

## THOUSANDS THROG KABALE DIOCESE FOR 2017 NATIONAL YOUTH DAY



A priest carries the National Youth Day cross as thousands of youths jubilate.  
PHOTO BY JOY ZAKO

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**Editorial**

On 25th December, we celebrate Christmas, the birthday of Our Lord Jesus Christ, and exactly one week later (1st January) we celebrate the Solemnity of Mary Mother of God. The connection between these two feasts is quite obvious. The first one is a celebration of a birthday and the second is a celebration of motherhood. Having honoured the birth of the child Jesus, the Saviour of the world, we cannot fail to thank God for the mother who gave birth and raised that child. She is our spiritual mother who is always available to intercede for us.

A celebration of a birthday is an opportunity to thank God for the gift of life, the gift of our parents and all the people who are part of our life. As we celebrate the Nativity of Our Lord and the Solemnity of Mary Mother of God, I believe it is right and fitting that we also remind ourselves of the important role that parents play in our life. We thank God for them and for all the people who have made precious contributions to our life. We appreciate all the blessings received in 2017 and we pray for a blessed new year 2018.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

**Fr. Philip Odii**  
**Editor/Executive Secretary**  
**of Social Communica-**  
**tions, Uganda Episcopal**  
**Conference**



Youth from Kabale Diocese holding a banner for the 2017 NYD

# Thousands throng Kabale Diocese for 2017 NYD

By **Jacinta W. Odongo** Media Officer, Uganda Episcopal Conference

Thousands of youth from across Uganda have converged in the Diocese of Kabale for the 2017 National Youth Day (NYD) celebration.

The youth event kicked-off on Tuesday, December 12 with a grand welcoming ceremony of the youth, which was followed by a procession of the NYD cross. On December 13, Rt. Rev. Callistus Rubaramira, the Bishop of Kabale Diocese led the official opening ceremony of the youth event.

This year's celebration is held under the theme, *"The Mighty One has done great things for me, and Holy is His name"* (Luke 1:49). It will run for five days until December 17.

The NYD is a Church's Day event for young people and is typically celebrated every year in different dioceses. It aims to help the youth experience the universality of the church, deepen their faith and grow closer to Christ in their daily lives, by means of prayer and the sacraments, together with other young people.

The National Youth Coordinator of the Uganda Episcopal Conference (UEC), Joyce Zako said that by coming together, young people will be able to discuss their most intimate aspirations and experience the Church as a communion, and make a commitment to the urgent task of new evangelization.

"This celebration provides an opportunity for the youth to live and share the universality of the Church that in Christ we are indeed one. Besides, it creates awareness among the youth on topical issues within their community hence encouraging them to become change agents," she explained.

Over the years, the event has recorded a number of positive changes which can be witnessed from the growing numbers of youth participation in the celebration. One of the biggest changes seen in this year's event is, the presence of the refugee community in Uganda taking part in the celebration as an association for the first time in the NYD history. The five-day event also attracted youth from neighbouring countries; Burundi, Rwanda, Tanzania and Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

During the NYD week, the youth engaged in a number of activities including way of the cross, catechesis, confessions, devotions and reconciliation activities. There were also other entertaining activities such as tourism, sports competitions, cultural exhibitions and cultural music performances. The youth were further taken through discussion topics such as Youth and Entrepreneurship, Youth and Politics as well as Youth and HIV/AIDS prevention and the Art of Choosing a Good Partner.

Most Rev. Paul K. Bakyenga, the ►

► Archbishop of Mbarara Ecclesiastical Province, presided over the final Holy Mass which was the climax of the celebration. It was concelebrated by the Bishop Chairman of the UEC Lay Apostolate Commission (LAC), Rt. Rev Paul Ssemogerere and other Bishops from Mbarara Ecclesiastical Province.

Kabale Diocese is animating the

NYD celebration on behalf of Mbarara Ecclesiastical Province which comprises of Dioceses of Fort portal, Hoima, Kabale, Kasese and Mbarara. The five-day event has been organized by the UEC National Youth Office in collaboration with Kabale Diocese. It forms part of a global build-up to the World Youth Day, which will be held in Panama in 2019. Besides, the

NYD took place as millions of young Catholics around the world prepare to voice their concerns at the upcoming "Synod of Bishops on Young People" which will take place in the Vatican in 2018.

The NYD celebration was inaugurated in 1993 in Tororo Archdiocese. Jinja Diocese hosted the 2016 NYD with over 3000 youth in attendance.

## CHRISTMAS MESSAGE FOR DECEMBER 2017



**Dear Friends,**

I must be frank. I often feel uneasy when requested for a "Christmas Message". To me, Christmas itself is the message, the breaking and Good News that God so loved the world that in the fullness of time he sent his own Son who became a man to save us. These are not just words, but an event which changed the history of the world. This is the absolutely extraordinary and incredible news, the message that we should all proclaim and spread. Any other message and commentary risk watering down and diminish the impact that this breaking news should have on our life.

Having said this, here I am all the same, requested for a "Christmas Message for New Contact". What can I say? I still maintain that Christmas is THE Message also for the readers and contributors of New Contact, the "front page news" that should appear and be transmitted in different ways through its articles. People must be helped to see and realize what God is doing for his people in Uganda today. How can this be done?

Allow me to take you back to September 2013, when

the first issue was published online.

We started New Contact in order to revive the link between the particular Churches of our dioceses in Uganda, to share information and experiences, to build up and strengthen the awareness of being and belonging to one big family, the Catholic Church in Uganda.

Our intention was that it would reflect the life, achievements and challenges of the Church in our country. Month after month, through the contribution of people from all the dioceses, we wanted to offer via internet to our people in Uganda and our friends abroad a picture of our reality.

Looking back, at the end of 2017, we can say that something has certainly been achieved along this line. At the same time there is no doubt that we still have a long way to go in order to fulfill the purpose and dream which gave origin to this publication. I dare say that we need to give priority to and focus more on The Message.

It is only after welcoming in our life this always contemporary Good News of the final and highest communication of God to his children through the incarnation of Jesus, and out of the personal experience of God's immense love for each one of us that will spring forth as a spontaneous and necessary result our desire and commitment to share this same Good News with others.

We shall become more creative, finding new and more interesting ways to tell and proclaim the wonders that this Word made flesh is doing now, in our dioceses, parishes and families.

Let this Christmas be the favourable time where we make a fresh and personal "new contact" with the Word and allow it to happen and take flesh in our life. It will renew our life and at the same time it will also give new vitality to New Contact. In this sense, Happy and True Christmas to all of us!

**+ Joseph Franzelli**  
**Bishop of Lira Diocese**

Merry  
Christmas



# Fort Portal holds National Xaverian Camp

By Jacinta W. Odongo

Over 1000 Xaverians thronged Fort Portal Diocese for the annual National Xaverian Camp from December 7-10.

The Camp, which brought together Xaverians from all the 19 Dioceses in the country, was held under the theme, *"As for me and my house, we shall serve the Lord"*. Dignitaries such as politicians from the region, priests, and religious men and women involved in the chaplaincy of the Xaverian movement in the country were also in attendance.

According to the National Xaverian Coordinator, Ben Kiwanuka, the objective of the Spiritual and Educational Camp was to help inspire Xaverians in the country in social and development interventions.

"As part of the growth agenda and Vision for our movement, we seek to build a culture of social and development interventions for and with local Church communities," he said.

During the four-day camp, members were actively involved in different activities including charitable, spiritual and educational. Under the charitable category, participants (divided into small groups) reached out to people in the villages for community service which included; sanitation for instance construction of temporary latrines, construction of racks for utensils and bathrooms made of reeds; praying for and washing clothes for the elderly or helpless people; and sharing some food stuff with the poor.

In the spiritual category, they engaged in activities such as teaching catechesis, bible sharing, and way of the cross, confessions, Daily Mass and prayers. While in the educational category, the Xaverians engaged in



Xaverians engage in a building and construction activity



The National Xaverian Coordinator, Ben Kiwanuka

craftsmanship, primary health care, positive life skills, games and sports as well as parades and techniques.

The highlight of the week was the

Holy Mass celebration that was held on Sunday, December 10 led by Rt. Rev. Bishop Robert Muhirwa, the Bishop of Fort Portal Diocese.

The Xaverian Movement is a dynamic Movement of Catholic Action inspired by the spirit of the Gospel and healthy African traditions. It is community based and so members actively participate in social and development interventions for and with the local church communities. The Vision is to have committed Catholics deeply involved in the leadership, growth and development of the Church and Society. It embraces Children, Youths and Adults. Uganda is part of the International Xaverian movement.

The week-long event was organized by the Xaverian Movement in collaboration with Fort Portal Diocese.

