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NEW CONTACT

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RT. REV. SANCTUS LINO WANOK INSTALLED AS FOURTH BISHOP OF LIRA DIOCESE



Bishop Wanok after his installation
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Editorial

On March 6, we celebrated Ash Wednesday, marking the beginning of the Season of Lent. It is a forty days spiritual journey in which we prepare ourselves to celebrate the Paschal Mystery of Christ's passion, death and resurrection. Our preparation entails self examination and spiritual renewal through repentance and spiritual exercises such as fasting, prayer and almsgiving.

We read in the Book of the Prophet Jonah Chapter 3 that when Jonah went to Nineveh and told the people that in forty days their city would be destroyed, they fasted and put on sackcloth as a sign of repentance. Everyone including the King called out to God asking for mercy and God forgave their sins.

Bearing in mind that as human beings we are weak and very often offend God and one another, we need to embrace the Season of Lent as an opportunity for serious self examination, renewal and reconciliation. It is an opportunity to call out to God and ask for mercy following the example of the people of Nineveh; an opportunity to forgive and reconcile with one another.

I wish you all a spiritually enriching Lenten Season.

Fr. Philip Odii
Editor/Executive
Secretary of Social
Communications

Rt. Rev. Sanctus Lino Wanok installed as fourth Bishop of Lira Diocese

By Fr. Tobby Okello

Rt. Rev. Sanctus Lino Wanok has been installed as the fourth Bishop of Lira Diocese.

The installation ceremony took place on Saturday February 9, 2019 at Lira Cathedral Ordination ground amidst jubilation. Over 300 clergy and thousands of friends and faithful, from across the Dioceses of Lira and Nebbi, where the Bishop formerly served before his appointment on November 23, 2018 by Pope Francis, came together to witness the colourful ceremony.

On the previous day, convoys from Nebbi, Kampala and Lira Diocese converged at Nora near Karuma to escort Bishop Wanok to his new home. The three-kilometre-long motorcade carrying the excited Christians made its way to Lira Cathedral Ordination ground in a journey of a four-hour drive. He was received by Rt. Rev. Joseph Franzelli, Bishop Emeritus of Lira Diocese, Hon. Jimmy Michael Akena, Member of Parliament for Lira Municipality and several priests. Most Rev. John Baptist Odama, Archbishop of Gulu Archdiocese led the installation ceremony.

The new Bishop in his homily said that the appointment caught him unaware while he was attending to his flock near Congo boarder. "I had to ask myself why me from an unknown boarder!" he said adding that even so he had to accept it in faith.

He appreciated the welcome accorded him but emphasised that it should be understood in the context that he represents Christ, thus urged the faithful to focus on the word of God.

In his speech, Bishop Franzelli regreted that the installation ceremony took place when the cathedral was still under renovation. He however noted that it would be the task of the new bishop to build the cathedral.

The Emeritus bishop also said that he had chosen to remain in Lira to give assistance where he can. He appealed to the people of Lira to show their support to the new Bishop.

The Chairman of the Uganda Episcopal Conference Rt. Rev. Joseph Antony Zziwa also Bishop of Kiyinda-Mityana Diocese started his speech by saying "a miracle is about to happen." and to the surprise of many, he gave part of his speech in Luo.

He emphasised the need for unity and thanked Bishop Wanok for accepting his call and Bishop Franzelli for his contribution

to Lira Diocese and the Church in Uganda.

Bishop Zziwa made a special appeal to all Catholics and people of good will to contribute to the Uganda Catholic Television (UCTV) Project adding that if funds allow, UCTV is set to start in March 2019. He also announced the appointment of Most Rev. Luigi Bianco as the new Papal Nuncio to Uganda and thanked Fr. Alfred D'Souza, the Charge d'affaires for taking care of the Nunciature when the former Nuncio was appointed to Hungary.

Archbishop Odama in his speech, called for unity, love and peace among the Christians saying the future of humanity depends on it. "Let us grow together building our country," he exhorted.

The event was graced by Hon. Edward K. Ssekandi, the Vice President of the republic of Uganda who represented President Yoweri K. Museveni as the Chief Guest. He congratulated the new bishop of Lira upon his appointment and said that President Museveni had offered a brand new vehicle to the Bishop. The Vice President further expressed his gratitude to the Catholic Church for its contribution to the growth and development of the country.

Other Government dignitaries who were in attendance included the Minister of Lands, Hon. Betty Amongi, the Minister in charge of Northern Uganda, Hon. Joyce Kweyocwiny and over 10 Members of Parliament from Lango and West Nile.

The colourful celebration attracted over thousands of faithful including 13 bishops and over 300 priests, religious men and women from all the ecclesiastical provinces of Uganda as well as the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Biography of Bishop Sanctus Wanok

Bishop Wanok was born on April 7th, 1957 at Ukuru Pamach village in Zombo District. He was ordained deacon on August 31, 1986 at Ediofe Parish and later Priest on September 27, 1986 at Warr Parish. He was appointed the third Bishop of Nebbi Catholic Diocese on February 8th, 2011 by His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI. He holds a Doctorate in Biblical Theology from Pontifical Urban University Rome.

He replaces Bishop Joseph Franzelli who has been serving from 2005-2018. His other predecessors are Bishop Caesar Asili, 1968-2003 and Bishop Joseph Oyanga, 1989-2003.

Pictorial of Rt. Rev. Sanctus Lino Wanok's installation



Pilgrims welcome Bishop Wanok upon his arrival in Lira Diocese for his installation.



Bishop Franzelli (left) and Bishop Wanok (right) during the entrance procession



A section of the priests at the installation Mass



Archbishop Odama (standing) installs Bishop Wanok as new Bishop of Lira Diocese



Bishop Franzelli (right) congratulates Bishop Wanok (left) after his installation as new Bishop of Lira Diocese



The Consultors of Lira Diocese examining the Papal Bull appointing Bishop Sanctus to Lira



H.E Edward Ssekandi (in black suit) shares a light moment with Bishop Wanok and Bishop Franzelli during the ceremony



The U.E.C Chairman Rt. Rev Joseph Antony Zziwa delivering his speech



Archbishop John Baptist Odama delivering his speech at the installation ceremony



Bishop Wanok blessing the people after the installation ceremony
PHOTOS BY FR. TOBBY OKELLO



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Peace Week is a school to learn, promote peace, Archbishop Odama tells pilgrims



Bishops lead a procession during the Peace Week

By Fr. Tobby Okello

“Over the past few years, no one could ever imagine that one day we could meet, celebrate and even sleep in each other’s homes,” said Most Rev. John Baptist Odama, Archbishop of Gulu.

