Therefore, such training is good to reflect on who we are and what we are meant to be. It will help minimise conflicts in parishes and foster coming together," Bishop Franzelli explained.

St. Francis FHP program was founded in (1984) to offer education to children from disadvantaged families, with the focus of the family as the most important central unit of the society.

However, the organisation has grown over the years with the addition of a Tailoring School in 1986 and a Counsellor Training Institute in 1999. Today they offer a variety of training in counselling psychology and psychosocial facilitation in Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania, Rwanda, Dr Congo and Ethiopia. It is registered in Uganda (1990), the UK (2000) and Ireland (2009).

St. Francis FHP receives patronage and support from Most Rev. Paul K. Bakyenga, the Archbishop of Mbarara Archdiocese.



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Preparations underway for the 2017 Uganda Martyrs day

By Jacinta W. Odongo Media Officer, Uganda Episcopal Conference

The Diocese of Hoima has commenced preparations for the 2017 Uganda Martyrs Day celebration due June 3, at Namugongo Catholic Shrine. Hoima diocese was chosen last year to animate the celebration on behalf of Mbarara Ecclesiastical Province.

The chairperson of the Organizing Committee at Diocesan level for the 2017 celebration has confirmed that at least US\$41,806 an equivalent of Ugandan Shilling 150m has been collected so far in form of cash and pledges from parishes and corporate companies.

He was grateful for the contributions made so far and was hopeful that the target will be met by April. The preparations and actual celebration have been estimated to a cost of at least US\$139,353 (Ug Shs 500M). The diocese is expected to launch other channels to help in the fund-raising drive.

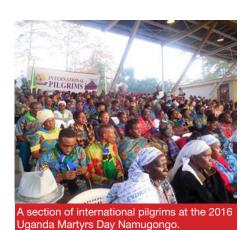
"We are organizing for two major

fund-raising drives: fund raising dinner which will mainly target corporate companies and Namugongo Marathon both expected to be held in April. We hope to start the actual preparations at the Namugongo Shrine by May so that we can start receiving the pilgrims with ease."

Meanwhile, on January 30 the UEC Secretary General Msgr. John Baptist Kauta inducted a 30 man-delegation from Hoima Diocese representing all the nine organizing committees for the June 3 celebration. The delegation was led by Rt. Rev Vincent Kirabo, the Bishop of Hoima.

Over 400 choir members have also began rehearsals in various training centers ahead of the celebration. The choir members have been drawn from all the parishes in the three vicariates of the Diocese which includes Hoima, Kibale and Masindi.

The annual celebration commemorates the heroic faith of the 45 Martyrs, both Catholic and Anglican, who were burnt to death following the orders of Kaba-



ka Mwanga II, the then king of Buganda between 1885 and 1887. Twenty-two Catholic Martyrs were beatified on June 6, 1920, by Pope Benedict XV, and on October 18 1964, Pope Paul VI canonized them as Saints; Two of them, that is St. Andrew Kaggwa and St. Anatoli Kiriggwajjo hail from Hoima Diocese

The celebration usually brings together millions of pilgrims from across the globe. Hoima diocese last presided over the Martyrs Day celebration in 2001.

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Italian Archbishop celebrates re-opening of Sacred Heart of Jesus Cathedral in Arua Diocese



By Gaetano Apamaku, Radio Pacis

On Saturday February 25, thousands of Christians from across the country thronged Sacred Heart of Jesus Cathedral, Ediofe vicariate, in Arua Diocese to commemorate the reopening, re-dedication and consecration of the Cathedral by Most Rev. Vincenzo Paglia, an Italian Roman Catholic Archbishop and the President of Pontifical Academy for Life.

After seven years of work on the Cathedral, the faithful were welcomed on Saturday amidst jubilation to witness the newly re-furbished church, featuring blue and yellow stained glass window, an altar restored with marble, a large crucifix with painted details and several pieces of artwork.

The celebration was marked with a Holy Mass that was presided over by Archbishop Paglia and concelebrated by His Eminence Emmanuel Cardinal Wamala, Most Rev. Michael August Blume, the Apostolic Nuncio to Uganda, Most Rev. John Baptist Odama, the Archbishop of Gulu and Chairman of the Uganda Episcopal conference, Rt. Rev Sabino Ocan Odoki of Arua and seven other bishops from various dioceses. There were also over 50 priests, deacons and religious sisters.

In his homily, Archbishop Paglia said that to open the door of the cathedral is a symbol of opening the depths of our hearts

"To open the house of the Lord to the people, a house which is a place of prayer and encounter, is a great and beautiful event. In this world where too often doors and borders are closed we instead are opening doors. This is what Jesus asks us to do: to open our hearts to our sisters and brothers especially the most poor and vulnerable so that no one is left alone and no one is left outside the mercy of God," he said

He also expressed his gratitude towards Bishop Odoki for his invitation to reopen and consecrate the church saying, "It is a great honor for me to participate at the celebration for the Dedication of the Cathedral of Arua Diocese. It has been a work of many years requiring much commitment to renew and expand this cathedral."

Bishop Odoki in his speech urged the faithful to respectfully receive the Cathedral as a gift of God through which God's blessings will flow through the sacraments and sacramentals. The bishop stressed that, in the cathedral, the gift of life, baptism, confirmation, and other sacraments will be administered.

He further expressed his gratitude to Archbishop Paglia, the Apostolic Nuncio, the Cardinal, Archbishop Odama, other bishops, priests and the faithful for their presence and contribution towards the renovation and the celebration of the re-opening of the Cathedral.

Archbishop Odama appealed to Christians and all mankind to love one another and cautioned the leaders in South Sudan to stop fighting and killing one another.

Meanwhile, some of the lay people present were close friends of Bishop Odoki, Larry and CeCe Carroll, who contributed greatly towards the completion of the Cathedral. Larry, who was present at the reopening ceremony, was presented with a gift by the Archbishop and the Bishop of Arua.