## Tororo Archdiocese begins preparations for 2018 Uganda Martyrs Day

By Media Officer, UEC

The Archdiocese of Tororo has begun preparations for the 2018 Uganda Martyrs Day (UMD) celebration due June 3 at Namugongo Catholic Shrine.

Tororo has so far launched a number of activities in anticipation of a successful celebration. On November 12, 2017, the Archdiocese success-

fully held its second fund-raising drive in Kampala Archdiocese in a bid to raise Shs720m, which is required for the preparations and actual 2018 UMD celebration.

Hundreds of people braved the heavy rain that morning to attend the fund-raising that kicked-off with a Holy Mass led by Most Rev. Emmanuel

Obbo, the Archbishop of Tororo Archdiocese. A total of Ushs 10.9m was raised in cash while Ushs 28.6m in form of pledges.

Prior, the Archdiocese held its first fundraising drive in Tororo on October 21, 2017, and collected about Ushs 18m in cash and Ushs 4.7m in pledges. 10 Central Organizing committees have already been set-up at the Archdiocesan level to help in the organization and coordination of the celebrations.

The Archdiocese has also unveiled ►



Most Rev. Emmanuel Obbo, the Archbishop of Tororo Archdiocese

► a theme for the 2018 UMD celebration: “Let Us Walk in the Light of God as a Family” (1 John 1:5-10). The major objective behind this theme is ultimately to focus on the family; that smallest unit of the human society in which the faith of everyone is implanted and in which it grows, drawing from the powerful example of the parents. In addition, Tororo has released a special prayer (novena) dedicated to the Uganda Martyrs. The prayer is intended for the

success of the June 3rd celebrations and for the intentions of all the pilgrims who will attend the 2018 celebration.

Tororo Archdiocese will animate the 2018 celebrations on behalf of Tororo Ecclesiastical Province which comprises of the Dioceses of Jinja, Kotido, Moroto, Soroti and Tororo. The 2018 UMD celebration will be held concurrently with the 100 year’s celebration of the martyrdom of the two Catechists from Paimol: Blessed Daudi Okello and



The sanctuary at Namugongo Catholic Shrine By Jacinta W. Odongo

Blessed Jildo Irwa who were killed in 1918. The two Blessed Martyrs are usually commemorated on 18th, October but they will be remembered in a special way on 3rd, June, 2018.

The annual celebration is usually held in honour of the 22 Catholic Martyrs who were killed on the orders of Mwanga II the Kabaka (King) of Buganda between 1885 and 1887. Twenty-two Catholic Martyrs were beatified on 6th, June, 1920, by Pope Benedict XV, and on 18th, October, 1964, Pope Paul VI canonized them as Saints. In addition to the 22 Catholic Martyrs, there are two Catechists from Paimol: Blessed Daudi Okello and Blessed Jildo Irwa.

The celebration usually brings together millions of pilgrims from across the globe. Tororo last presided over the Martyrs Day celebrations in 1998.

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Kindly contact New Contact Managing Director, Fr. Philip Odii, (0782746812 / 0702606851)



President Uhuru Kenyatta (AMECEA PHOTO)

## President Kenyatta Grants All Africans Visas to Kenya at Points of Entry

By AMECEA Online News Reporter

President Uhuru Kenyatta has directed that all Africans wishing to visit Kenya be issued with visas at various points of entry.

Speaking during his maiden speech following his inauguration for a second term in office at the Kasarani Stadium, the Head of State expressed hope that this would prompt other African states to open up their borders in order to promote free movement.

He stated that the visas would not be issued on a reciprocal basis. In addition, it was made to enable free trade and cooperation with the various African nations.

“The freer we are to travel and live

with one another, the more integrated and appreciative of our diversity, we will become. The political balkanization that risks our mutual security, the negative politics of identity, will recede as our brotherhood expands to embrace more Africans,” he said.

“Today, I am directing that any African wishing to visit Kenya will be eligible to receive a visa at the port of entry. To underscore Kenya’s commitment, this shall not be done on the basis of reciprocity.”

He further announced that all East African Community nationals are free to work in Kenya without work permits with all that is needed being their national IDs and for them to observe the stipulated laws.

“As a mark of our continued commitment to you, our Brothers and Sisters in the East African Community; from today, you will be treated like Kenyans. Like your Kenyan brothers and sisters, you will need only your identity card. You can now work, do business; own property, farm and if you wish, and find a willing partner, you can marry and settle in Kenya,” he stated.

He stated that the decision was driven by the desire for deeper regional integration.

“As I welcome you, I remind you that equally you shall be subject to the same rules and laws as your Kenyan brothers and sisters,” he said.

“You are our closest friends; our fate and yours are joined at the hip; our troubles and triumphs are yours, and yours are ours. I will work with you, my brothers, the leaders of the East African Community, to bring a renewed energy and optimism to our union,” he stressed.

Rwanda – a member of the East African Community recently announced a new visa regime that allows travellers from across the world to be issued a 30-day visa on arrival in Kigali, beginning January 1, 2018.

The visa-on-arrival policy was approved by a Cabinet meeting chaired by President Paul Kagame on November 8.

“Citizens of all countries will get a visa upon arrival without prior application, starting January 1, 2018. Before that, only nationals of African countries and few others were getting a visa upon arrival,” said a statement signed by Yves Butera, spokesperson of the Directorate-General of Immigration and Emigration.

### WISE QUOTES FOR REFLECTION

“Christmas is joy, religious joy, an inner joy of light and peace” – Pope Francis

“God never gives someone a gift they are not capable of receiving. If he gives us the gift of Christmas, it is because we all have the ability to understand it and receive it” – Pope Francis

“If you have been brutally broken, but still have the courage to be gentle to others then you deserve a love deeper than the ocean itself” – Nikita Gill

“You will learn more from failure than from success. Don’t let it stop you. Failure builds character” – Unknown

“Nothing is so strong as gentleness, nothing so gentle as real strength” – Saint Francis de Sales

“The Future Belongs To The Competent. Get Good, Get Better, Be the Best” - Brian Tracy

“We may encounter many defeats but we must not be defeated” – Maya Angelou

“Don’t compare your life to others. There is no comparison between the sun and the moon. They shine when it is their time” - Unknown

“You can’t solve a problem on the same level it was created. You have to rise above it to the next level” – Albert Einstein

“Surround yourself with the dreamers and the doers, the believers and the thinkers, but most of all, surround yourself with those who see greatness within you even when you don’t see it yourself” – Unknown

“Human rights are not only violated by terrorism, repression or assassination but also by unfair economic structures that creates huge inequalities” – Pope Francis

# Catholic University of Eastern Africa set to close down its two Campuses

By Pamela Adinda

AMECEA Online News

The Catholic University of Eastern Africa (CUEA) is set to shut down its two Campuses in a move that is part of the internal restructuring, which the institution is currently undertaking. According to the university's Vice Chancellor Prof. Justus Mbae the restructuring process is part of the implementation of the turnaround strategy that is meant to counter the financial difficulties the institution is currently facing.

The two campuses include the Nairobi City Campus and the Kisumu Campus in Western Kenya. Prof. Mbae told AMECEA Online News in an interview that the university had to do this because it was spending too much on those colleges yet there were no good returns in terms of business for sustainability.

"For Nairobi City Campus we have been paying a lot in terms of rent yet it is only 14 kilometres (8.7 miles) from the main campus, so what we are doing is to try to get the students to come to the main campus in Langata, which is in the outskirts of the city," Prof. Mbae explained.

The case of Kisumu Campus is however a little different; although



the university owns the premises therefore do not pay rent, the property is very small and has no prospects for growth because there is no room for expansion. According to the Don, there are very little activities going on at the campus during the day as most students usually take evening classes.

"We are just thinking that this is not a good business. It is making very little in terms of income, it just breakeven; yet we have to do better than just breakeven because we have to pay the lecturers and the non-teaching staff to keep the campus going; so it is really not cost effective to keep it going. We regret the decision but sometimes you have to think about the future of

the institution and its sustainability and these calls for painful decisions that have to be made," Prof Mbae explained.

He further said that the decision to close the two campuses came as a coincidence with the directive of the Kenyan Cabinet Secretary for Education urging Universities to concentrate on their main campuses.

Speaking on Wednesday November 15 at the Kenya School of Monetary Studies during a meeting to review the growth of public universities in the country, Dr Fred Matiang'i, the Education Cabinet Secretary said the universities will now be required to focus on strengthening the existing campuses. The Ministry of Education has stopped public universities from setting up more satellite campuses with immediate effect.

As part of the turnaround strategy, Prof. Mbae added that CUEA needs more students and therefore intend to pay particular attention to the AMECEA region because that is the reason for which the institution was founded.