“This is an achievement,” he added. “Thus for those who desire peace, Peace Week has become a school to learn God’s peace and become promoters of peace.”

Archbishop Odama made his remarks during the 14th Annual GANAL (Gulu, Arua, Nebbi and Lira) Ecclesiastical Province Prayer Peace week that was held from January 21 – 25, 2019 at Lango College Ground in Lira Diocese. This year’s prayer peace week deliberated on Pope Francis’ message for World Day of Peace “*Good politics is at the service of peace*”. It began with a peace march led by Archbishop Odama, Rt. Rev. Sabino Ocan Odoki of Arua Diocese, Rt. Rev. Joseph Franzelli, Bishop Emeritus of Lira Diocese and Rt. Rev. Sanctus Lino of Lira Diocese. Over 3000 pilgrims from across the

country including cultural and political leaders were also in attendance.

The Archbishop noted that people who killed each other in the past insurgencies in the northern region: the Ombaci massacre and the Lord’s Resistant Army among others have reconciled and overcome the fear of living with one another despite their differences in language, religion, environment and political affiliation.

He urged pilgrims to embrace peace and reconciliation in their families and society so as to leave Northern Uganda better than they found it. The prelate thanked the cultural leaders for their commitment in promoting words of love, peace and unity among its people in the region.

In his speech, Bishop Franzelli deliberated on good politics by expounding on the indicators of bad politics such as corruption, plundering the environment, denial of fundamental rights, clinging on power for long, xenophobia, and racism among others, adding that these frustrates peace.

The 2019 Peace Week featured a cross range of events which included cultural entertainment and a football match between the clergy of GANAL against the staff of centenary bank. The match ended in a 4-1 win in favour of the clergy.

At the closure of the peace week, Archbishop Odama declared Lira Diocese as the winner of this year’s tree planting competition followed by Nebbi Diocese with 718.666.642, Arua 13165.410 and Gulu 5.377.180 trees. Lira diocese took the trophy for the second time having planted 765,934.999 trees. The GANAL bishops chose Nebbi Diocese as the host of the 2020 Prayer Peace Week.

Peace Week is an initiative of the Bishops of GANAL that was launched in 2005 to provide room for social interaction, prejudice reduction, healing and reconciliation amongst the communities of Northern Uganda who became victims in the region following the past insurgencies in the region.

Pictorial of Prayer Peace Week



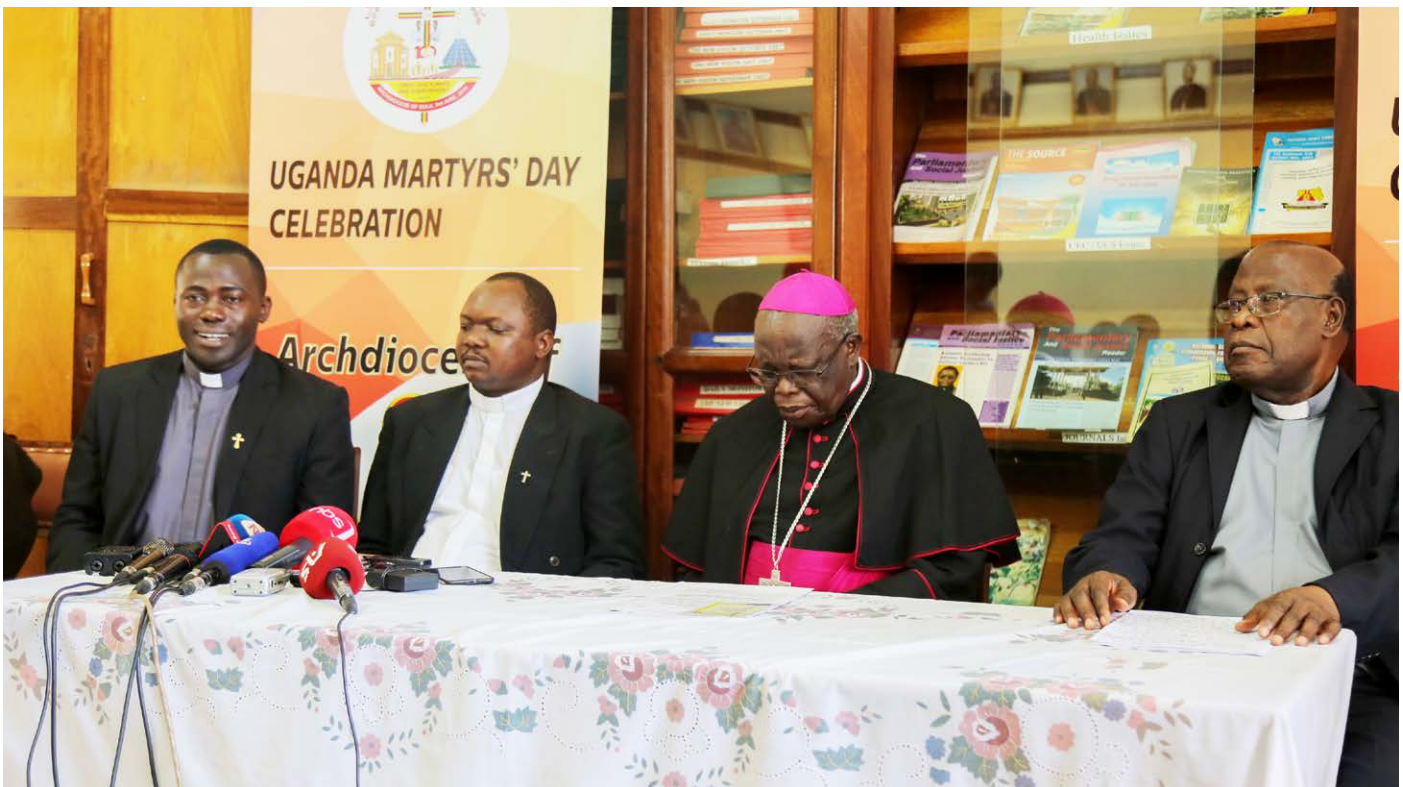
Archbishop Odama (second left) with other Bishops during the Peace Week