At the end of the Holy Mass, Fr. Tonino Pasolini, the chairman of central organizing committee for the renovation and extension of the cathedral, handed over the keys and other documents of the cathedral to Bishop Odoki. The renovation of Sacred Heart of Jesus Cathedral, Ediofe started way back on May 18, 2010. Arua Diocese was cut off from Gulu Diocese and erected as a diocese on June 23, 1958.

Happy families are made through homemade humor, mutual respect and honor

Extracted from the article, "A True Human Family is Found in Faith and Bonded in Justice"

By Fr. Paulino Mondo

Happy families own a surface similar to good cheer. Above all, they like each other, which can be quite a different thing from loving. Among themselves, they have always one hidden treasure which is 'homemade humor' that they have accumulated against rainy days and difficult times. Their humor is not necessarily amusing. Their jokes may not be appreciated by outsiders and their laughter can arise from the most trivial sources. But the joys and the laughter and the happiness belong entirely to the family. While they may have had their

own personal treasures of humor to ease the struggles of daily living, families in the ancient world were also bound to one another by a strict code of honor. Even if children should harbor no natural love for their parents, they were duty-bound to honor them. This societal ethic was affirmed in the Decalogue, where the mandate to 'honor your father and your mother' followed immediately after the commandments pertaining to God and right before those that conceived other human relationships cf. Exodus 20:2.

FEATURE February 2017 ISSUE 2 VOL 5 NEW CONTACT 9

The Christian Lover: The Sweetness of Character in Marriage

The sweetness of love and Marriage in Letters of Believers



By Barbara Nabukenya, UCMB

Marriage is under siege in our time, and Christian unions are not going unscathed. Dr. Michael A.G. Haykin believes that love letters written by Christian husbands and wives of the past can help strengthen the ties that bind spouses of today. In this anthology, Haykin brings together letters from one or both parties in 12 significant relationships from church history.

The contents range from courtship communications to proposals of marriage to final words before dying, but most have to do with the ups and downs of married life.

In the end, 'The Christian Lover' is a celebration of marriage, an intimate window into the thoughts of men and women who were deeply in love with both God and one another.

Paul's first letter to the Corinthians; Love is always patient and kind, it's never jealous, love is never rude or selfish, it doesn't take offence. God's major means for developing Christian character and spiritual maturity.

Marriage should be sweater as years go by; if you don't have the financial capacity, a handwritten love letter will always make a difference.

God's will is that you succeed in your marital life, but there are vices you need to guard against. It is based on this that I will be pointing out some of these vices and how to combat them, in order to reap the joy and blessings of marriage.

Many times as two grown up individuals matured in age and mind, ready for marriage, come together to start a family, there are deceptive thoughts that cross their minds, making them feel that marriage is the solution to all their problems.

A young girl with nagging parents and accommodation problems may feel it is an escape route from her trouble-

some circumstances. A lady with financial problems may feel marrying a rich man will solve her battle with the forces of poverty. To a man, he may feel marriage will solve his problem of having to get a cook or someone to clean the house or it will earn him that promotion he has been long awaiting for in his office. Besides, some believe that marriage will help them to solve their problems of irresponsibility. Despite these ideas, marriage does not automatically lift a man above the works of the flesh, "the vices of the flesh." Yielding to the flesh or wrong attitudes account for the heartache many families are still experiencing in their homes today. The Scripture says: Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: (Galatians 5:19-21).

These character traits in the above scripture steal the peace and joy in a marriage. They also hinder family success. When you hear your would be spouse say "Don't worry, I'll change when we get marriage" or "Things will get better when we are married" be cautious because in most cases it is not true. A well known man of God used to say, "A lizard in Nigeria will not become an alligator in America". Whatever one's character is before marriage, is what it will be after marriage. It is only by the transforming power of the Word of God that is able to cause positive changes in an individual, and this is only the resolute decision and input of the individual himself.

A popular adage says: "Action speaks louder than words" (2 Thessalonians 3:7). As a child of God, you should let your actions give glory to God and be an example for your family members to follow. Example, they say, is the best teacher.

Are you the kind of man who says, "I love you" to your wife now and the next minute you are found beating or raining curses on her? If so, your behaviour is in conflict with what you have said. Are you the kind of wife who keeps shouting abusive words at your husband? He is watching all that you are doing and matching it with what you profess. Imagine someone who has just finished fighting in his apartment and a few minutes after he carries his Bible to witness to someone else in that same apartment about the Lord Jesus

Christ. He will never make any headway. He will be held up to ridicule.

Some people have a lot of charisma, but little character. Someone once said "Charisma without character equals crisis." In homes, there is need for us to walk our talk, not just talk our walk. Proverbs 11:3 makes us to realize that there is a reward for those who walk in integrity and integrity is what lends credence to your actions.

Integrity is what will help a wife to trust her husband in all his dealings. It is what makes the husband to trust his wife with money. The Scripture says: The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her, so that he shall have no need of spoil (Proverbs 31:11). Believe me, you as an individual are the sole determinant of what type of actions you will be taking from this minute. The decision must be made by you and you must abide by it. However, God is able to inject into you the power you need to live a victorious life in your home, at work, with friends, and with family members.

To be wiser than God is to be the biggest fool. There is always a price to be paid for every anti-scriptural character that you exhibit. It is character that makes a successful home. So, if you desire success in your life and family, then build character that is rooted in the Word. A minister of the gospel says: "The Word of God is character-building." It is right character that gives birth to right marriage.

For more insight, there are books that one may buy and help in character formation and revival.

- Marriage Covenant
- Making Marriage Work
- Building A Successful Home and Success in Marriage (Co-Authored).



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Caritas Internationalis Coordinator visits S. Sudanese Refugees' Camps in Yumbe



By Jacinta W. Odongo

The Emergency Response Officer of Caritas Internationalis, John Coughlin visitedUganda from February 2-9, 2017.

