



Pope Francis' 2018 'Urbi et Orbi' Christmas message » **VATICAN** Page 15



NEW CONTACT

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NEBBI CATHOLIC DIOCESE HOSTS 2018 NATIONAL YOUTH DAY



Youths at the 2018 National Youth Day celebration in Nebbi Catholic Diocese. PHOTO BY GAETANO APAMAKU

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Editorial



The year 2018 has come to a close. We thank the Almighty God for keeping us and for all the blessings received. We appreciate our New Contact readers and advertisers for the support and feedback. As we enter the New Year 2019, we ask the Lord to bless our plans and activities.

The Catholic Church in Uganda is in the process of establishing a national television station and God willing we shall be on air by March 2019. It is a big project and we need the support and participation of all our Christians. An appeal has been made by our Bishops for every Catholic Faithful and all people of good will to support this project with a humble financial contribution of at least two thousand Uganda shillings (Shs 2,000/=). The fundraising drive is running from 25th December 2018 to 25th March 2019.

As coordinator of the project, I add my voice of appeal for your support towards this noble cause. Your financial contribution can be deposited into the bank account indicated below:

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In case you need more information about the TV project, you can contact me by phone (+256782746812/+256702606851) or by email (podii2002@gmail.com).

I wish you all a Blessed New Year!

Fr. Philip Odii
Editor/Executive Secretary of
Social Communications

Nebbi Catholic Diocese hosts 2018 National Youth Day

By Gaetano Apamaku
Radio Pacis

Thousands of youth from within and outside Uganda gathered in Nebbi Diocese from December 10-15, 2018, to celebrate the annual National Youth Day (NYD).

The week-long celebration brought together over 3000 young people from 17 dioceses out of 19 across the country as well as pilgrims from Rwanda, Democratic Republic of Congo and South Sudan.

The 2018 NYD was held under the theme, 'Do not be afraid Mary, for you have found favor with God' (Luke 1:30). It began with a grand opening ceremony that was led by Rt. Rev. Sanctus Lino Wanok, the Apostolic Administrator of Nebbi Diocese and the Bishop elect- of Lira Diocese. Five bishops and over 50 priests were also in attendance.

In his homily, Bishop Wanok called upon different stakeholders to come on board to empower youths with various hands-on skills and help them achieve their lifetime goals.

"As most of us are aware, in many schools nowadays the world of academia is not practical. Therefore, it is important to give youths practical things even during their holidays," said Bishop Wanok.

He urged them to always journey with Mother Mary in their daily lives as she will help them to overcome many troubles that they are facing.

The Bishop Chairman of the Lay Apostolate Commission of the Uganda Episcopal Conference, Rt. Rev. Paul Ssemogerere also the Bishop of Kasana-Luweero Diocese reminded the congregation about the Pope's plea which he made to the Synod Fathers concerning the youth during the Synod of bishops that was held in October 2018 in Rome. He said, Pope Francis expressed confidence that young people will provide the missionary dynamism for the Church's evangelizing thrust in today's fast changing, globalized and greatly interconnected world as they are not just the future but also the church's present.

Meanwhile, the closing ceremony of the NYD was graced by the Prime Minister, Dr. Ruhakana Rugunda, who represented President Yoweri Museveni as the chief guest. He conveyed President Museveni's message to the youth, which cautioned them to be disciplined



The Bishops and the Rt. Hon. Prime Minister of Uganda, Dr. Ruhakana Ruganda unveil the architectural plan of the Youth centre that is set to be constructed in Nebbi Diocese

and to avoid lifestyles that expose them to the risk of HIV infection. The Prime Minister also announced a shs30m cash contribution from the President towards the construction project of the Youth Centre, which is set to be constructed in Nebbi Diocese.

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, Youth and technology among others.

The NYD is a Church's event for young people held every year in different dioceses with an aim of helping the youth experience the universality of the church, deepening their faith and growing closer to Christ in their daily lives, by means of prayer and the sacraments.

The 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 them on topical issues within their community hence encouraging them to become change agents.

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.

Pictorial of the National Youth Day in Nebbi



The Bishops chat with the Prime Minister, Dr. Rugunda during the NYD celebration.



Bishop Wanok (left) and Bishop Sabino Ocan Odoki of Arua Diocese share a light moment with the youth



The youth engaged in a cultural music performance at the celebration



Youths from D.R.C during the NYD celebration



The Prime Minister lays the foundation block of the youth centre set to be constructed in Nebbi Diocese



The newly ordained priests during their ordination. PHOTOS BY FR. PHILIP LOKEL

Kotido Diocese gets two new priests

By Fr. Philip Lokel, Fr. Peter Loono and Francesco Castoro

Hundreds of joyful Catholics from across the Diocese of Kotido and neighboring Dioceses of Lira, Gulu and Moroto gathered in Kotido Diocese to witness the ordination of two new priests and one deacon.

Rt. Rev. Giuseppe Filippi, the Bishop of Kotido Diocese was the chief celebrant at the Ordination Mass that was held at Good Shepherd Cathedral on November 17, 2018.

Those ordained into priesthood are; Fr. Joseph Lokiding from Kaabong parish and Fr. Wilfred Okello from Abim parish while seminarian Joseph Ogwal also from Abim parish, was ordained as deacon.

In his homily, Bishop Filippi urged the newly ordained priests and deacon to be true shepherds as they begin their long journey of service in the church. He called upon them to abide by their vows by spreading the gospel of God and guiding Christians to be stronger in their faith.

The Bishop said that God does not ordain people for himself but for his

people thus told them to always commit their strength and time to fulfill the mission of Christ.