Bishop Franzelli (center), a cultural leader and a participant pose for a photo after receiving a trophy for Lira Diocese as the 2019 Winner for tree planting competition



Cultural dancers perform during the Peace Week



Archbishop (second right) with the U.E.C Secretary General. Msgr. John Baptist Kauta (far right) and other priests during the press conference. PHOTO BY JACINTA W. ODONGO

Gulu Archdiocese needs Ushs900m for Uganda Martyrs celebration

By Jacinta W. Odongo
Media Officer, Uganda Episcopal Conference

The former Chairman of Uganda Episcopal Conference (UEC) and Archbishop of Gulu Archdiocese, Most Rev. John Baptist Odama has appealed for a financial support of Uganda Shillings 900 million from well-wishers and government institutions for the 2019 Uganda Martyrs Day celebration on June 3.

Archbishop Odama made his appeal Monday February 25, during a press conference that was held at Uganda Catholic Secretariat premises in Nsambya, Kampala. He said that the Archdiocese of Gulu has drawn a budget of Ushs 900m that will be used in the preparations of the event and the actual celebration. The Archdiocese was chosen last year to animate the 2019 UMD celebration.

"We have a moderate budget of shs900m. I appeal to all well-wishers, Catholic faithful, government

institutions, businesses and corporate organizations at local and international level, to help us in raising this money," he said adding "Who knows may be an individual can come forth and decide to donate the whole amount."

The Archdiocese has so far collected only Ushs10m in cash and shs24m in form of pledges out of the total budget. Archbishop Odama noted that Mbarara Archdiocese, through the Catholic faithful of Mbarara living in Kampala, organized for them (Gulu) a fundraising drive on February 24 and collected a total of shs5m.

He thanked Most Rev. Paul K. Bakyenga of Mbarara and the Catholic faithful of Mbarara living in Kampala for coming to their rescue through the fundraising drive.

"I am very grateful to Mbarara Arch-

diocese and Archbishop Bakyenga because when they heard that their brother Archdiocese will be animating this year's UMD celebration, they decided to organize for us this initiative," he noted.

The prelate said that they will also visit all the parishes and institutions in Gulu Archdiocese to mobilize the community to contribute towards the celebration. Besides, they will hold several fundraising dinners in both Gulu and Kampala in March and April.

Gulu Archdiocese last animated the UMD celebrations in 2003 soon after the beatification of Blessed Daudi Okelo and Jildo Irwa in 2002 at the Vatican by Pope John Paul II. The two Blessed Martyrs from Paimol symbolically joined the 22 Martyrs of Uganda when, their relics were brought to Namugongo after their beatification.

This year's celebration will be a unique celebration as it will also commemorate the centenary celebration of the martyrdom of the two Blessed Catechists. The theme guiding the 2019 UMD celebration is, "Obey God Always and Everywhere."

Meanwhile, the Archdiocese has set up a Central Organizing committee and 10 subcommittees at diocesan level to help in the organization and coordination of the celebration.

Pope Francis Won't Attend SECAM Golden Jubilee – Catholic Church Announces



Pope Francis during his trip to Africa

By Media Officer, Uganda Episcopal Conference

For months Ugandans had hoped that His Holiness Pope Francis would attend in person the Golden Jubilee celebration of the Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar (SECAM) which are slated for July 23-28, 2019 in Uganda.

In a statement issued on Thursday, February 21, 2019, the Uganda Episcopal Conference (UEC) through its Secretary General, Msgr John Baptist Kauta announced that Pope Francis will not attend the 2019 SECAM Golden Jubilee event.

"The office of the President of Uganda has officially communicated to the UEC that the Holy Father will not be able to attend the Symposium," reads a section of the statement.

He however noted that despite the Pope not attending the grand

event, the celebration will proceed as scheduled, adding that more than 400 bishops from various regional and national Conferences and other Church institutions in Africa and Madagascar are expected to attend.

"THE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT OF UGANDA HAS OFFICIALLY COMMUNICATED TO THE UEC THAT THE HOLY FATHER WILL NOT BE ABLE TO ATTEND THE SYMPOSIUM,"

Msgr Kauta stated that last year, the UEC on behalf of SECAM, requested H.E President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni of Uganda to invite Pope Francis for the climax of the celebration due in July this year.

The SECAM Golden Jubilee celebration, which was launched on July

29, 2018 at Lubaga Cathedral, will be held under the theme: "Church-Family of God in Africa, Celebrate your Jubilee! Proclaim Jesus Christ your Saviour." The event is expected to also attract thousands of faithful including top dignitaries and government officials among others.

SECAM was born out of the will of African bishops during the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) as they wanted to establish a forum in which they could speak with one voice on matters pertaining to the Church on the continent. The establishment of SECAM is, therefore, a result of the bishops' resolution to build a continental structure in order to bring forth the African vision to the whole Church. His Holiness Pope Paul VI presided over SECAM's inauguration in July, 1969 in Kampala during his first visit to Africa.

Archbishop Bianco appointed new Papal Nuncio to Uganda

By Media Officer,
Uganda Episcopal Conference

The Holy Father, Pope Francis has appointed the Titular Archbishop of Falerone, Luigi Bianco as the Apostolic Nuncio to Uganda.

The apostolic nuncio is the papacy's diplomatic representative in a foreign country.

The news of the appointment was made public on 4th February by the Secretary General of the Uganda Episcopal Conference, Msgr. John Baptist Kauta after receiving a confirmation letter addressed to the Catholic Clergy from Fr. Alfred Rayan, D'Souza, the Charge d'affaires of the Nunciature in Uganda.

"With this letter I have the honour to communicate to you that the Holy Father Pope Francis has appointed His Excellency Most Rev. Luigi Bianco, Titular Archbishop of Falerone, as the new Apostolic Nuncio to Uganda," reads a section of the letter. "As soon as a date is fixed for the new Apostolic Nuncio's arrival in Uganda, it shall be my pleasure to inform you."