"We think the AMECEA region itself can really be a good source especially if we can get some support in recruiting more students to come to CUEA, we will be looking for that," he said adding that they also intend to tap into the international market and plans to do so are already underway.

## Pope Francis appoints Bishop of Kitale as Apostolic Administrator of Eldoret Diocese



Rt. Rev. Maurice Crowley  
Bishop of Kitale

By The Catholic Mirror

The Holy Father has appointed Bishop Maurice Crowley of Kitale as the Apostolic Administrator of Eldoret Diocese following the passing on of the Bishop of Eldoret, Rt. Rev. Cornelius Korir on October 30, 2017.

The Official communication was made through a letter dated November 22, 2017 and signed by the Apostolic Nuncio to Kenya and South Sudan, Archbishop Charles D. Balvo.

Bishop Crowley, 71 was appointed Bishop of Kitale on April 3, 1998.

In his speech during the funeral of Bishop Korir, Archbishop Balvo said that the late bishop had left him with something else to do, to look for his

successor which he described as not to be an easy task.

"Certainly in the next few days someone has to be appointed temporarily to guide and direct the diocese of Eldoret as we seek to find the person who will succeed Bishop Korir," the Nuncio.

The late Bishop Korir was appointed Bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Eldoret on , April 27, 1990 and had served the diocese for 27 years till his demise. He was laid to rest on November 11, 2017.

The Catholic Diocese of Eldoret is situated in the Rift Valley Province of Kenya on the western side of the Great Rift Valley. It was carved from Kisumu diocese as the Apostolic Prefecture over 50 years ago on the feast of St. Peter and Paul on June 29, 1953. The diocese was later subdivided three times giving rise to Nakuru, Kitale and Lodwar dioceses.

## KEY EVENTS FOR JANUARY 2018

### **January 1- New Year's Day/ Solemnity of Mary, the Mother of God.**

New Year's Day, also called New Year, marks the first day of the year on the modern Gregorian and Julian calendars. The start of New Year's Day, at midnight, is heralded by fireworks, parties and special events.

The Solemnity of Mary Mother of God commemorates the divine motherhood of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the God-Bearer, Mother of Jesus Christ who is God and human. This celebration, assigned on January 1, one week after Christmas, in conformity with the ancient liturgy of the city of Rome, is meant to commemorate the part played by Mary in this mystery of salvation. The Church puts the feast of this solemnity on the first day of the New Year to emphasize the importance of Mary's role in the life of Christ and of the Church. We commemorate various saints on different days of the year, but Mary is the most prominent of them all. She has a special role and mission given to her by God. As Mother of our Redeemer and of the redeemed, she reigns as Queen at the side of Christ the King. She is a powerful intercessor for all of our needs here on earth.

### **January 7- Epiphany of the Lord**

The Greek word Epiphany means appearance or manifestation or showing forth, marks Jesus' first appearance to the Gentiles. "Epiphany" refers to God's Self-revelation as well as to the revelation of Jesus as His Son. Epiphany is an older celebration than the feast of Christmas, having originated in the East in the late second century. In Italy and Spain, the gifts traditionally associated with the Christmas season are exchanged on the feast of the Epiphany.

### **Monday, January 8- Baptism of the Lord**

Today the Church celebrates the Solemnity of the Baptism of Our Lord. This brings to an end the season of Christmas. The Church recalls Our Lord's second manifestation or epiphany which occurred on the occasion of His baptism in River Jordan. Jesus descended into the River to sanctify its waters and to give them the power to beget sons of God. The event takes on the importance of a second creation in which the entire Trinity intervenes. Friday, January 20- Inauguration of 45th President of the United States of America The inauguration of Donald Trump as the 45th President of the United States will be held on

### **January 17- Memorial of Saint Anthony, Abbot**

The Church commemorates the abbot from the 3rd century. St. Anthony, the father of monks, retired to the desert at about the age of eighteen in order to live in perfect solitude. He laid the foundations of community life, and gave to his disciples that profound broad and sane instruction, the mature result of solitude and prayer, which forms the surest basis of Christian asceticism.

It seemed as if Christ had spoken to him personally, giving a command he must obey. Without delay he sold his property, gave the proceeds to the poor, and went into the desert (about 270). When overcome by fatigue, his bed was the hard ground. He fasted rigorously, ate only bread and salt, and drank only water. Nor would he take food before sundown; at times he passed two days without any nourishment. Often, too, he spent whole nights in prayer. The saint suffered repeatedly from diabolical attacks, but these merely made him more steadfast in virtue.

He would encourage his disciples in their struggle with the devil with such words: "Believe me; the devil fears the vigils of pious souls, and their fastings, their voluntary poverty, their

loving compassion, their humility, but most of all their ardent love of Christ our Lord. As soon as he sees the sign of the Cross, he flees in terror."

He is the Patron of: Amputees; basket makers; basket weavers; brush-makers; butchers; cemetery workers; domestic animals; gravediggers; monks; hermits; eczema; epilepsy; epileptics; relief from pestilence; against skin diseases; skin rashes.

### **January 22- Day of Prayer for the Legal Protection of Unborn Children**

The General Instruction of the Roman Missal (GIRM), no. 373, designates January 22 as a particular day of prayer and penance, called the "Day of Prayer for the Legal Protection of Unborn Children": "In all Catholic Dioceses January 22 (or January 23, when January 22 falls on a Sunday) shall be observed as a particular day of prayer for the full restoration of the legal guarantee of the right to life and of penance for violations to the dignity of the human person committed through acts of abortion."

In addition to this special Mass on this day, as individuals, we are called to observe this day through the penitential practices of prayer, fasting and/or giving alms.

### **January 25- Feast of the Conversion of Saint Paul, Apostle**

St. Paul, named Saul at his circumcision, a Jew of the tribe of Benjamin, was born at Tarsus, the capitol of Cilicia. He was a Roman citizen. He was brought up as a strict Jew, and later became a violent persecutor of the Christians. While on his way to Damascus to make new arrests of Christians, he was suddenly converted by a miraculous apparition of Our Lord. From a fierce persecutor he became the great Apostle of the Gentiles. He made three missionary journeys which brought him to the great centers of Asia Minor and southern Europe, and made many converts. Fourteen of his Epistles are found in the New Testament. He was beheaded in Rome around 66 A.D., and his relics are in the Basilica of St. Paul Outside-the-Walls near the Ostian Way.

Patron: of authors; evangelists; hailstorms; hospital public relations; journalists; lay people; missionary bishops; musicians; writers, public relations personnel; public relations work; publishers; reporters; rope braiders; rope makers; tent makers; saddle makers; saddlers; against snakes; snake bites.

### **January 26- National Resistant Movement (NRM) Liberation Day**

NRM Liberation Day is one of Uganda's public holidays. The holiday commemorates the fall of Tito Okello's regime in 1986. Uganda proclaimed its independence from Great Britain in 1962. Unfortunately, the history of Uganda as an independent state was full of political unrest and included a succession of military coups and a civil war.

### **January 31- Memorial of Saint John Bosco, Priest**

St. John Bosco was the founder of the Salesian Society, named in honor of St. Francis de Sales, and of the Daughters of Mary, Help of Christians. His lifework was the welfare of young boys and girls, hence his title, "Apostle of Youth." He had no formal system or theory of education. His methods centered on persuasion, authentic religiosity, and love for young people. He was an enlightened educator and innovator.

Patron: of apprentices; boys; editors; laborers; schoolchildren; students; young people



# Ministering to Children



By Fr. Lazar Arasu SDB

When children and adults scramble for spaces in the church often children are the losers. An adult, usually an elder in the church comes to tell them to sit on the floor, or on the steps or even go out of the church. Our population demographic makes it possible that half the spaces of our churches (or any public places for that matter) can be occupied by little children and pre-teens. It is in direct contrast with the Christianity in the west, where hardly you see little children or young people. But as a matter of fact, children can outgrow adults in prayer and love of God. That is exemplified by the immortal words of Jesus, “Let the little children come to me... Kingdom of God belongs to such people.” Jesus acknowledged that children have rightful place in worship and religious happenings. They have a privileged place to access the love and knowledge of God.

Adults also have a serious invitation, “Unless you become little children, you will not enter the kingdom of God.” Now the real question is how we minister to these kids. Invitation to be like them and effectively ministering to them is a challenge. It is in ministering to them that we can preserve their innocence and their Godliness. It is a paramount duty of the pastoral ministers and parents to minister to children. It is in nurturing the God in them, that children will continue to become examples to adults. But often times they are the forgotten section of the society, that part of human society that is so vulnerable, yet so rich in promise. They are the future of the society and the church.