Coughlin's visit was intended to allow the donors and sponsors from various confederation members that support Caritas Uganda in the Emergency Refugee Project, to better understand the challenges facing South Sudan and to assess the situation of the South Sudanese refugees living in the country.

The South Sudanese refugees were forced to flee their country following the resumption of war between forces loyal to President Salvar Kiir and Opposition leader Riek Machar in July, 2016. According to UNCHR, a total of 237,270 South Sudanese refugees arrived in Uganda between, July 7 and October 21, 2016.

"When we made an appeal to Caritas Internationalis for support of the South Sudanese refugees living in Uganda following the war, Coughlin received our proposals and sent to all the 124 confederation members. He pushed for our support and about eight members came on board," the Director of Caritas Uganda and the Vice President of Caritas Africa, Msgr Francis Ndamira said. He added, "His presence at the refugee camp will enable him to assess the situation of the refugees on ground."

Msgr Ndamira also said that Coughlin's visit was a follow-up on how Caritas Uganda has implemented the Emergency Response Project since its implementation in October last year in a bid to assist over 3000 South Sudanese refugees and the host community living in and around Bidibidi Refugee Camp in Yumbe District (Northern region of Uganda) enhance food security and livelihoods.

"The project supports these refugees through food production and non-agricultural income generation including offering training in technical courses such as catering, tailoring, metal fabrication, hair dressing and beauty and motor vehicle mechanic among others to help them become self-reliant and to strengthen their socio-economic resilience," he explained.

During his week-long visit, Coughlin he met with Rt. Rev Sabino Ocan Odoki, the Bishop of Arua Diocese, the project coordinator of Caritas Uganda and representatives from the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) and UNHCR at both national and diocesan level. He also held respective meetings with local government officials in Yumbe District and emergency Appeal field staff, before leaving for Ethiopia on February 9, 2017.

Meanwhile, according to the latest statistics released by the Refugee Information Management System (RIMS) of the Government of Uganda, the country currently hosts about a half a million refugees residing in nine rural settlements. The report further states, "the influx of refugees from South Sudan continues at an average rate of 2,000-2,500 individuals per day." Majority of the refugees originate from the Equatorial region of South Sudan and belong to a variety of ethnic groups including Kakwa, Kuku, Madi, Didinga, Acholi, Zande and Bari among others.

Refugees have frequently spent many days in the bush hiding from armed groups and travelling on foot to reach the border with Uganda with limited access to food, water and other needs. Caritas Uganda, UNHCR, OPM and other partners ensure that refugees arriving at official and unofficial border points are quickly transported to Bidibidi (or a collection Point) where access to reception facilities (water, food, shelter and medical attention / nutritional screening) is provided.

WISE QUOTES FOR REFLECTION

"Life is beauty, admire it; Life is life, fight for it" he said that is true for the child about to be born and for the person who is about to die: "Every life is sacred!" - *Mother Teresa of Calcutta*

The secret of change is to focus all of your energy not on fighting the old, but on building the new, - *Socrates*

Enjoy the little things in life because one day you will look back and realize they were the big things- Anonymous

Although time seems to fly by, it never travels faster than one day at a time. Each day is a new opportunity to live your life to the fullest, - *Dr. Steve Maraboli*

Your profession is not what brings home your weekly paycheck, your profession is what you are put here on earth to do, with such

passion and such intensity that it becomes spiritual in calling, - Vincent Van Gogh

When we pray, God hears more than we say, He answers more than we ask, He gives more than we imagine, but ...in His own time, in his own way! So keep faith, - *Anonymous*

There is a story behind every person. There is a reason why they are the way they are. Think about that before you judge someone, - *Anonymous*

If you look at what you have in life, you will always have more. If you look at what you don't have in life, you will never have enough, - *Oprah Winfrey*

February 2017 ISSUE 2 VOL 5 NEW CONTACT 11

What you need to know about Uganda Young Christian Students movement



By Rose Kababikira

The Uganda Young Christian Students (UYCS) is a Catholic action movement of the apostolate of the Laity. It is traditionally an evangelization agent in schools and student milieu (secondary and higher education). It is a member of the International Secretariat of the International Young Christian Students with the head-quarters in France. UYCS is mainly composed of students in secondary and tertia-

ry institutions, and is present in all the 19 Catholic Dioceses of Uganda.

As a movement of Catholic action, UYCS focuses on the evangelization and sanctification of students and the formation of a Christian conscience among them, so that they can infuse the spirit of the Gospel into various aspects of life in their communities. Thus, the aim of UYCS is to "Make a students' world a better and happier place to live in both spiritually and materially"

Inspired by the spirituality of Cardinal Joseph Cardijn, the founder, UYCS has a spirituality of reflection and action that helps young people to internalize the faith and match their life to the Gospel. It is through the methodology of the Review of Life, of See-Judge-Act, that YCS provides formation and raises youth engagement in their realities. It is this engagement that translates into mobilization and action against poverty, exclusion and injustice in the world and a commitment to be in service of the poorest of the poor.

UYCS is a movement of the Catholic Church for students and by students.

Therefore, being full of energy and having the ability of social transformation, the Uganda YCS, in the light of the Gospel and the different local realities, face head on and resolve the respective challenges by using the individual or group application of the Methodology of the Review of Life, See-Judge-Act. More than a method, it is an opportunity for the individual to build a stronger community based on the principles of understanding, solidarity, truth and charity. When the Review of Life is practiced by students, it serves to answer questions of adolescence. It brings goals to their life and creates a space of friendship and common faith in which they can grow.