Until his appointment, Archbishop Bianco has been the Papal Nuncio to Ethiopia. He succeeds Most Rev. Michael August Blume who served as Nuncio to Uganda since February 2013 to July 2018, before moving to Hungary to take up a new diplomatic post.

Born in Asti, Italy on March 3, 1960, Archbishop Bianco was ordained priest for the diocese Casale Monferrato on March 30, 1985. On July 1, 1989 he entered the diplomatic service of the Holy See and served in different Nunciatures: Italy; Egypt; Argentina; Croatia and Spain. He was appointed Apostolic Nuncio to Honduras on January 12, 2009, and on July 14, 2014, he was chosen as Papal Nuncio to Ethiopia.

Subsequently, he was also nominated Apostolic Nuncio to Djibouti and Apostolic Delegate to Somalia on September 10, 2014.



The new Apostolic Nuncio to Uganda, H.E Luigi Bianco

PHOTO BY JACINTA W. ODONGO



Archbishop John Baptist Odama(left) hands over the University mace to Bishop Joseph Antony Zziwa(right) as he is being installed as new UMU Chancellor

Bishop Zziwa installed as new UMU Chancellor

By Juliet Lukwago

Rt. Rev. Joseph Antony Zziwa, Bishop of Kiyinda-Mityana Diocese has been installed as the new Chancellor of Uganda Martyrs University (UMU) in a colorful ceremony that was performed by the Patron of the University His Grace Dr. Cyprian Kizito Lwanga at UMU main campus, Nkozi on February 15, 2019.

His installation as Chancellor follows his election as the new Chairman of the Uganda Episcopal Conference, the Assembly of Catholic Bishops that oversee the church affairs in the country which was held on Sunday 11th November 2018. Incidentally, Bishop Zziwa has been Archbishop Odama's deputy for the last 8 years.

Bishop Zziwa acknowledged the tremendous work that all his predecessors have done, the Uganda Episcopal

"I KNOW YOU MAY MEET CHALLENGES, BUT IF YOU ARE FIRM AND WORK AS A TEAM, GOD WILL ALWAYS BE WITH YOU BECAUSE THIS IS A UNIVERSITY OF JESUS CHRIST"

Conference, Governing Council, management and staff of UMU. In a special way, he appreciated Kampala Archdiocese for availing land where Uganda Martyrs University was established. He urged the UMU community to stick to the core values of the University in order to achieve its vision of; "To be a University that is nationally and internationally recognized for excellence in teaching, learning, research, advancement of knowledge and community engagement".

The former Chancellor Most Rev. John Baptist Odama, also the Archbishop of Gulu expressed gratitude to the Uganda Episcopal Conference for entrusting him with the stewardship role and being Chancellor of UMU for 8 years and 6 months. He prayed for his successor and the new team to lead Uganda Martyrs University to greater heights.

"I know you may meet challenges, but if you are firm and work as a team, God will always be with you because this is a University of Jesus Christ", he prayed.

Archbishop Odama urged the UMU community, to continue praying for the University, desist from using violence but instead resort to dialogue and finding solutions to any challenges that may arise.

The Vice-Chancellor, Rev. Prof. John Chrysostom Maviiri was very grateful to the Uganda Episcopal Conference, the laity, alumni and students for the continuous material and spiritual support to the University. He highlighted some of the UMU achievements and recognized in special way members of the outgoing Governing Council.

Protecting Children from Abuse



Fr. Lazar Arasu Priest and School Administrator

“If one member suffers, all suffer together with it” (1 Cor 12:26). With these words Pope Francis opened “Vatican Summit on child protection and the clerical sexual abuse crisis” which was held from 18-24 February. For the past two decades Catholic Church has been hounded by numerous cases of sexual abuse of minors involving priests. The court cases caused the church not only huge financial losses but credibility in proclaiming the faith.

At the start of the Summit, Cardinal Luis Antonio Tagle of Manila, Philippines, gave the first formal talk to the gathering, acknowledging how church leaders for so long ignored the suffering of the victims of clerical sexual abuse and covered up the evil crimes of the priest-perpetrators. “Sometimes,” he said, “bishops were simply afraid to look at the wounds caused by their priests, but he insisted that one cannot profess faith in Christ while ignoring the wounds inflicted on the people Jesus loves.” Sexual abuse is a serious violation of a person’s dignity. Loss of dignity is loss of very personhood.

Human dignity is often built around our sexuality. As sex is something very personal and intimate, our sexual nature too is very delicate and sacred. When we are sexually violated or abused our scars can remain until the end of our life. Recovery from sexual abuse is rather hard and almost impossible. Sexual abuse affects our relationship with our own very self, with others and the society around us. A sexually abused child can remain psychologically retarded with permanent setbacks.

By calling this high level meeting with

world’s senior bishops, the Pope has taken a courageous step to purify the Church of these heinous acts and to rebuild the lost confidence among the people of God. He said quiet openly, “...in my heart I acknowledge the suffering endured by many minors due to sexual abuse, the abuse of power and the abuse of conscience perpetrated by a significant number of clerics and consecrated persons... these are crimes that inflict deep wounds of pain and powerlessness, primarily among the victims, but also in their family members and in the larger community of believers and nonbelievers alike.”

Pope’s tweet on 22 February said it in a form of prayer, “Lord, deliver us from the temptation to want to save ourselves, and our reputations; help us to acknowledge our guilt and to seek humble and concrete answers together, and in communion with all the People of God.” Chaired the Summit meetings, Pope has been calling for concrete action—by way of accountability, right use of power and money and together with other prelates called for resignation of persons in authority if need be.

In a country like Uganda crimes against children such as defilement, child marriage, and child neglect go unreported and are often compromised. Since 2014, every year over 200,000 cases are reported to the police, but most of them do not always receive right judgment. As country grows in education and other sectors it is important to put in place right policies and have right implementation strategies to protect children.