A recent demographic statistics reveals that in Uganda there are 13,708,263 children (below 18 years) which are 56.1% of the population. Neglecting more than half of the population is disastrous to the society now and in the future. In our pastoral ministry it is worthwhile to ask, “What kind of of pastoral ministry do we have?” and “How are we helping them to grow in faith and

morals.” We can confidently say that caring for them and helping them and accompanying them in faith is giving sure foundation to our society and the faith-community—the Church.

Psychologist and child development experts claim that the first sign of faith-quest arises in the mind of children between the ages of five and nine. So it is the best moment to tap the quest and lay a good foundation for faith and love of God. And when we fail to answer to the child’s faith queries at this period we may lose them forever. So souls are to be caught ‘when young’. Our saints and martyrs in Catholic tradition prove this point beyond doubt; let us think of Saints Kizito, Dominic Savio, Maria Goretti, and others. They are stalwarts of spirituality and sanctity. These child-saints and teenage saints continue to educate us on godly matters for centuries to come.

Our spiritual development begins at birth, with the connectedness and trust an infant feels in being held, fed, and cuddled by his parents. Children’s spirituality reflects how absorbed they are in the wonder of creation. They want to touch and know everything. We can rightly call this wonder as innocence, purity and virtuousness. These manifested super-human qualities made Jesus to recognize them as “fit for the kingdom” and worthy of our imitation.

It is interesting to know where children get their knowledge of God. They basically learn from the love they experience at home—the way they are loved and cherished by their mother and father. They learn from elders who cherish their presence and make them feel loved and esteemed. They also learn from the wise wisdom passed on to them by teachers and religious instructors at Sunday school and catechism lessons. But when these occasions are not well utilized or wrongly appropriated, the sort after spirituality is distorted, ill-learned or even become scandalous. In this way we can end up creating spiritually dwarf children. Jesus prescribes a suitable punishment for this action—to tie a millstone on the neck and submerge the individual in the depth of the sea and never to resurface again.

Many grown up adults who are nominal Christians often say that when they were young they were regular church goers, were Alter Servers, and they spent most of their time in the church. In other words, ‘they were better Christians in younger years’ but they lost their

sense of God along the way. An honest personal evaluation will reveal that many adults have not grown in spirituality after their childhood learning. Their methods of prayer and other religious adherence have stalled—reached a spiritual stagnancy. May be as children they were not instructed well in faith.

What needs to be recognized? Children are an integral part of our life, they are also very much part of our spiritual growth and ministry. As Jesus had priority for them in his ministry we need to set aside a quality time for their spiritual care. Caring for children’s spiritual growth is one of the best investments that any church can make. This investment will surely bring a great return. It is also important to realize that children are not only the church of tomorrow, but they are a lively church of today. It is almost impossible to catechize the unevangelized late-teen or a young adult, but it is easy to instruct a young child in faith.

Ministering to children is indeed ministering to families. A healthy family is made of senior adults—grandparents, and other adults—parents and young adults—grown up children. It is even possible to reach-out to the families through children’s ministry. Many adults many find their way to the church through the care received by children.

Now it is the duty of the elders in the church to staff the children’s ministry with children-friendly adults. Ministering to children is not merely like childcare or babysitting but attending to the spiritual and emotional growth of children appealing to their own sensibilities. It is also important to find certain tasks that children can involve themselves in the church which will create in them a sense of belonging and will help them to find their place among the faithful. They also should be given opportunity to actively participate in worship, greet, read, pray and serve at services. Make a budget for their ministry will surely bring financial and spiritual blessings and the entire church community.

By doing the above we will become good adherents of Jesus’ words, “let the children come to me.” As they are already enjoying their privileged place in the Kingdom of God, our caring for them will gain for us our own place in the kingdom. Surely ministry to children will open other fruitful ministries such as family ministry, sacramental ministry, youth ministry and school ministry in the church.

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**LITURGICAL READINGS FOR  
JANUARY 2018**

**January 1-The Octave Day of Christmas  
Solemnity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the  
Mother of God**

**Lectionary: 18**

*Reading 1 NM 6:22-27*

*Responsorial Psalm PS 67:2-3, 5, 6, 8*

*Reading 2 GAL 4:4-7*

*Gospel LK 2:16-21*

**January 7-The Epiphany of the Lord**

**Lectionary: 20**

*Reading 1 IS 60:1-6*

*Responsorial Psalm PS 72:1-2, 7-8, 10-11,  
12-13.*

*Reading 2 EPH 3:2-3A, 5-6*

*Gospel MT 2:1-12*

**January 8-The Baptism of the Lord**

**Lectionary: 21**

*Reading 1 IS 42:1-4, 6-7 OR IS 55:1-11*

*Responsorial Psalm PS 29:1-2, 3-4, 3, 9-10*

*Gospel MK 1:7-11*

**January 14- Second Sunday of Ordinary  
Time**

**Lectionary: 65**

*Reading 1 1 SM 3:3B-10, 19*

*Responsorial Psalm PS 40:2, 4, 7-8, 8-9, 10*

*Reading 2 1 COR 6:13C-15A, 17-20*

*Gospel JN 1:35-42*

**January 17-Memorial of Saint Anthony,  
Abbot**

**Lectionary: 313**

*Reading 1 1 SM 17:32-33, 37, 40-51*

*Responsorial Psalm PS 144:1B, 2, 9-10*

*Gospel MK 3:1-6*

**January 21- Third Sunday in Ordinary Time**

**Lectionary: 68**

*Reading 1 JON 3:1-5, 10*

*Responsorial Psalm PS 25:4-5, 6-7, 8-9*

*Reading 1 11 COR 7:29-31*

*Gospel MK 1:14-20*

**January 22- Day of Prayer for the Legal  
Protection of Unborn Children**

**Lectionary: 317**

*Reading 1 2 SM 5:1-7, 10*

*Responsorial Psalm PS 89:20, 21-22, 25-26*

*Gospel MK 3:22-30*

**January 25- Feast of the Conversion of Saint  
Paul, Apostle**

**Lectionary: 519**

*Reading 1 ACTS 22:3-16or Acts 9:1-22*

*Responsorial Psalm PS 117:1BC, 2*

*Gospel MK 16:15-18*

**January 28- Fourth Sunday in Ordinary  
Time**

**Lectionary: 71**

*Reading 1 DT 18:15-20*

*Responsorial Psalm PS 95:1-2, 6-7, 7-9*

*Reading 2 1 COR 7:32-35*

*Gospel MK 1:21-28*

# Pope Francis' prayer intention for December: 'For the elderly'

By Vatican Radio

Pope Francis on December 4, 2017 released a video message accompanying his prayer intention for the month of December, which is "For the elderly."

"Let us keep in mind our elders, so that sustained by families and institutions, may with their wisdom and experience collaborate in the education of new generations."

It has become the custom of Pope Francis to release a video message detailing his new prayer intention each month.

The monthly videos are promoted by the "Worldwide Prayer Network of the Apostleship of Prayer," an organization dedicated to spreading the Pope's prayer intentions concerning the challenges facing humanity.

The full text of the message is below:

## DECEMBER 12, 2017 – For the elderly

A person that does not take care of grandparents, that does not treat them well has no future.



Pope Francis embraces an elderly woman

The elderly have wisdom.

They are entrusted with a great responsibility: to transmit their life experience, their family history, the history of a community, of a people.

Let us keep in mind our elders, so that sustained by families and institutions, may with their wisdom and experience collaborate in the education of new generations.

The Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network of the Apostleship of Prayer developed "The Pope Video" initiative to assist in the worldwide dissemination of monthly intentions of the Holy Father in relation to the challenges facing humanity.

## Pope Francis given Lamborghini to be auctioned for charity



Pope Francis signs an autograph on his brand new Lamborghini Huracan

By Vatican Radio

Pope Francis was presented with the keys to a brand-new Lamborghini Huracan on November 15 by officials from the luxury car maker.

The special edition car, however, will be auctioned off by Sotheby's in London and the proceeds given to four charities in Pope Francis' name.

Pope Francis blessed the car and signed the hood after receiving it in front

of his Casa Santa Marta residence.

Sporting the papal colors - white with yellow-gold detailing - the Lamborghini Huracan's base price usually start at 183,000 euros but the specially-made papal car should bring far more at auction. Auction proceeds go to four charities.

A statement from the Holy See Press Office said some of the proceeds will go to the papal charity "Aid to the Church in Need" towards rebuilding homes, churches, and public buildings in Iraq's Nineveh Plains. These funds, the statement said, will help Christians who had taken refuge in Iraqi Kurdistan "to finally return to their roots and recover their dignity."

Another recipient of the Lamborghini's proceeds is the "John XXIII Community", which offers protection and aid for women who have been victims of human trafficking and prostitution.