The YCS office is open Monday to Friday, 8:00am to 5:00pm Contact Coordinator Rose Kababikira – 0788008036 Uganda Catholic Secretariat Nsambya, Kampala

Key events for March 2017

Wednesday, March 1 - Ash Wednesday

Ash Wednesday is an integral part of the Lenten season in many Christian religions including Catholic, Orthodox and some Protestant religions. In the Catholic religion, the ashes used on Ash Wednesday are remnants of the palm leaves distributed from the prior year on Palm Sunday. Catholics keep the palm leaves throughout the year and return them to the Church before Ash Wednesday of the next year. The leaves are then turned into ashes for use in the Ash Wednesday services. During the service, the parishioners proceed to the front of the church and the ashes are placed on each person's forehead in the shape of a cross. The ashes are not to be washed off but are to remain on the forehead throughout the day of Ash Wednesday.

Sunday, March 5 - First Sunday of Lent

Lent is a religious time period of 40 days before Easter Sunday focusing on prayer, penance, and a renewal of faith. Lenten season is a time to prepare for Jesus rising from the dead.

For the leap year of 2012, the number of days between Ash Wednesday and Easter Sunday total 45. If the year is a non-leap year, the number of days between Ash Wednesday and Easter Sunday total 44. There is a difference of approximately 6 days between the 40 days of the Lenten season and the actual count of 44 days (45 in a leap year). The difference lies in the history of the season of Lent.

The focus, beginning on Ash Wednesday, is to seek penance for sins of the past and to renew the relationship with God through the three pillars of the Lenten season. The three pillars are prayer, fasting and almsgiving. Prayer is to allow people to focus or meditate on many aspects of their personal lives and to also pray for others. Fasting is to assist in "developing self-control. It is often an aid to prayer, as the pangs of hunger remind us of our hunger for God." Fasting also assists in the changing of behavior. "The prophet Isaiah insists that fasting without changing our behavior is not pleasing to God." When reading Isaiah 58:5-8, it states. Almsgiving is a continuation of prayer and fasting. It is a time to be thankful for all that God has given us. It is also a time to care for others as God cares for us.

Wednesday, March 8- International Women's Day (IWD)

IWD originally called International Working Women's Day is a day, when women are recognized for their achievements without regard to divisions, whether national, ethnic, linguistic, cultural, economic or political. The theme for this year's celebration focuses on, "Women in the changing world of work: Planet 50-50 by 2030."

Monday, March 20- The Solemnity of St. Joseph spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary

The second greatest saint, next to the Blessed Virgin Mary, is Saint Joseph. His great humility and closeness to Jesus Christ, allows him to be such a saint. Saint Joseph is the foster father of Our Lord and took great care of him. Divine Revelation tells us that Saint Joseph was pure, just, gentle, prudent, and completely obedient to the will of God. We should all strive to be as faithful as Saint Joseph. He was named the Patron of the Universal Church by Blessed Pope Pius IX. St. Pope John XXIII added his name to the Roman Canon of the Eucharistic Prayer. St. Joseph is also patron saint of the Universal Church, families, fathers, expectant mothers (pregnant women), travelers, immigrants, house sellers and buyers, craftsmen, engineers, and working people in general.

Saturday, March 25- The Solemnity of the Annunciation of the Lord

March 25 is usually the Solemnity of the Annunciation, but when it falls during Holy Week, the feast is transferred to the first day after the Easter Octave. The Annunciation is a mystery that belongs to the temporal rather than to the sanctoral cycle in the Church's calendar. For the feast commemorates the most sublime moment in the history of time, the moment when the Second Divine Person of the most Holy Trinity assumed human nature in the womb of the Virgin Mary. Thus it is a feast of our Lord, even as it is of Mary, although the liturgy centers wholly around the Mother of God.

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LITURGICAL READINGS FOR MARCH



Ash Wednesday

First Reading Joel 2: 12-18 Responsorial Psalm Ps 51:3-4, 5-6 AB, 12-13, 14-17 Second Reading 2 Cor 5:20- 6: 2 Gospel Mt 6: 1-6, 16-18

First Sunday of lent

First Reading Genesis 2: 7-9, 3: 1-7 Responsorial Psalm Ps 51: 3-4, 5-6, 12-13, 17 Second Reading Rom 5:12-19 Gospel Mt 4:1-11

Second Sunday of lent

First Reading Genesis 12: 1- 4A Responsorial Psalm Ps 33: 4-5, 18-19, 20, 22 Second Reading 2Tm 1:8B-10 Gospel Mt 17:1-9

Third Sunday of lent

First Reading Ex 17: 3-7 Responsorial Psalm Ps 95:1-2, 6-7, 8-9 Second Reading Rom 5: 1-2, 5-8 Gospel Jn 4: 5- 42

Solemnity of St. Joseph, spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary

First Reading 2 Samuel 7: 4-5A, 12-14A, 16 Responsorial Psalm Ps 89: 2-3, 4-5, 27-29 Second Reading Rom 4: 13, 16-18, 22 Gospel Mt 1:16, 18-21, 24 A

Solemnity of the Annunciation of the Lord

First Reading Isaiah 7:10- 14, 8:10 Responsorial Psalm Ps 40:7-8A, 8 B- 9, 10, 11 Second Reading Heb 10:4-10 Gospel Lk1: 26-38

Fourth Sunday of lent

First Reading 1 Samuel 16: 1B, 6-7, 10-13A Responsorial Psalm Ps 23:1-3A, 3B- 4, 5, 6 Second Reading Eph 5:8-14 Gospel Jn 9: 1- 41

AFCON: Cameroon beats Egypt to lift African title



Cameroon produced a stunning comeback to beat Egypt in the final of the African Cup of Nations (AFCON), held in Gabon's capital, Libreville, on Sunday February 5, 2017.

Arsenal midfielder Mohamed Elneny, who returned to Egypt's starting line-up after an injury, found the net from inside the box after 22 minutes to give his country the lead.

But in the 59th minute, Nikolas N'Koulou equalised and put the Indomitable Lions back in the game.