Crimes against human sexuality, especially against children need to be

dealt with firmness and even without mercy. Pope Francis who is known for mercy said, “I am conscious of the effort and work being carried out in various parts of the world to come up with the necessary means to ensure the safety and protection of the integrity of children and of vulnerable adults, as well as implementing zero tolerance and ways of making all those who perpetrate or cover up these crimes accountable. We have delayed in applying these actions and sanctions that are so necessary, yet I am confident that they will help to guarantee a greater culture of care in the present and future.”

Now that the Catholic Church, largest religious institution in the world has openly confessed its grave mistake and has honestly tried to find ways to amend its path, it is the high time for other religious and civil institutions to do the same soul-searching act and be honest to look at its own settings and do the same to protect children. We know that in our own land numerous children and other vulnerable persons have been molested by teachers, pastors, social leaders and even by parents who need to do the same acts of reparation. It is urgent to put in place strict policies to create a healthy and safe environment for all the vulnerable persons to grow and mature.

The wakeup call Pope gave to 400 bishops who were called to this summit suits everyone who are in one way or another responsible for the protection of children and vulnerable persons in our society. Let the leaders and guardians of children heed these words: “Looking back to the past, no effort to beg pardon and to seek to repair the harm done will ever be sufficient. Looking ahead to the future, no effort must be spared to create a culture able to prevent such situations from happening, but also to prevent the possibility of their being covered up and perpetuated. The pain of the victims and their families is also our pain, and so it is urgent that we once more reaffirm our commitment to ensure the protection of minors and of vulnerable adults.”

**FR. LAZAR ARASU SDB
CHAPLAIN, PALABEK REFUGEE
SETTLEMENT**

KEY LITURGICAL EVENTS FOR MARCH 2019

March 6, 2019- Ash Wednesday

Ash Wednesday is one of the most popular and important holy days in the liturgical calendar. It marks the beginning of the Season of Lent, a season of penance, reflection, prayer and fasting which prepares us for Christ's Resurrection on Easter Sunday, through which we attain redemption.

Ash Wednesday takes place 46 days before Easter Sunday, and is chiefly observed by Catholics, although many other Christians observe it too. The practice includes the wearing of ashes on the head. The ashes symbolize the dust from which God made us. As the priest applies the ashes to a person's forehead, he speaks the words: "Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return." Alternatively, the priest may speak the words, "Repent and believe in the Gospel."

March 8, 2019- International Women's Day

International Women's Day (IWD) is a global day celebrating the social, economic, cultural and political achievements of women. The day also marks a call to action for accelerating gender parity.

The 2019 IWD will be celebrated under a theme of, "Balance for Better" that will run all year long. The campaign theme provides a unified direction to guide and galvanize continuous collective action, with "Balance for Better" activity reinforced and amplified all year.

IWD has occurred for well over a century, with the first IWD gathering in 1911 supported by over a million people in Austria, Denmark, Germany and Switzerland. Today, it belongs to all groups collectively everywhere.

March 10, 2019- First Sunday of Lent

On this First Sunday of Lent, priests lead the Liturgy with this profoundly insightful opening prayer: "Father, through our observance of Lent, help us to understand the meaning of your Son's death and Resurrection, and teach us to reflect it in our lives."

This ancient practice of setting aside 40 days in order to enter - in Jesus - into the desert places in our own

daily lives and confront the temptations and struggles we face is a gift. It comes from the Lord and is offered through the Church who is our mother. Lent is a gift given to us by the Lord, but we have to unwrap it and apply its remedial and healing prescriptions.

March 19, 2019- Solemnity of Saint Joseph, husband of the Blessed Virgin Mary

St. Joseph is the spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary and the foster-father of Jesus. His important mission in God's plan of salvation was "to legally insert Jesus Christ into the line of David from whom, according to the prophets, the Messiah would be born and to act as his father and guardian" (Directory on Popular Piety and the Liturgy).

Most of the information about St. Joseph comes from the opening two chapters of St. Matthew's Gospel. No words of his are recorded in the Gospels; he was the "silent" man. Pius IX (1870) declared him patron and protector of the universal family of the Church.

March 25, 2019- Solemnity of the Annunciation of the Lord

This 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 on the Mother of God.

This feast is very important in the defense of the life of unborn children. Even with small children, this is a good day to begin teaching about the high value God places on human life. He loved us so much that he became one of us, took on our human nature and became an innocent, completely dependent infant.

This is a Solemnity, so when this feast falls during the Lenten season, our Lenten penance obligations are lifted. This feast day forecasts the blessed event of Christmas, and illustrates how the liturgical year is an endless circle of days.

WISE QUOTES FOR REFLECTION

'One of the happiest moments in life is when you find the courage to let go of what you can't change' – *Anonymous*

'Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it' – *Proverbs 4:23*

'Sometimes you just need to distance yourself from people. If they care, they'll notice. If they don't you know where you stand' – *D. Crysis*

'Don't cry over the past, it's gone. Don't stress about the future, it hasn't arrived. I live in the present and make it beautiful' – *Kushand*

'The things you take for granted someone else is praying for' – *Unknown*

'When someone else's happiness is your happiness that is love' – *Lana Del Rey*

'There is only one way to avoid criticism: do nothing, say nothing, and be nothing' – *Aristotle*

'God has placed you where you're at in this very moment for a reason, remember that and trust he is working everything out!' – *Unknown*

'When god gives you a "No", give him a "Thank you". He was protecting you from less than his best' – *Unknown*.

'Whenever you find yourself doubting how far you can go, just remember how far you have come. Remember

everything you have faced, all the battles you have won, and all the fears you have overcome' – *Anonymous*

'The most confused we ever get is when we try to convince our heads of something our hearts know is a lie' – *Karen Moring*

'Apologizing doesn't always mean you're wrong and the other person is right. It means you value relationship more than your ego' – *Unknown*

'The first step toward success is taken when you refuse to be a captive of the environment in which you first find yourself' – *Mark Caine*



Most Rev. Hubertus Matheus Maria van Megen, the newly appointed Apostolic Nuncio to Kenya

Kenya gets new Apostolic Nuncio

By Pamela Adinda, Amecea Online News

Most Rev. Hubertus Matheus Maria van Megen, the newly appointed Apostolic Nuncio to Kenya is not a stranger in the Region. His last assignments were in two of the AMECEA countries (Sudan and Eritrea) where the Catholic Church is a minority. As Chargé d' Affaires in Malawi (2010-2014), he was very instrumental during the preparation of the AMECEA 18th Plenary Assembly in Malawi which took place in 2014 and was a big success.