Two Italian charities which work mostly in Africa - Gicam and Friends of Central Africa - will also receive some of the funds to support projects dedicated to providing medical care for women and children.

# Pope on inaugural World Day of the Poor: they open for us the way to heaven

By Vatican Radio



Pope Francis receives gifts during the Holy Mass

Pope Francis celebrated Mass on November 19 – the XXXIII Sunday in Ordinary Time and the first-ever World Day of the Poor – in St. Peter's Basilica. The Holy Father announced the World Day of the Poor during the Extraordinary Jubilee Year of Mercy, and entrusted its organization and promotion to the Pontifical Council for Promoting the New Evangelization.

There were some 4000 needy people in the congregation for the Mass, after which Pope Francis offered Sunday lunch in the Paul VI Hall.

Speaking off the cuff to guests at the luncheon, the Holy Father said, "We pray that the Lord bless us, bless this meal, bless those who have prepared it, bless us all, bless our hearts, our families, our desires, our lives and give us health and strength." The Holy Father went on to ask God's blessing on all those eating and serving in soup kitchens throughout the city. "Rome," he said, "is full of this [charity and good will] today."

The World Day of the Poor is to be marked annually, on the 33rd Sunday in Ordinary Time.

In the homily he prepared for the occasion and delivered in St. Peter's Basilica following the Gospel reading, Pope Francis said, "In the poor, Jesus knocks on the doors of our heart, thirsting for our love." He went on to say, "When we overcome our indifference and, in the name of Jesus, we give of ourselves for the least of his brethren, we are his good and faithful friends, with whom he loves to dwell."

Reminding the faithful that it is precisely in the poor, we find the presence of Jesus, who, though rich, became poor (cf. 2 Cor 8:9), and that there is therefore in each and every poor person, a "saving power" present, Pope Francis said, "[I]f in the eyes of the world they have little value, they are the ones who open to us the way to heaven."

"For us," the Pope continued, "it is an evangelical duty to care for them, as our real riches, and to do so not only by giving them bread, but also by breaking with them the bread of God's word, which is addressed first to them."

"To love the poor," Pope Francis said, "means to combat all forms of poverty, spiritual and material: and it will also do us good. Drawing near to the poor in our midst will touch our lives. It will remind us of what really counts: to love God and our neighbour. Only this lasts forever, everything else passes away."



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## Pope concludes apostolic visit to Myanmar, Bangladesh

By Vatican radio



Pope Francis waves at the crowd in Bangladesh before boarding the plane

Pope Francis flew back to Rome from Dhaka airport on December 2, concluding his 21st foreign visit outside of Italy that took him to Myanmar and Bangladesh.

The Pope was given an official farewell at Dhaka airport, where the Minister for Foreign Affairs was present to see him take off on a Bangladesh Airlines aircraft on his flight back to Rome.

The Pope was in Myanmar from November 27-30, after which he visited neighbouring Bangladesh from November 30 to December 2. While Myanmar's over 51 million population is nearly 90 percent Buddhist, where Catholics form only 1.2%, in neighbouring Bangladesh Muslims account for nearly 90% of the population, and Catholics less than 1 percent.

The purpose of his two-nation apostolic visit was not only to confirm the faith of the tiny Catholic communities in the two Asian nations but also to carry Christ's message of reconciliation, forgiveness, peace and harmony among the people for the common good. And that is what the logos and themes of the two visits indicated. The theme of the Pope's Myanmar visit was "Love and Peace", and that the Bangladesh, "Harmony and Peace." The Pope also encouraged ecumenical and interfaith cooperation in order to be a prophetic and healing presence in the life of the nation.

In both the nations, the Catholic communities are active, especially in their outreach programmes for the poor and needy, which the Pope commended and encouraged. Overall the Pope delivered 8 discourses and three homilies, celebrating two Masses in Myanmar and another Mass in Bangladesh with priestly ordination.



Pope Francis at St. Peter's Square

## Angelus: Pope marks Advent and recalls Papal journey

By Vatican Radio

Pope Francis was back in St Peter's Square for the traditional recitation of the Angelus on Sunday December 3, following his return from a journey to Myanmar and Bangladesh. From the window of his studio the Holy Father thanked all those who accompanied him there in prayer.

He told all those gathered in the square that he was impressed by the many noble and smiling faces he witnessed despite their hardships and he expressed his closeness to them.

The Pope also remembered in his prayers the nation of Honduras which has witnessed violent protests as a result of a disputed Presidential election. Pope Francis said, "I remember especially the people of Honduras, and pray they can overcome the current moment of difficulty in a peaceful way."

Advent

Before the recitation of the Marian Prayer the Holy Father focused his attention on this first Sunday of Advent saying, it is the time "that is given to us to welcome the Lord who comes to meet us, to verify our desire for God, and to look ahead and prepare for the return of Christ.

"Referring to the Gospel readings of the day, the Pope explained, "Jesus exhorts us to pay attention and to watch, to be ready to welcome him at the moment of his return."

The person who pays attention, he continued, is the one who, "in the noise of the world, does not let him or herself be overwhelmed by distraction or superficiality, but lives in a full and conscious way, with a concern directed above all to others."

With this attitude, Pope Francis noted, "we become aware of the tears and needs of others"... The attentive person, he added, tries to counter the indifference and cruelty in the world and rejoices in the treasures of beauty that also exist in it.

The Holy Father underlined that the vigilant person is the one that welcomes the invitation to watch, and is not overwhelmed by the weariness of discouragement, a lack of hope or disappointment. Being alert and vigilant, Pope Francis concluded are the preconditions that help us to stop "wandering away from the ways of the Lord", lost in our sins and in our infidelities; "these are the conditions that allow God to break into our existence, in order to restore meaning and value to its full of goodness and tenderness."

# Pope's message for 2018 World Day of Peace is released

By Vatican Radio

Pope Francis' message for the celebration of the 2018 World Day of Peace was released on November 24, 2017 during a press conference at the Holy See Press Office.

The message entitled Migrants and Refugees: Men and Women in search of Peace is divided into six sections with the first offering heartfelt good wishes for peace and inviting people of good will to embrace those fleeing war, hunger and persecution.

The message also poses the question, why so many migrants and refugees? Pope Francis answers this by considering the many conflicts forcing people to leave their homelands, but he notes also the desire for a better life.

The Holy Father notes that some people consider the growth in migration as a threat.. But, "for my part, he says, I ask you to view it with confidence, as an opportunity to build peace."

### Peace points

Contained in the 4th section of the message under the theme, "four mile-posts for action", the Pope points out what is needed in order for migrants and refugees to find the peace they seek is a strategy combining four actions: welcoming, protecting, promoting and integrating.

Looking at the situation from an international perspective, Pope Francis expresses the hope that this spirit of welcome and integration, "will guide the process that in the course of 2018 will lead the United Nations to draft and

approve two Global Compacts, one for safe, orderly and regular migration and the other for refugees."

### Common Home

Finally, the Holy Father draws inspiration from Saint John Paul II with these words. "If the 'dream' of a peaceful world is shared by all, if the refugees' and migrants' contribution is properly evaluated, then humanity can become more and more a universal family and our earth a true 'common home'."

Please find below the message of Pope Francis for the Celebration of the World Day of Peace, 1 January 2018

## MIGRANTS AND REFUGEES: MEN AND WOMEN IN SEARCH OF PEACE

### 1. Heartfelt good wishes for peace

Peace to all people and to all nations on earth! Peace, which the angels proclaimed to the shepherds on Christmas night, is a profound aspiration for everyone, for each individual and all peoples, and especially for those who most keenly suffer its absence. Among these whom I constantly keep in my thoughts and prayers, I would once again mention the over 250 million migrants worldwide, of whom 22.5 million are refugees. Pope Benedict XVI, my beloved predecessor, spoke of them as "men and women, children, young and elderly people, who are searching for somewhere to live in peace." In order to find that peace, they are willing to risk their lives on a journey that is often long and perilous, to endure hardships and suffering, and to encounter fences and walls built to keep them far from their goal.

In a spirit of compassion, let us embrace all those fleeing from war and hunger, or forced by discrimination, persecution, poverty and environmental degradation to leave their homelands.

We know that it is not enough to open our hearts to the suffering of others. Much more remains to be done before our brothers and sisters can once again live peacefully in a safe home. Welcoming others requires concrete commitment, a network of assistance and goodwill, vigilant and sympathetic attention, the responsible management of new and complex situations that at times compound numerous existing problems, to say nothing of resources, which are always limited. ▶



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► By practising the virtue of prudence, government leaders should take practical measures to welcome, promote, protect, integrate and, “within the limits allowed by a correct understanding of the common good, to permit [them] to become part of a new society.” Leaders have a clear responsibility towards their own communities, whose legitimate rights and harmonious development they must ensure, lest they become like the rash builder who miscalculated and failed to complete the tower he had begun to construct.