Cameroon's comeback was completed at the match's final moments, when Vincent Aboubakar controlled the ball in the 89th minute, clipped it over a defender and then shot past Egypt's goalkeeper to clinch his country's fifth African title with a sublime finish.

The Besiktas striker, who came in as a substitute, delivered Cameroon's first African Cup crown since 2002 and denied Egypt an eighth title.

Meanwhile, Uganda was eliminated from the Africa Cup of Nations after drawing their final Group D match 1-1 with Mali in Oyem. In earlier group D matches, they lost 1-0 to Ghana and Egypt respectively.

AFCON attracted a total of 17 teams: Gabon (hosts), Uganda, Algeria, Cameroon, Egypt, Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, Ivory Coast, Mali, Morocco, Senegal, Zimbabwe, Tunisia, Dr Congo, Togo and Burkina Faso.

Cameroon's AFCON triumphs:

- 2017 beat Egypt 2-1
- 2002- beat Senegal 3-2 (penalities)
- 2000- beat Nigeria 4-3 (penalties)
- 1988- beat Nigeria 1-0
- 1984- beat Nigeria 3-1

Source: www. Aljzeera.com



Egypt's Mohamed Elneny scored the final's first goal (Mike Hutchings Livepic Reuters)



Cameroon are Africa's football champions for a fifth time (Amr Abdallah Dalsh Reuters)



Farouk Miya (centre) who scored Uganda's only goal in the tornament against Mali. (theinvestigatomews.com)

AMECEA February 2017 ISSUE 2 VOL 5 NEW CONTACT 13

Kenya needs a credible and peaceful election - KCCB



By Rose Achiego Waumini Communication KCCB

Kenya Conference of Catholic Bishops (KCCB) through the Catholic Justice and Peace Commission (CJPC) and the Commission for Social Communications – Waumini Communications is committed to ensure that Kenya attains credible and peaceful elections slated for August, 2017.

A communications team drawn from the two commissions, the Catholic Radios with the assistance of consultants, early this week congregated for a three-day workshop to strategize on how to develop peace messages that would be relayed on televisions, radios, newspapers and on digital platforms across the country and beyond.

The team which is to work closely with the Bishops and priests in ensuring that political leaders and Kenyans embrace peace was informed that the Country need credible elections for Kenyans to get a government that is mandated by the will of the people of Kenya and peace because without peace the economic and social pillar as well as the governance pillar all collapse.

Addressing the team at Emmaus Centre in Nairobi, Future of Kenya Foundation Democratic Governance, Policy and Strategy Specialist, Africa Region Cyprian Nyamwamu said, there is need to set up a serious and strong vetting mechanism consistent with Chapter 6 of the constitution of Kenya to ensure that corrupt, fraudulent, anti-democracy, anti-cohesion and anti-peace individuals do not

get elected to power come August, 2017.

Nyamwamu said, the Campaigns must be governed to ensure it is nonviolent and abides by the standards of Article 81 of the constitution. "We need to deal with hate speech, incitement, ethnic and clan biases that are likely to bring about serious conflicts and possible violence in the counties and even nationally." He said

"This ethnic balkanization of our nation and reducing elections to an ethnic census must be stopped by a group of conscious and courageous Kenyans who present a different and people centered narrative." Nyamwamu added.

He also noted that, there is need for a robust framework for election monitoring and observation of all the pre-election, election and post election processes in order to promote the credibility of the process revealing that, currently the government is not interested in funding the process of observation or civic education leaving this at the mercy of foreign supporters- mostly through taxes of other nationals- which is regrettable.

The Catholic Church's campaign for Peaceful and Credible election in Kenya will commence by the launch of the Lenten campaign which is scheduled to take place on 25th, February, 2017 at the University of Nairobi Graduation Grounds.

"This ethnic balkanization of our nation and reducing elections to an ethnic census must be stopped by a group of conscious and courageous Kenyans who present a different and people centered narrative."

Chad's foreign minister Moussa Faki Mahamat elected AU Commission chair

By AGENCIES

Chad's foreign minister Moussa Faki Mahamat was named Monday January 30, 2017 as the new AU Commission chairperson, beating four others to succeed South Africa's Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma,



Moussa Faki Mahamat

diplomats told this reporter.

Several delegates leaving the election hall confirmed the win, while grinning Chadian delegates hugged each other in celebration.

Former Burundian president Pierre Buyoya confirmed Faki's victory, telling this reporter it came after a final round battle with Kenyan foreign minister Amina Mohamed.

The 56-year-old former prime minister has been at the forefront of the fight against Islamists in Nigeria, Mali and the Sahel and has promised "development and security" will be top of his agenda as chief of the continental bloc.

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Catholic bishops in Kenya appeal for intervention on drought situation



By Rose Achiego

Catholic Bishops of Kenya issued an urgent appeal to local, national, and international bodies as well as individuals to come and join hands in solidarity with the Church by contributing funds, food and non-food items to save lives of communities severely affected by the current drought which is ravaging Kenya.

Addressing the media at Waumini House in Nairobi on February, 7th 2017,

the Chairman of the Kenya Conference of Catholic Bishops (KCCB), Rev. Philip Anyolo said, "We hasten to appeal to the Government to declare the current drought a national disaster in order to beckon the International Community to step forward and support the many Kenyans who are suffering from this predicament."

Bishop Anyolo further said that they have been closely monitoring the current drought situation in the Country and reports from our Dioceses and Parishes indicated tales of suffering, desperation, hopelessness and in some cases imminent loss of lives.

The Bishops are also appealing to Christians and people of good will to join hands in solidarity with the Church by contributing funds, food and basic items to save lives of those affected.

The KCCB Chairman who was accompanied by Caritas President, Archbishop Martin Kivuva Musonde of the Catholic Archdiocese of Mombasa, Bishop Cornelius Korir of Eldoret, Anthony Muheria of Kitui and Joseph Mbatia of Nyahururu said that the funds collected would help the Church respond to emergency situation through relief to assist the affected Communities through provision of urgent basic needs. He further clarified that, Caritas Kenya the Development and Humanitarian Arm of the Catholic Church, would coordinate these initiatives.