Born on October 4, 1961 in the town of Eyselshoven in Netherlands, Archbishop Van Megen was ordained to priesthood on June 13, 1987, having completed his studies at the diocesan seminary of Rolduc. After his ordination he was stationed in parishes in Nieuweinde and Schaesberg in the Diocese of Roermond and later entered the Holy See's diplomatic service where he has subsequently worked at Nunciatures in Eritrea-Sudan, Brazil, Slovakia, Israel and Malawi.

The Apostolic Nunciature in Sudan was established in 1972 and Archbishop Van Megen was the eighth nuncio. It was during his tenure in Sudan

that the current Archbishop to Khartoum, Most Rev. Michael Didi Adgum Mangoria, was appointed following the retirement of H.E. Gabriel Cardinal Zubeir Wako

The previous nuncios to Sudan also represented the Holy See in other parts of Africa at the same time, specifically Eritrea. Archbishop Van Megen also served as Nuncio in Eritrea and it was during his tenure that the Metropolitan Church sui iuris (i.e. "of its own right") in Eritrea was erected on January 19 2015, separating it from the Metropolitan Archdiocese of Addis Ababa and elevating the Diocese of Asmara to the status of Metropolitan Archdiocese. Subsequently Most Rev. Mengheseab Tesfamariam, MCCJ, was appointed first Metropolitan Archbishop of Asmara.

The official announcement of the appointment of Archbishop Van Megen as Apostolic Nuncio to Kenya was made on February 15, 2019. He takes over from Most Rev. Charles D. Balvo who on September 21 was appointed Apostolic Nuncio to Czech Republic.

Pope Francis appoints New Apostolic Nuncio to Zambia



AMECEA Online News

Since March 2018, the Apostolic nunciature for Zambia and Malawi has been vacant following the appointment of Archbishop Julio Murat as Apostolic Nuncio to Cameroun. On 2nd February, 2019, the Holy Father Pope Francis appointed Monsignor Gianfranco GALLONE as the new Apostolic Nuncio to Zambia.

According to the press statement sent to AMECEA Online News by the National Communications Coordinator at Zambia Conference of Catholic Bishops (ZCCB), Rev. Fr. Winfield Kunda, The Very Reverend Monsignor Gianfranco Gallone was born on 20th April 1963 in Ceglie Messapica (Brindisi) – Italy and was ordained Priest on 3rd September 1988 for the Diocese of Oria in Italy.

Monsignor Gallone entered the Diplomatic Service of the Holy See on 19th June 2000. Subsequently he was posted to Mozambique, Israel, Slovakia, India and Sweden.

Until his new appointment to Zambia, Monsignor Gallone was serving as an official at the Vatican's Secretariat of State.

Monsignor Gallone holds a doctoral degree in Canon Law and speaks Spanish, English, Portuguese and Slovak, in addition to his native Italian. With his appointment to Zambia, His Excellency Monsignor Gallone has also been appointed Archbishop.

Ordinarily the Apostolic Nuncio appointed to Zambia also serves Malawi. As at now Malawi is yet to receive the Apostolic Nuncio.

Fire burns Segerea Major Seminary



Segerea Major Seminary after the fire disaster. Photo by Sarah Pelaji

By Sarah Pelaji

Fire has burned the Priests' rectory at St Carol Lwanga Major Seminary Segerea in Dar es Salaam Archdiocese on January 15, 2019.

According to the Rector of the Seminary Rev. Fr. Tobias Ndabhatinya, the cause of the fire is an electric shock that occurred after an electrical discharge occurred.

"It is our custom every Wednesday evening we meet for recreation. As we were proceeding with recreation, suddenly we sensed smell of something burning, and after a few seconds, we heard a sound like an explosion of a thing."

"Then we saw fire that had started to burn the first floor, where our rooms are located. We called upon the assistance of our students the seminarians to come and help those who were trapped in the rooms to come out. Then we contacted the Fire Brigade who came to put off the fire," he said.

He explained that the fire completely burnt down all the 14 bedrooms of priests and no property was saved

"IT IS OUR CUSTOM EVERY WEDNESDAY EVENING WE MEET FOR RECREATION. AS WE WERE PROCEEDING WITH RECREATION, SUDDENLY WE SENSED SMELL OF SOMETHING BURNING, AND AFTER A FEW SECONDS, WE HEARD A SOUND LIKE AN EXPLOSION OF A THING."

from the fire, and that luckily no one was injured or died in the accident.

He thanked the seminarians for their boldness, intelligence and commitment to save their formators from the fire.

He said the seminarians were able to save the seminary cars by pushing them; some even lifted and carried the cars by their hands so that they don't get burned. He also thanked the

neighbors who helped during the fire tragedy.

After receiving the fire breakout news at the Tanzania Episcopal Conference (TEC), the bishops who at that time were undergoing a training had to temporarily break from the program to go witness the damage at the seminary.

Speaking on behalf of TEC, the Vice-President of Tanzania Episcopal Conference Rt. Rev. Flavian Kassala said he is sorry for the priests and the seminarians who were left without clothes and other basic needs like teaching tools.

"On behalf of TEC I give my sympathy to the priests and all seminaries for this accident," he said while thanking God that everyone was safe.

"We have seen and have witnessed how the fire has consumed the building but we ask you to be calm while other issues are being worked upon by your Bishops," he said.

He said the Bishops will convene an emergency meeting to see how they can immediately provide accommodations and other needs that requires immediate support for the priests who are left with only the clothes they were putting on that day.

He too congratulated the Seminarians for their self-sacrificing spirit to save the lives of the priests and other properties like the cars.

The Bishops are requesting donation to the seminary from Christians and other people of good will including Church partners so that they may be able to rebuild the burnt structure and replace other properties that were burned so that the seminary may go back to normalcy in the shortest time possible





Pope Lenten message calls for conversion

By Linda Bordoni

Pope Francis is calling on the faithful not to let the Lenten season of grace pass in vain, and to live as children of God acknowledging and obeying His law, in particular in regards to our brothers and sisters and to creation.