## 2. Why so many refugees and migrants?

As he looked to the Great Jubilee marking the passage of two thousand years since the proclamation of peace by the angels in Bethlehem, Saint John Paul II pointed to the increased numbers of displaced persons as one of the consequences of the “endless and horrifying sequence of wars, conflicts, genocides and ethnic cleansings” that had characterized the twentieth century. To this date, the new century has registered no real breakthrough: armed conflicts and other forms of organized violence continue to trigger the movement of peoples within national borders and beyond.

Yet people migrate for other reasons as well, principally because they “desire a better life, and not infrequently try to leave behind the ‘hopelessness’ of an unpromising future.” They set out to join their families or to seek professional or educational opportunities, for those who cannot enjoy these rights do not live in peace. Furthermore, as I noted in the Encyclical *Laudato Si’*, there has been “a tragic rise in the number of migrants seeking to flee from the growing poverty caused by environmental degradation”.

Most people migrate through regular channels. Some, however, take different routes, mainly out of desperation, when their own countries offer neither safety nor opportunity, and every legal pathway appears impractical, blocked or too slow.

Many destination countries have seen the spread of rhetoric decrying the risks posed to national security or the high cost of welcoming new arrivals, and by doing so demeans the human dignity due to all as sons and daughters of God. Those who, for what may be political reasons, foment fear of migrants instead of building peace are sowing violence, racial discrimination



Refugees waiting to travel at an indetified airport

and xenophobia, which are matters of great concern for all those concerned for the safety of every human being.

All indicators available to the international community suggest that global migration will continue for the future. Some consider this a threat. For my part, I ask you to view it with confidence as an opportunity to build peace.

## 3. With a contemplative gaze

The wisdom of faith fosters a contemplative gaze that recognizes that all of us “belong to one family, migrants and the local populations that welcome them, and all have the same right to enjoy the goods of the earth, whose destination is universal, as the social doctrine of the Church teaches. It is here that solidarity and sharing are founded.” These words evoke the biblical image of the new Jerusalem. The book of the prophet Isaiah (chapter 60) and that of Revelation (chapter 21) describe the city with its gates always open to people of every nation, who marvel at it and fill it with riches. Peace is the sovereign that guides it and justice the principle that governs coexistence within it.

We must also turn this contemplative gaze to the cities where we live, “a gaze of faith which sees God dwelling in their houses, in their streets and squares, [...] fostering solidarity, fraternity, and the desire for goodness, truth and justice” – in other words, fulfilling the promise of peace.

When we turn that gaze to migrants and refugees, we discover that they do not arrive empty-handed. They bring their courage, skills, energy and aspirations, as well as the treasures

of their own cultures; and in this way, they enrich the lives of the nations that receive them. We also come to see the creativity, tenacity and spirit of sacrifice of the countless individuals, families and communities around the world who open their doors and hearts to migrants and refugees, even where resources are scarce.

A contemplative gaze should also guide the discernment of those responsible for the public good, and encourage them to pursue policies of welcome, “within the limits allowed by a correct understanding of the common good” – bearing in mind, that is, the needs of all members of the human family and the welfare of each.

Those who see things in this way will be able to recognize the seeds of peace that are already sprouting and nurture their growth. Our cities, often divided and polarized by conflicts regarding the presence of migrants and refugees, will thus turn into workshops of peace.

## 4. Four mileposts for action

Offering asylum seekers, refugees, migrants and victims of human trafficking an opportunity to find the peace they seek requires a strategy combining four actions: welcoming, protecting, promoting and integrating.

“Welcoming” calls for expanding legal pathways for entry and no longer pushing migrants and displaced people towards countries where they face persecution and violence. It also demands balancing our concerns about national security with concern for fundamental human rights. Scripture reminds us: “Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers, for by so doing some ►



Migrants in Libya waiting to board a boat at the Mediterranean Sea



A Migrants rescue operation in the Mediterranean in 2016 (AFP Getty)

► people have shown hospitality to angels without knowing it.”

“Protecting” has to do with our duty to recognize and defend the inviolable dignity of those who flee real dangers in search of asylum and security, and to prevent their being exploited. I think in particular of women and children who find themselves in situations that expose them to risks and abuses that can even amount to enslavement. God does not discriminate: “The Lord watches over the foreigner and sustains the orphan and the widow.”

“Promoting” entails supporting the integral human development of migrants and refugees. Among many possible means of doing so, I would stress the importance of ensuring access to all levels of education for children and young people. This will enable them not only to cultivate and realize their potential, but also better equip them to encounter others and to foster a spirit of dialogue rather than rejection or confrontation. The Bible teaches that God “loves the foreigner

residing among you, giving them food and clothing. And you are to love those who are foreigners, for you yourselves were foreigners in Egypt.”

“Integrating”, lastly, means allowing refugees and migrants to participate fully in the life of the society that welcomes them, as part of a process of mutual enrichment and fruitful cooperation in service of the integral human development of the local community. Saint Paul expresses it in these words: “You are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God’s people.”

### 5. A proposal for two international compacts

It is my heartfelt hope this spirit will guide the process that in the course of 2018 will lead the United Nations to draft and approve two Global Compacts, one for safe, orderly and regular migration and the other for refugees. As shared agreements at a global level, these compacts will provide a framework for policy proposals and practical

measures. For this reason, they need to be inspired by compassion, foresight and courage, so as to take advantage of every opportunity to advance the peace-building process. Only in this way can the realism required of international politics avoid surrendering to cynicism and to the globalization of indifference.

Dialogue and coordination are a necessity and a specific duty for the international community. Beyond national borders, higher numbers of refugees may be welcomed – or better welcomed – also by less wealthy countries, if international cooperation guarantees them the necessary funding.

The Migrants and Refugees Section of the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development has published a set of twenty action points that provide concrete leads for implementing these four verbs in public policy and in the attitudes and activities of Christian communities. The aim of this and other contributions is to express the interest of the Catholic Church in the process leading to the adoption of the two U.N. Global Compacts. This interest is the sign of a more general pastoral concern that goes back to very origins of Church and has continued in her many works up to the present time.

### 6. For our common home

Let us draw inspiration from the words of Saint John Paul II: “If the ‘dream’ of a peaceful world is shared by all, if the refugees’ and migrants’ contribution is properly evaluated, then humanity can become more and more a universal family and our earth a true ‘common home’.” Throughout history, many have believed in this “dream”, and their achievements are a testament to the fact that it is no mere utopia.

Among these, we remember Saint Frances Xavier Cabrini in this year that marks the hundredth anniversary of her death. On this thirteenth day of November, many ecclesial communities celebrate her memory. This remarkable woman, who devoted her life to the service of migrants and became their patron saint, taught us to welcome, protect, promote and integrate our brothers and sisters. Through her intercession, may the Lord enable all of us to experience that “a harvest of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.”

*From the Vatican, 13 November 2017  
Memorial of Saint Frances Xavier Cabrini,  
Patroness of Migrants*

# What does Trump recognizing Jerusalem as Israel's capital mean for the city's status?

Global news

U.S. President Donald Trump surprised leaders around the world on Wednesday when he recognized Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, but this declaration doesn't mean changes to the status of the city just yet.

In announcing that Jerusalem would be home to a U.S. embassy, Trump recognized the 1995 decision by Congress called the Jerusalem Embassy Act. Israeli parliament currently designates the united city of Jerusalem as Israel's capital after annexing the region in 1967.

An associate professor at the University of Ottawa, Costanza Musu, explains that in enacting this decision, Trump recognizes this to be true

in American law as well.

"Under Israeli law, [Jerusalem is] the capital of Israel," Musu, who works in the graduate department of international affairs, states. "What Trump does with his declaration is to say, 'Well, we're recognizing in American law as well,' which is what the 1995 Congress decision was about."

However, since the act was passed, Musu adds that each president over the past two decades has waived that decision twice per year for fear of the international reaction, given the complex diplomatic state of the region.

"The reason it's been postponed is that every president has felt that there was the potential for a major conflagration of the kind that we're seeing yesterday and today [Saturday and Sunday], if the United States were to



US President Donald Trump visits the Western Wall, the holiest site where Jews can pray.

formally announce the moving of the embassy," Musu said.

Musu explains that Trump too signed the same waiver shortly after making the announcement, once again deferring the construction of an embassy in Jerusalem for another six months.

## American diplomats say Jerusalem's status remains the same

In addition to the waiver, American diplomats have referred frequently to Trump declining to specify between West Jerusalem and East Jerusalem in his announcement.

West Jerusalem is largely accepted by the international community to be Israeli sovereign territory, while East Jerusalem is not officially recognized in the same light. The conflict largely stems from both the Israeli government and the Palestinians claiming East Jerusalem as their capital.