According government agency report, the number of Kenyans in need of relief food has risen to 2.7 million from 1.3 million last year. The most affected are nine arid counties namely: Turkana, Marsabit, Samburu, Tana River, Isiolo, Mandera, Garissa, Wajir and Baringo.4

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WORLD February 2017 ISSUE 2 NEW CONTACT

U.S. Bishops express solidarity with Muslim community

Vatican Radio



People in the USA protests against President Trumph's travel ban

Expressing solidarity with the Muslim community, U.S. Bishops have expressed deep concern over religious freedom issues raised by President Trump's Executive Order on refugees from seven Muslim nations: Iran, Libya, Syria, Somalia, Sudan, Yemen and Iraq.

In a statement published Tuesday, January 31, on the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) website and signed by Bishops Mitchell Rozanski, William Lori and Oscar Cantù, the Bishops respond to the Order and join other faith leaders to stand in solidarity with those affected by it.

Please find below the full USCCB state-

WASHINGTON—On January 27, 2017, President Donald J. Trump issued an executive order that, among other things: suspends issuance of visas and other immigration benefits to nationals of seven predominantly Muslim countries for 90 days; indefinitely suspends resettlement of refugees from Syria, which is also predominantly Muslim, subject to a possible exception for those who are "religious minorities" in their home countries and facing religious persecution; and suspends virtually the entire U.S. refugee resettlement program for 120 days, also subject to a possible exception for such "religious minorities."

Most Reverend Mitchell T. Rozanski, Bishop of Springfield and Chairman of the USCCB Committee on Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs, Most Reverend William E. Lori, Archbishop of Baltimore and Chairman of the USCCB Ad Hoc Committee for Religious Liberty, and Most Reverend Oscar Cantú, Bishop of Las Cruces and Chairman of the USCCB Committee on International Justice and Peace, jointly issued the following statement in response to this action:

We recognize that Friday evening's Executive Order has generated fear and untold anxiety among refugees, immigrants, and others throughout the faith community in the United States. In response to the Order, we join with other faith leaders to stand in solidarity again with those affected by this order, especially our Muslim sisters and brothers. We also express our firm resolution that the Order's stated preference for "religious minorities" should be applied to protect not only Christians where they are a minority, but all religious minorities who suffer persecution, which includes Yazidis, Shia Muslims in majority Sunni areas, and vice versa. While we also recognize that the United States government has a duty to protect the security of its people, we must nevertheless employ means that respect both religious liberty for all, and the urgency of protecting the lives of those who desperately flee violence and persecution. It is our conviction as followers of the Lord Jesus that welcoming the stranger and protecting the

vulnerable lie at the core of the Christian life. And so, to our Muslim brothers and sisters and all people of faith, we stand with you and welcome you.



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Anti-migrant legislation is "deporting the heart of America," American theologian

2017-02-02 Vatican Radio

Building walls and banning immigrants means "deporting the heart of America" and "letting the politics of fear rule us". That's the view of American theologian and author Father Dan Groody, who heads a centre for Latino spirituality and culture at Notre Dame University in Indiana.

After spending time running retreat programmes for immigrants on the U.S.-Mexico border, Fr Dan has been developing a theology of migration, challenging Christians to view themselves as migrants and Jesus as an illegal immigrant who "put Mary outside the law".

Philippa Hitchen sat down with Fr Dan to hear how new U.S. legislation will affect his country's immigrant communities and how global migration can be viewed from a theological perspective...

Fr Dan's interest in Latino spirituality began when he lived in Uruguay, Argentina and Chile during the dictatorship years. Following his ordination, he worked with the Valley Missionary Program in southern California, offering retreats in migrant camps and discovering "the life, the faith and the vibrancy" of the Latino communities

Politics of fear

As well as being inspired by the joy and generosity of the people, he also saw the poverty and suffering of many who died in the desert trying to cross the border into the U.S. President Trump's pledge to continue sealing off the U.S. – Mexico border, he says, resolves nothing and is simply "closing us off....deporting the heart of America... and letting the politics of fear rule us"

The poor, he notes, will feel the brunt of the latest anti-immigrant measures, which he terms "political bravado, trying to sound tough". Furthermore he says, the legislation may "put a target on our back" by being offensive to Mexicans, Muslims and others, leaving "more people wanting to harm us" instead of "globalizing solidarity" as Pope John Paul II called for.

Broad ethic of life

Fr Dan applauds Catholic communities and leaders who've been protesting against the legislation which he sees as deeply divisive. While Donald Trump won the presidential election, Fr Dan says real authority "compels by virtue of goodness, not by fear, and in this case, I'm yet to see it". While praising the new administration's "movement in the right direction" on abortion, Fr Dan says the "ethic of life is a broad issue",

including problems of poverty, inequality and migration.

Jesus as 'illegal' migrant

From a theological perspective, Fr Dan speaks of the Incarnation in terms of Jesus as a migrant, moving "into the otherness of human skin as the divine spirit". Scripture, he continues, "challenges us at a deep level" to see Jesus as "illegal from the beginning, because when the Annunciation happened, Mary was betrothed to Joseph" and to be found pregnant by somebody else "would have put Mary outside the law". "Why would God choose that moment to migrate into Mary's womb and become human?", he asks, suggesting that God is opening up "a space for hope for all those outside the law, even for those considered illegal".

Fr Dan reflects on Pope Francis's visit to the island of Lampedusa, celebrating Mass with a chalice made from the wood of a refugee boat. While most of those on board were saved, some died, making the chalice both "a cup of suffering" but also a symbol of salvation and hope, he says.