In this year's Lenten message, the Pope invites believers to prepare to celebrate the paschal mystery with mind and heart renewed, warning that "Sin leads man to consider himself the god of creation, to see himself as its absolute master and to use it, not for the purpose willed by the Creator but for his own interests".

The Pope's Lenten message was released on Tuesday during a press conference at the Holy See Press Office. The theme chosen this year is "For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God" (Rom 8:19)

Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, 6 March, and will conclude on Holy Saturday, 20 April, the day before Easter.

"Let us leave behind our selfishness and self-absorption, and turn to Jesus' Pasch. Let us stand beside our

brothers and sisters in need, sharing our spiritual and material goods with them".

This is one of the key passages of Pope Francis' Lenten Message for 2019. Reflecting on a verse from St. Paul's Letter to the Romans, the Pope highlights how the season before Easter must be a time to "welcome Christ's victory over sin and death into our lives", and attract "its transforming power to all of creation"

Fasting, prayer, almsgiving

Appealing to the faithful to not allow this season of grace to pass in vain, Pope Francis says that if, "the Lent of the Son of God 'was an entry into the desert of creation to make it become again that garden of communion with God' that it was before the original sin, Christians today are invited "to embody the paschal mystery more deeply and concretely in their personal, family and social lives, above all by fasting, prayer and almsgiving."

Fasting, the Pope says, means turning away from the temptation

LET US STAND BESIDE OUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS IN NEED, SHARING OUR SPIRITUAL AND MATERIAL GOODS WITH THEM".

to "devour" everything to satisfy our voracity; Prayer teaches us to abandon idolatry and the self-sufficiency of our ego; Almsgiving, whereby we escape from the insanity of hoarding everything for ourselves in the illusory belief that we can secure a future that does not belong to us.

If we follow this journey, he said it "is possible to rediscover the joy of God's plan for creation and for each of us, which is to love him, our brothers and sisters, and the entire world, and to find in this love our true happiness".

Conversion

The path to Easter, therefore, demands that "we renew our faces and hearts as Christians through repentance, conversion and forgiveness" the Pope said pointing out that it is a call that involves the whole of creation.

This "eager longing", this expectation of all creation, Pope Francis says, will be fulfilled in the revelation of the children of God, that is, when Christians and all people enter decisively into the "travail" that conversion entails.



Religious women ask for pardon

Men and women religious feel shame for failures on abuse

By Robin Gomes

“We ask pardon of all for our failures and repeat that we stand with the Holy Father. We commit our efforts to working with him so that the Church can move forward in a coherent, credible and unified way, a way that is genuinely healing, truly renewed, with new eyes to see and new ears to hear.”

The International Union of Superiors General (UISG), which brings together the superiors general of institutes of Catholic women religious, and the Union of Superiors General (USG) that brings heads of men’s religious institutes, issued a joint declaration on Tuesday expressing their full support for the Meeting on the Protection of Minors, called for by Pope Francis in the Vatican, that was held from February 21-24.

Children - most vulnerable

“In our work as religious, we come across many situations where children are abused, neglected, maltreated and unwanted,” the religious superiors wrote. “We see child soldiers; the trafficking of minors; the sexual abuse of minors; the physical and emotional abuse of minors. They cry out to us.”

As adults, as Christians and as religious they said they “want to work so that their lives are changed and that

the situations in which they are brought up are improved.”

They underscored the vulnerability of these children which they said makes them “dispensable, to be used and abused.”

Abuse of authority

The religious superiors noted that the Feb . 21-24 meeting will focus on the abuse of minors by people of authority in the Church, especially bishops, priests and religious, a story, they said, is full of pain “that has continued for decades”.

“We bow our heads in shame at the realization that such abuse has taken place in our congregations and orders, and in our Church.” “Our shame is increased by our own lack of realization of what has been happening,” and those in authority “failed to see warning signs or failed to take them seriously.”

Change

The religious superiors acknowledge that 3-day Vatican meeting is a short time, but they expressed their trust in the power of the Holy Spirit that with the winds of change blowing through the Church and goodwill on all sides, important processes and structures of accountability can be started and those

already in place can be reinforced.

“The abuse of children is wrong anywhere and anytime: this point is not negotiable,” they emphasized.

Areas of work

Following the example of Pope Francis, the men and women religious commit themselves to “humbly acknowledge and confess the wrongs that have been done; to reach out to survivors; to learn from them how to accompany those who have been abused and how they wish” their stories be heard.

The UISG and USG identified 3 areas where children are treasured and where their safety is promoted – in education and health care, in formation and in spirituality.

The many schools and hospitals that the religious orders run can ensure better protocols and higher standards of protection of minors.

The protection of minors and adults can be integrated into the formation programme of religious institutes. “It must be clear that whatever the culture and background, the abuse of children is never permitted or tolerable,” they stressed.

The religious superiors also intend that their spirituality centres develop special outreach programmes to any survivor who wishes to find help in their struggles with faith and meaning.” Even though some of the abuse victims would want to stay far from the Church, the religious would like to humbly accompany those survivors who want to make a journey of healing with them.

“Those who have been abused often carry a sense of guilt, shame and even sin. In reality, however, they are the ones who have been sinned against,” the religious superiors said.

Working, walking together

“We want to act with humility. We want to see our blind spots. We want to name any abuse of power. We commit to engage in a journey with those we serve, moving forward with transparency and trust, honesty and sincere repentance.”

The heads of religious orders want to work with parents, especially mothers, in fighting abuse. They acknowledged that their attempt to deal with abuse showed a “shameful lack of capacity to understand” their pain of the victims. While offering them their sincerest apologies and sorrow, they invited them to work with them to help minimize risks.

Protection of minors: Cardinal Marx - traceability, transparency make Church credible



Cardinal Marx addresses fellow bishops during the meeting on protection of minors in the church. VATICAN PHOTO

By Robin Gomes

Traceability and transparency in Church administration in dealing with and preventing the sexual abuse of minors are a “decisive factor in the trustworthiness and credibility of the Church.” “It is not transparency which damages the Church, but rather the acts of abuse committed, the lack of transparency, or the ensuing cover-up,” said German Cardinal Reinhard Marx on February 23, 2019 in his presentation to the “Meeting on the Protection of Minors in the Church,” taking place in the Vatican.