In failing to specify between East and West, Musu explained that several parties may have interpreted his statements as an endorsement of Israel's claim to the whole of Jerusalem. Trump later said that the final status of Jerusalem must be determined between the two parties.

American diplomats, including U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Nikki Haley, maintain that Trump's statements do not attempt to determine the final status of Jerusalem.

"The United States is not pre-determining final status issues. We remain committed to achieving a lasting peace agreement. We support a



A Palestinian youth flashes the V-sign for "victory" during Friday prayers in front of the Dome of the Rock mosque at the Al-Aqsa mosque compound in Jerusalem's Old City on December 8, 2017 (AFP PHOTO /AHMAD GHARABLI)

two-state solution if agreed to by the parties," Haley said at an emergency UN meeting called to discuss the announcement.

Several countries added to the international discord caused by Trump's declaration. Egyptian ambassador Abdellatif Aboulatta stated, "We'd also like to stress that such unilateral decisions is a violation of international legitimacy and thus it has no impact on the legal status of Jerusalem since it is a city under occupation."

Musu adds that diplomats maintain that the status and borders of Jerusalem have to be determined by the Israelis and the Palestinians.

However, professor emeritus at Simon Fraser University, Heribert Adam, adds in an email statement that while Trump's announcement does not change the status of Jeru-

salem immediately, it will provide leverage for Israeli negotiations going forward.

"In the foreseeable future, there will be neither a two-state solution or a one-state solution, but a cementing of the status quo with Israel being able to dictate further settlement expansion and reduction of Palestinian rights, despite rhetorical protests from world leaders."

Lastly, Musu explained that while Jerusalem may be recognized as the capital of Israel under both Israeli law and American law, this is not enough to change international law.

"There are two ways that international law can be generated. You can have a treaty, and you can have customary law. In order to have customary laws, you have to have a certain amount of states that actually act in a certain way and feel literally obligated to act," Musu said.

As defined by Cornell University, customary international law refers to "international obligations arising from established state practice, as opposed to obligations arising from formal written international treaties." There is no internationally-recognized treaty which states that West Jerusalem is under Israeli law.

"One state moving the embassy, even if it's the United States, would not be sufficient to create customary law," she added.



# 2017: YEAR IN REVIEW

This year was full of unexpected sad and joyful events; the inauguration of Donald Trump as the 45th president of the United States, the reopening and consecration of the Sacred Heart of Jesus Cathedral in Arua Diocese, the launch of University of Sacred Heart in Gulu Archdiocese and the death of, the AIGP Andrew Felix Kaweesi and the death of the Administration Assistant of the UEC Social Communications Department, Mrs. Geraldine Lwanyanga. Here is a look-back of the years biggest and saddest moments;

## JANUARY

### Prayer Peace Week in Gulu Archdiocese

Thousands of pilgrims from across the country took part in the 12th edition of the Prayer Peace Week in Gulu Archdiocese from January 9-13, 2017. There were also participants from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and South Sudan. The event began with a 5km peace march in Gulu town led by Most Rev. John Baptist Odama, the Archbishop of Gulu and Chairman of the Uganda Episcopal Conference, Rt. Rev. Joseph Franzelli, Bishop of Lira Diocese and Rt. Rev. Sanctus Lino Wanock, Bishop of Nebbi Diocese. Several cultural and political leaders also took part in the peace march. The week-long event was celebrated under the theme, "Non Violence: A Style of Politics for Peace." Prayer Peace Week, which is an annual event of peace pilgrimage, aims to foster a culture of dialogue and forgiveness, encourages cooperation and joint responsibility as alternatives to achieve sustainable peace, prosperity, harmony and social regeneration in the Northern region following one of the longest insurgencies in Uganda (over 20 years).

### Inauguration of 45th President of the United States of America (Donald Trump)

The inauguration of Donald Trump as the 45th President of the United States was held on Friday, January 20, 2017, on the West Front of the United

States Capitol Building in Washington, D.C. The inauguration marked the commencement of the four-year term of Mr. Trump as President and Mike Pence as Vice President. Trump took over from President Barack Obama, who went down in history as America's first Black President.



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

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

## FEBRUARY

### Apostolic Nuncio weds 146 couples in Tororo Archdiocese

The Apostolic Nuncio to Uganda, Most Rev. Michael August Blume made a six-day pastoral visit to Tororo Archdiocese from February 13 -18. The event was held under the theme "Merciful Parents, Peaceful Families". During his visit, the nuncio presided over wedding ceremony of 142 couples at Budaka, Kapchorwa, Nagongera, Busia and Nyangole Catholic parishes and blessed married couples at Nyondo Parish. The Nuncio spoke 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.

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

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 led by Most Rev. Vincenzo Paglia, an Italian Roman Catholic Arch-

bishop and the President of Pontifical Academy for Life.

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

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 was raised and enthusiastically received by the Pope who expressed his wish that it be donated to Bangui Children Hospital on February 6, 2017 to care for all poor children "without distinction of religious belonging, because all children need care and attention."

## MARCH

### Four Catholic Hospitals receive vehicles to boost their HIV/AIDS program

On Tuesday, March 28, four Catholic hospitals received four brand new vehicles to boost their HIV/AIDS program. The vehicles were donated to Virika Hospital in Fort Portal Diocese, Rubaga, Lacor and Comboni Kyamuhunga Hospitals located in Kampala, Gulu and Mbarara Archdioceses respectively to enhance efficient and effective HIV/AIDS healthcare service delivery. The vehicles were donated by the United States Government through its Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to the Uganda Episcopal Conference (UEC) for its AIDS Care and Treatment (ACT) program.

### AMECEA launches financial management workshop for Catholic Bishops in Uganda

The Association of Member Episcopal Conferences in Eastern Africa (AMECEA) held an inaugural workshop on Executive Financial Management for the Catholic Bishops in Uganda. The workshop was held from March 7-11, 2017 at St. Augustine Institute in Kampala to equip the Ugandan Bishops with knowledge and skills in financial management. It was organized by AMECEA in collaboration with the Uganda Episcopal Conference (UEC) and Missio - Aachen. The five-day training equipped the prelates with tips on how to plan sound capital structures, how to ensure safety on investments and optimum funds utilization within the Church.

### AIGP Kaweesi shot dead

The Assistant Inspector General of Police (AIGP) Andrew Felix Kaweesi was shot dead in his official car Fri-▶



► day morning, March 20 as he was going for duty. He was killed at about 9:30 am 100 meters from his gate in Kulambiro, alongside his body guard, Kenneth Erau and driver Godfrey Mambewo. According to police the late AIGP was shot 27 times, Mambewo 11 times while and his bodyguard took 33 bullets. The Police car in which they travelled had over 70 bullet holes.

#### **Amecea holds Resource Mobilization workshop for Communication coordinators**

Amecea held a four-day workshop on Resource Mobilization for the Pastoral coordinators, Communication coordinators and other Catholic media practitioners from the AMECEA region, from March 9-11 in Addis Ababa.

#### **MAY**

#### **Catholic Communicators celebrate 2017 World Communication Day**

On Sunday, May 21, 2017 Catholic communicators from across the country gathered in the Diocese of Lugazi to celebrate the 51st World Communication Day (WCD) at national level. The celebration was held at Our Lady Queen of Peace Cathedral under the theme of 'Fear not, for I am with you.' (Isaiah 43:5): Communicating Hope and Trust in Our Time' as released by Pope Francis. WCD is usually celebrated by the Catholic Church annually on the Sunday before Pentecost, which was on May 21 this year. However, the local Church can adjust the date according to its needs.

#### **Francisco and Jacinta officially declared saints**

Pope Francis on Saturday May 13 officially declared Francisco and Jacinta Marto saints of the Catholic Church in front of hundreds of thousands of pilgrims at Fatima, Portugal teaching us that even young children can become saints.

Pope Francis presided over their canonization Mass during his two-day pilgrimage to Fatima, Portugal May 12-13 to take part in celebrations for the 100th anniversary of the appearance of Our Lady of Fatima. The brother and sister, Francisco and Jacinta, who tended to their families' sheep with their cousin Lucia Santo in the fields of Fatima, witnessed the apparitions of Mary, now commonly known as Our Lady of Fatima. In her message

to the children, Mary brought with her requests for conversion, prayer (particularly the recitation of the rosary), sacrifices on behalf of sinners, and a three-part secret regarding the fate of the world.

#### **Emmanuel Macron wins french presidential election**

Emmanuel Macron was elected president of France on May 7 in a resounding defeat of Marine Le Pen, the far-right nationalist who threatened to pull out of the European Union. Macron won under the En Marche party which he founded in April 2016. At the age of 39, he became the youngest President in the history of France.