Immigrants save the Church

In a similar way, Fr Dan speaks of the annual Mass celebrated each November by bishops on both sides of the U.S.-Mexico border fence. This is not politicizing the liturgy, he says, but rather a "strong spiritual statement which has political implications", stressing that "even though these walls are here, we do profess…we are one body, regardless of our nationality".

Fr Dan says "when borders become barriers" and we "disconnect from our neighbour in need", then "we become alien to who we're called to be as human beings". The faith of migrants amidst the most desperate of situations, he concludes, reminds us that "it's not that the church saves the immigrant, it's the immigrant who saves the church".



WORLD February 2017 ISSUE 2 VOL 5 NEW CONTACT 17

Pope's Lenten message: The Word is a gift. Other persons are a gift



2017-02-07 Vatican Radio

Pope Francis' Lenten message was released on Tuesday entitled "The Word is a gift. Other persons are a gift."

Below find the English language translation of Pope Francis' Lenten message.

The Word is a gift. Other persons are a gift.

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Lent is a new beginning, a path leading to the certain goal of Easter, Christ's victory over death. This season urgently calls us to conversion. Christians are asked to return to God "with all their hearts" (Joel 2:12), to refuse to settle for mediocrity and to grow in friendship with the Lord. Jesus is the faithful friend who never abandons us. Even when we sin, he patiently awaits our return; by that patient expectation, he shows us his readiness to forgive (cf. Homily, 8 January 2016).

Lent is a favorable season for deepening our spiritual life through the means of sanctification offered us by the Church: fasting, prayer and almsgiving. At the basis of everything is the word of God, which during this season we are invited to hear and ponder more deeply. I would now like to consider the parable of the rich man and Lazarus (cf. Lk 16:19-31). Let us find inspiration in this meaningful story, for it provides a key to understanding what we need to do in order to attain true happiness and eternal life. It exhorts us to sincere conversion.

The other person is a gift

The parable begins by presenting its two main characters. The poor man is described in greater detail: he is wretched and lacks the strength even to stand. Lying before the door of the rich man, he fed on the crumbs falling from his table. His body is full of sores and dogs come to lick his wounds (cf. vv. 20-21). The picture is one of great misery; it portrays a man disgraced and pitiful.

The scene is even more dramatic if we consider that the poor man is called Lazarus: a name full of promise, which literally means "God helps". This character is not anonymous. His features are clearly delineated and he appears as an individual with his own story. While practically invisible to the rich man, we see and know him as someone familiar. He becomes a face, and as such, a gift, a priceless treasure, a human being whom God loves and cares for, despite his concrete condition as an outcast (cf. Homily, 8 January 2016).

Lazarus teaches us that other persons are a gift. A right relationship with people consists in gratefully recognizing their value. Even the poor person at the door of the rich is not a nuisance, but a summons to conversion and to change. The parable first invites us to open the doors of our heart to others because each person is a gift, whether it be our neighbor or an anonymous pauper. Lent is a favorable season for opening the doors to all those in need and recognizing in them the face of Christ. Each of us meets people like this every day. Each life that we encounter is a gift deserving acceptance, respect and love. The word of God helps us to open our eyes to welcome and love life, especially when it is weak and vulnerable. But in order to do this, we have to take seriously what the Gospel tells us about the rich man.

Sin blinds us

The parable is unsparing in its description of the contradictions associated with the rich man (cf. v. 19). Unlike poor Lazarus, he does not have a name; he is simply called "a rich man". His opulence was seen in his extravagant and expensive robes. Purple cloth was even more precious than silver and gold, and was thus reserved to divinities (cf. Jer 10:9) and kings (cf. Jg 8:26), while fine linen gave one an almost sacred character. The man was clearly ostentatious about his wealth, and in the habit of displaying it daily: "He feasted sumptuously every day" (v. 19). In him we can catch a dramatic glimpse of the corruption of sin, which progresses in three successive stages: love of money, vanity and pride (cf. Homily, 20 September 2013).

The Apostle Paul tells us that "the love of money is the root of all evils" (1 Tim 6:10). It is the main cause of corruption and a source of envy, strife and suspicion. Money can come to dominate us, even to the point of becoming a tyrannical idol (cf. Evangelii Gaudium, 55). Instead of being

an instrument at our service for doing good and showing solidarity towards others, money can chain us and the entire world to a selfish logic that leaves no room for love and hinders peace.

The parable then shows that the rich man's greed makes him vain. His personality finds expression in appearances, in showing others what he can do. But his appearance masks an interior emptiness. His life is a prisoner to outward appearances, to the most superficial and fleeting aspects of existence (cf. ibid., 62).

The lowest rung of this moral degradation is pride. The rich man dresses like a king and acts like a god, forgetting that he is merely mortal. For those corrupted by love of riches, nothing exists beyond their own ego. Those around them do not come into their line of sight. The result of attachment to money is a sort of blindness. The rich man does not see the poor man who is starving, hurting, lying at his door.

Looking at this character, we can understand why the Gospel so bluntly condemns the love of money: "No one can be the slave of two masters: he will either hate the first and love the second, or be attached to the first and despise the second. You cannot be the slave both of God and of money" (Mt 6:24).

The Word is a gift

The Gospel of the rich man and Lazarus helps us to make a good preparation for the approach of Easter. The liturgy of Ash Wednesday invites us to an experience quite similar to that of the rich man. When the priest imposes the ashes on our heads, he repeats the words: "Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return". As it turned out, the rich man and the poor man both died, and the greater part of the parable takes place in the afterlife. The two characters suddenly discover that "we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it" (1 Tim 6:7).

We too see what happens in the after-life. There the rich man speaks at length with Abraham, whom he calls "father" (Lk 16:24.27), as a sign that he belongs to God's people. This detail makes his life appear all the more contradictory, for until this moment there had been no mention of his relation to God. In fact, there was no place for God in his life. His only god was himself.