190 participants, including patriarchs, cardinals, bishops, religious

superiors, heads of Vatican dicasteries and presidents of bishops’ conferences, are gathered in the Vatican Feb. 21-24, to plan strategies as a Church in responding effectively to eradicate the scourge of clerical sexual abuse of minors in the Church.

Each of the three days has a specific theme - responsibility, accountability and transparency.

“Transparency as a Community of Believers,” was the theme of the presentation of Cardinal Marx, the president of the German Bishops’ Conference, on day 3 of the meeting.

The Archbishop of Munich and Freising described transparency as

actions, decisions, processes, procedures, etc. that are understandable and traceable. According to him “traceability and transparency are inextricably linked.”

Administration

Card. Marx pointed out that a fully-functional Church administration is an important building block in combatting abuse of minors.

The visible social structures of the Church, he said, serve the Spirit of Christ, who vivifies it, in the building up of the body. Hence, there is the need for a fully-functional administration, which must be oriented towards the goal of the Church, and based on the principle of justice. Administration standardises procedures and processes, makes things objective by creating and enforcing rules and laws, and helps prevent arbitrariness, thus contributing actively to justice. Administration regulates, and sanctions infringements against the common interest, rules and laws.

Abuse of power

However, Cardinal Marx warned that this power of administration can also be misused and abused when it forgets its function of serving the different people living together and cooperating to achieve higher goals. Administration can also be preoccupied with itself and use rules and regulations only to sustain the power of persons.

The cardinal pointed out that “the sexual abuse of children and youths is in no small measure due to the abuse of power in the area of administration.” “In this regard, administration has not contributed to fulfilling the mission of the Church, but on the contrary, has obscured, discredited and made it impossible.”

“Files that could have documented the terrible deeds and named those responsible,” he said, “were destroyed, or not even created.” “Instead of the perpetrators, the victims were regulated and silence imposed on them.”

The cardinal said that “stipulated procedures and processes for the prosecution of offences were deliberately not complied with, but instead cancelled or overridden.” “The rights of victims were effectively trampled underfoot, and left to the whims of individuals.” ▶

► Card. Marx said, “These are all events that sharply contradict what the Church should stand for.” “The way in which Church administration was structured and carried out, did not contribute to unifying the whole human race, and bringing mankind closer to God, but on the contrary, violated these aims.”

In cases where the Church has failed, the 65-year old cardinal said, the thoughts of some abuse victims can be summarized as follows: “If the Church claims to act in the name of Jesus, yet I am treated so badly by the Church or its administration, then I would also like to have nothing to do with this Jesus.”

Transparency and traceability

In order for administration to act in accordance with the Church’s mission, and with the nature of the Church as a “symbol and instrument”, Card. Marx said, there needs to be transparency and traceability of administrative procedures.

Administrative procedures become transparent, if it is understandable and traceable who has done

what, when, why and what for, and what has been decided, rejected or assigned. Thus, people who experience transparent administration can uncover errors and mistakes in the administrative actions, and defend themselves against such actions.

Objections to traceability and transparency could possibly come from violations of pontifical secrecy or from false accusations with the purpose to ruin the reputation of innocent priests, the priesthood or the Church.

But as Card. Marx finds, there is no reason behind the application of pontifical secrecy to the prosecution of criminal offences concerning the abuse of minors.

A clearly-defined public procedure establishes a degree of credibility, which enables restoring the reputation of a wrongly-accused person, who would otherwise be subjected to rumours, if the investigation is not appropriate, transparent or conclusive.

“It is not transparency which damages the Church, but rather the acts of abuse committed, the lack of

transparency, or the ensuing cover-up,” stressed Card. Marx who also serves a Coordinator of the Council for the Economy in the Vatican.

Immediate measures

The urgency of the abuse of minors, the cardinal said, calls for immediate initiation of important measures.

In this regard, he recommended that the goal and the limits of pontifical secrecy and confidentiality should be clearly defined in order that the Church be not exposed to the suspicion of covering up.

Quality transparent procedural norms and rules for ecclesiastical processes must be established.

Facts must be set out transparently with the public announcement of statistics on the number of cases, and details thereof, as far as possible.

Judicial proceedings should be published, or else lingering doubts about the proper conduct of court proceedings will only harm the reputation and the functioning of the Church.

POPE FRANCIS PRAYER INTENTIONS FOR 2019

JANUARY

Young People and the Example of Mary

That young people, especially in Latin America, follow the example of Mary and respond to the call of the Lord to communicate the joy of the Gospel to the world.

FEBRUARY

Human Trafficking

For a generous welcome of the victims of human trafficking, of enforced prostitution, and of violence.

MARCH

Recognition of the Right of Christian Communities

That Christian community, especially those who are persecuted, feel that they are close to Christ and have their rights respected.

APRIL

Doctors and their Collaborators in War Zones

For doctors and their humanitarian collaborators in war zones, who risk their lives to save the lives of others.

MAY

The Church in Africa, a Seed of Unity

That the Church in Africa, through the commitment of its members may be the seed of unity among her peoples and a sign of hope for this continent.

JUNE

The Mode of Life of Priests

That priests, through the modesty and humility of their lives, commit themselves actively to solidarity with those who are most poor.

JULY

The Integrity of Justice

That those who administer justice may work with integrity, and that the injustice which prevails in the world may not have the last word.

AUGUST

Families, Schools of Human Growth

That families, through their life of prayer and love, become ever more clearly “schools of true human growth”.

SEPTEMBER

The Protection of the Oceans

That politicians, scientists and economists work together to protect the world’s seas and oceans.

OCTOBER

A Missionary “Spring” in the Church

That the breath of the Holy Spirit engenders a new missionary “spring” in the church

NOVEMBER

Dialogue and Reconciliation in the Near East

That a spirit of dialogue, encounter, and reconciliation emerge in the Near East, where diverse religious communities share their lives together.

DECEMBER

The Future of the Very Young

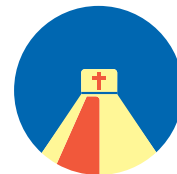
That every country takes the necessary measure to prioritize the future of the very young, especially those who are suffering.

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