#### **JUNE**

#### **Hoima Dioceses leads 2017 Uganda Martyrs celebration**

Millions of pilgrims thronged Namugongo Shrine on June 3 to celebrate the 2017 Uganda Martyrs Day celebration. The 2017 celebration was led by the Diocese of Hoima under the theme, 'Stand firm in the faith that you have been taught, Colossians 2:7'. In his homily, Rt. Rev. Vincent Kirabo, the Bishop of Hoima called upon the pilgrims to build their faith and practice good virtues just like the Uganda Martyrs who exhibited a high degree of discipleship to God.

#### **UEC mourns Social Communications Department Administrative Assistant**

On Tuesday June 20, 2017 the Uganda Episcopal Conference (UEC) community woke up to the devastating news of the death of one of its dedicated staff, Geraldine Namirimu Lwanyaga. Mrs. Lwanyaga, 54, passed away in the early hours of Tuesday at Nsambya Hospital after a short illness. She served as the Administration Assistant of the UEC Social Communications Department (SCD) at the time of her death.

#### **Canada hosts 2017 SIGNIS World Congress**

From 19 to 22 June, the SIGNIS World Congress 2017 was held on the

theme: "Promoting Stories of Hope" with plenary sessions and workshops wherein to discuss, discover and share topics on the world of media and social communications. Attending the congress were 150 Catholic communicators, including several Salesians.

#### **Pope Francis marks 25 years as a Bishop**

On June 27, Pope Francis celebrated Mass in the Pauline Chapel of the Apostolic Palace, together with the members of the College of Cardinals present in the city to mark the 25th jubilee of his ordination to the episcopacy.

#### **JULY**

#### **Gulu Archdiocese launches University of Sacred Heart**

The Catholic Church in Uganda has marked another milestone in the education sector after University of the Sacred Heart in the Archdiocese of Gulu (USHG) was launched on Saturday, July 15. This brings the number of Catholic founded Universities in the country to three. The other two are Uganda Martyrs University and University of Kisubi.

#### **Catholic Church in Zambia celebrates 125 years**

The Catholic Church in Zambia has celebrated 125 years of Catholic Faith. The celebrations were held from July 14-15 at the Lusaka Show Grounds Main arena, in Zambia.

#### **Former Brazil's President Lula gets prison term**

Twice President of Brazil Luiz Inacio Lula Da Silva, has been sentenced to nine and a half years after being convicted by a Judge for corruption charges. Judge Sergio Moro found Lula guilty of accepting the equivalent of 1.2 million dollars in bribes, principally in the form of a luxury apartment in return for steering State Petroleum Company Petrobras contracts the way of engineering company OAS.

#### **AUGUST**

#### **IEBC declares Uhuru Kenyatta President amid irregularities**

The Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC) has declared Uhuru Muigai Kenyatta as the duly elected President of the Republic of Kenya. Uhuru got 8,203,290 votes (54.27 percent) against Raila Odinga's 6,762,224 votes (44.74 percent). Uhuru met the 50+1 threshold of the total votes cast and at least 25 percent of votes in 24 counties. The 2017 general election had a voter turnout of 79.17 percent. The other six presidential candidates got a combined ►



▶ percentage vote of 0.97 percent. Uhuru got over 25 percent of votes in 35 counties while Raila got 25 percent in 29.

## SEPTEMBER

### Kenya Supreme Court Nullifies Presidential Election

In a historic ruling and a first in Africa, Kenya's Supreme Court nullified on September 1 the re-election of a sitting president, ordering a new vote to be held within 60 days after finding that the outcome last month had been tainted by irregularities.

It was a stunning moment for Kenya, one of Africa's most populous nations, and for democracy in general. Kenya's disputed presidential election in 2007 set off bloodshed that left at least 1,300 people dead and 600,000 displaced around the country.

### Parliament tables age limit bill amid chaos

The Uganda Parliament on September 26 passed a resolution to allow the scrapping of the presidential age limit. The bill which mainly targets Article 102 (b) of the Constitution has been widely criticized by different segments of people including the religious leaders. Numerous scenes of chaos have also been witnessed in the Uganda parliament as a result of the bill. The debate was postponed from September 21 to September 26 amid heavy police deployment to parliament.

## OCTOBER

### Uganda hosts Missionary Congress

The Catholic Church in Uganda has made another milestone after the country successfully hosted the Missionary Congress from October 10-14, at Pope Paul VI Memorial Hotel in Rubaga, Kampala. The Congress, which was the first of its kind in Uganda, was held to commemorate the centenary of Pontifical Missionary Union (PMU) and the golden jubilee of Vatican II Decree known as Ad Gentes Divinitus (a Decree on the Church's Missionary Activity). It was held under the theme, 'Mission Concerns Us All: A call to Animation and Cooperation' (cfr Mk 16:15).

### Kampala Archdiocese celebrates golden jubilee

The Archdiocese of Kampala marked 50 years on Sunday, October 29 with the celebration of Holy Mass. It was presided over by the Prefect of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples at the Vatican, H.E. Fernando Cardinal Filoni who appealed for sup-

port of the weak and vulnerable people in the country.

### Thousands commemorate the beatification of Blessed Martyrs from Paimol

On October 20, 2017, thousands of pilgrims from across the world flocked at Wi Polo Paimol Martyrs Shrine in Kalongo Sub County, Agago District, to commemorate the beatification of Blessed Martyrs Daudi Okello and Jildo Irwa. The two Catechists, both of Acholi decent, were killed on October 18, 1918 for refusing to denounce their faith. Okello was only 17 years old while Irwa was the youngest (14 years) by the time they met their death. The duo preached equality against the practice of slavery, witchcraft and clan discriminations contrary to what many believed then. They were beatified by St. Pope John Paul II on October 20, 2002 and since then; the celebration has been gaining rapid momentum as far as the number and devotions of the pilgrims is

### President Kenyatta declared winner in repeat presidential elections

President Uhuru Kenyatta was declared on October 30 the winner of Kenya's presidential election — for the second time this year.

Mr. Kenyatta received nearly 7.5 million votes in the repeated vote, according to the Independent Electoral Commission Board. Mr. Kenyatta also won the first election, in August, by 1.4 million votes. But the opposition leader, Raila Odinga, challenged the results, and the Supreme Court nullified the election in September, citing irregularities. The turn-out was much lower than the nearly 80% of registered voters who participated in the August election. The low turn-out was mainly caused by the National Super Alliance (NASA) party Honorable Raila Odinga's (The main opposition party presidential candidate) refusal to take part in the re-run, on grounds that the Independent Electoral and Boundaries commission (IEBC) had failed to make the necessary changes to ensure a free, fair and credible elections.

## NOVEMBER

### Catholic women hold inaugural fundraising dinner for rural women

On November 8, 2017, Catholic women from across the country gathered at Hanlon Gardens in Nsambya for an inaugural fundraising dinner towards the economic empowerment of rural women in Uganda. The din-

ner was organized by the Family Desk under the Lay Apostolate Department of the Uganda Episcopal Conference (UEC).

### Pope Francis approves the heroic virtues of Pope John Paul I

Pope Francis on November 9 authorized the Congregation for the Causes of Saints to promulgate the decree approving Pope John Paul I heroic virtues which confers on him the title 'Venerable'. Pope Francis also authorized seven other decrees along with that of John Paul I — two of them on martyrdom and 5 on heroic virtues. Pope Francis has approved and declared him 'Venerable Servant of God' had a brief papacy of just 33 days, yet has left an indelible mark.

### Zimbabwe's Robert Mugabe resigns, ending 37-year rule



Zimbabwe's President Robert Mugabe resigned on November 21 bringing an end to his 37 years of rule and sparking jubilant celebrations in the nation's streets. A letter from Mr Mugabe read out by the speaker of parliament said the decision was voluntary and he had made it to allow a smooth transfer of power. He had previously refused to quit despite the military takeover and days of protests. The news abruptly halted an impeachment hearing that had begun against him.

Former vice-president, Emmerson Mnangagwa, who had been earlier sacked by Mugabe, was officially sworn as President. Mr Mnangagwa's sacking earlier in November triggered a political crisis forcing military takeover and days of protests..

### Pope Francis bans the sale of cigarettes inside the Vatican City

Pope Francis is putting a stop to the sale of cigarettes and tobacco inside Vatican City State. A statement released on Thursday November 9, by Greg Burke, Director of the Holy See Press Office, explained that the Holy See "cannot be cooperating with a practice that is clearly harming the health of people." Citing the World Health Organization statistics that smoking causes more than seven million deaths worldwide every year, he said cigarettes will not be sold at the Vatican as from the beginning of next year.

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