The rich man recognizes Lazarus only amid the torments of the afterlife. He wants the poor man to alleviate his suffer-

ing with a drop of water. What he asks of Lazarus is similar to what he could have done but never did. Abraham tells him: "During your life you had your fill of good things, just as Lazarus had his fill of bad. Now he is being comforted here while you are in agony" (v. 25). In the afterlife, a kind of fairness is restored and life's evils are balanced by good.

The parable goes on to offer a message for all Christians. The rich man asks Abraham to send Lazarus to warn his brothers, who are still alive. But Abraham answers: "They have Moses and the prophets, let them listen to them" (v. 29). Countering the rich man's objections, he adds: "If they will not listen either to Moses or to the prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone

should rise from the dead" (v. 31).

The rich man's real problem thus comes to the fore. At the root of all his ills was the failure to heed God's word. As a result, he no longer loved God and grew to despise his neighbor. The word of God is alive and powerful, capable of converting hearts and leading them back to God. When we close our heart to the gift of God's word, we end up closing our heart to the gift of our brothers and sisters.

Dear friends, Lent is the favorable season for renewing our encounter with Christ, living in his word, in the sacraments and in our neighbor. The Lord, who overcame the deceptions of the Tempter during the forty days in the desert, shows us the path we must take. May the Holy Spirit lead us

on a true journey of conversion, so that we can rediscover the gift of God's word, be purified of the sin that blinds us, and serve Christ present in our brothers and sisters in need. I encourage all the faithful to express this spiritual renewal also by sharing in the Lenten Campaigns promoted by many Church organizations in different parts of the world, and thus to favor the culture of encounter in our one human family. Let us pray for one another so that, by sharing in the victory of Christ, we may open our doors to the weak and poor. Then we will be able to experience and share to the full the joy of Easter.

From the Vatican, 18 October 2016 Feast of Saint Luc the Evangelist

Pope donates 200,000 euros to Bangui's Children's Hospital

Vatican Radio

A joint effort between art and mercy has made it possible for one of the most troubled countries in the world to receive a substantial donation for its children in need of medical care.

When the project entitled "Christo's box, between Art and Mercy, A Gift for Bangui" was presented in May 2016 at the Vatican Museums, Pope Francis had made it quite clear that he wanted the proceeds to go to the Bangui Children's Hospital in the Central African Republic. 200,000 euros is the sum that has been raised and enthusiastically received by the Pope who has expressed his wish that it be donated to the Hospital on February 6, 2017 so it can care for all poor children "without distinction of religious belonging, because all children need care and attention."

At the heart of the project, a well-known contemporary artist, the Bulgarian-born US citizen Christo, "packaged" a fragment of Raphael's 'The School of Athens'. The work was presented by the artist himself at the Raphael Hall at the Vatican Pinacoteca



in collaboration with the Vatican Secretariat for Communications and the Vatican Museums.

Christo is well known for his works of art that involve "packaging" or wrapping – and include monumental intervention such as the "packaging" of Rome's Porta Pinciana in 1974 and of Berlin's Reichstag in 1995.

The idea at the root of the project stemmed from a work of art that Christo created through "packaging" a container for a DVD series produced by CTV entitled "Discovering the Vatican". The cover of the DVD set represents a figure from Raphael's 'The School of Athens', one of his frescoes to be seen in the Vatican Museums.

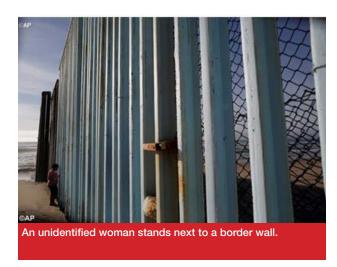
The "boxes", each one numbered and signed by the artist, were auctioned off by Christie's for 1,000 euros each in London,

Turin, Milan and Rome. At the launch of the project, the then Vatican Museums director, Antonio Paolucci, remarked that "Many years ago, Pope Julius II used Raphael to celebrate himself and his Church, (...) five centuries have gone by and another Pope is using a Raphael for a work of mercy to help one of the poorest and most marginalized countries of sub-Saharan Africa".

Pope Francis visited the Bangui Pediatric Hospital during his Apostolic visit to CAR in November 2015 and was reportedly struck by the fact that there was no equipment at the hospital to provide oxygen to or to resuscitate children. And so, once he was informed of the initiative, he said that he wanted the proceeds to go to those facilities.

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Muslims and Christians unite to call for bridges not walls



Vatican Radio

US President Donald Trump's Executive Order to tighten restrictions on arrivals to the United States has been widely condemned, although polls suggest that US public opinion is sharply divided on the policy.

Amongst other restrictions, the Order issued on January 25, bans nationals from seven mainly Muslim countries from entering the US, it places a temporary ban on all refugee admissions and prioritizes refugee claims by religious

minorities (Christians in mainly Muslim countries).

Faith-based organizations and human rights groups have called for a re-think of the Executive Order and have urged governments to address the structural causes of forced displacement and share the responsibility of providing for refugees.

Amongst them, the Jesuit Refugee Service – JRS - that has released a joint interfaith statement with the Italian Islamic Religious Community – COREIS- calling for bridges, not walls.

In brief:

What Trump had promised to do on his first day in office

- Ask Congress to immediately deliver a full repeal of Obamacare.
- Begin rescinding Mr.
 Obama' executive orders on immigration.
- Begin working on an impenetrable physical wall on the southern border.
 He has said it is "the single first thing I'll do".
- Learn the difference between Hezbollah and Hamas. Trump admitted to interviewer Hugh Hewitt that he didn't know the difference, but "will know far more than you know within 24 hours after I get the job."
- Get rid of gun-free zones in schools and military bases. "My first day, it gets signed, okay? My first day."
- Move criminal illegal immigrants out of the country. "Day 1, my first hour in office, those people are gone," he shouted at a rally in Arizona.

Source: www.telegraph.co.uk



Turning Moments into Memories

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