His Homily focused on the readings of the day that were extracted from Prophet Ezekiel chapter 34 about God as a Shepherd of the people of Israel, and from the gospel according to Luke: 10 on the parable of the Good Samaritan. The prelate emphasized that whereas the text of Ezekiel outlined the 'job description' of those ordained, the parable of the Good Samaritan provided them with the practical aspect of that job description.

"The Lawyer in the parable asked Jesus what he must do to inherit eternal life. Jesus answered him by quoting to him the greatest commandment of the love of God and neighbor as found in the book of Deuteronomy 6 and in Leviticus 18 respectively. But the Lawyer wanted to justify himself by posing another question: Who is my neighbor? To which Jesus replied with a parable," Bishop Filippi said.



Rt. Rev. Giuseppe Filippi, Bishop of Kotido Diocese during the ordination

The prelate urged the priests to follow the example of the Good Samaritan by leaving their comfort zone and getting nearer to the persons in need.

"Like the lawyer we like to 'justify' ourselves to avoid doing what we ought to do, namely the practical things demanded by our faith. The practical things of our faith require that we do not act like the priest and the Levite who passed on by the other side when confronted by problems. Instead we must act like the Good Samaritan: come down from our own mountain and get nearer to the persons who are in need. These persons come in many forms: the sick, the hungry, the lonely, the lost and all those who meet with all sorts of misfortunes on the journey of life," he explained.

The prelate further asked the faithful to support the newly ordained priests and deacon by praying for them in their mission.

Over 40 Caritas Uganda sponsored youths graduate in Aquaculture

By Jacinta W. Odongo
Media Officer, Uganda Episcopal Conference

Over 40 youths from Arua Diocese have graduated in Aquaculture with support from Caritas Uganda.

The youths graduated on November 8, 2018, in a colourful ceremony after their successful completion of a six-month course on Aquaculture at Aquaculture Community School in Arivu Sub County, Arua District. They have been on sponsorship under a youth livelihood project named Building Skills in Aquaculture for Jobs (BSAJ), which was implemented on March 5, 2018, by Caritas Uganda in collaboration with Caritas Norway and the Norwegian Aquaculture company, Hauge Aqua.

Hellen Chanikare, the Project Coordinator of Caritas Uganda said that out of the 46 graduates 15 were female students and 31 were male.

“This is the first batch to graduate under BSAJ and as Caritas Uganda we are glad to see how successful the project has been. All these youth were assessed in Fish farming, Level 1, by the Directorate of Industrial Training, Ministry of Education and Sports, and all passed and qualified as competent fish farmers,” she said.

In his speech, the National Director of Caritas Uganda, Msgr Francis Ndamira thanked their partners for their continued support towards the project whose goal is to provide youths with documented skills and qualifications that contribute to entrepreneurship and self-employment.

He also congratulated the graduates upon successful completion of the training urging them to work hard, and to not only concentrate on fish farming but also practice crop production like grow vegetables and trees. He said that through integrated farming, the youth can produce fish feeds for their fish instead of buying.

The Assistant Commissioner for Fisheries, Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries (MAAIF), Andrew Alio, who was the Guest of Honour urged the graduates to put into practice what they learnt so as to remain relevant to the society and kick out poverty in Arua Diocese.



A section of the graduands during the graduation ceremony in Arua. PHOTO BY IMELDA LAKER

“Be humble and take care of yourselves so that you won’t die young with the knowledge that you have acquired, instead use it to develop the nation Uganda. It is not all about graduating and acquiring certificates but rather putting into practise what you have learnt,” Alio said.

He pledged to avail employment opportunities to some of the graduates and encouraged the public to employ these graduates so that they can contribute to the development of the country. He also urged the local government officials present to sensitise the community about the importance of aquaculture in terms of food security, income generation, employment among others.

“Be humble and take care of yourselves so that you won’t die young with the knowledge that you have acquired, instead use it to develop the nation Uganda. It is not all about graduating and acquiring certificates but rather putting into practise what you have learnt,”

While delivering his speech, George Mutekaanga, the Assistant Commissioner for private schools and Institutions in Uganda applauded the female graduates for enduring the six months training amidst all the challenges some of the trainees face especially the young mothers. He requested the project staff, community and parents to closely follow up on these female graduates to ensure that they don’t give up along the way.

Mr. Mutekaanga represented the State Minister for higher Education, Dr. John Chrysostom Musingo as Chief Guest. He pledged to use his office to support the project and promised to conduct a monitoring visit to the businesses of the female graduates to ensure that they remain focused and attain their goals.

Meanwhile, the Director of International Department Caritas Norway, Marit Sørheim, commended the graduates who had already constructed fish ponds in their villages, and encouraged the public to sensitise more girls to participate in the BSAJ project as it targets 60% female beneficiaries.

She further called upon the parents of the graduates to avail land to the youth to practice fish farming and crop planting thus curb youth unemployment.

Pictorial of the Aquaculture Graduation Ceremony in Arua



Arua Diocese Brass Band and the graduands lead a procession to the graduation ground.



A section of the graduands during the ceremony.



Msgr. Dr. Francis Ndamira, Mr. Mutekaanga George, Marit Sørheim, Mr. Alio Andrew



The graduands ready to receive their awards.

PHOTOS BY: IMELDA LAKER



The graduands receiving their certificates



The graduates pose for a group photo with key stakeholders.

UEC Vice Chairman appeals for support for new Catholic Television project



Bishop Muhirwa

By Jacinta W. Odongo

The Vice Chairman of the Uganda Episcopal Conference (UEC) and Bishop of Fort Portal Diocese, Rt. Rev. Robert Muhirwa, has appealed to all Catholic faithful and people of good will to raise two billion shillings towards the new Uganda Catholic TV (UCTV) project.

Speaking during a briefing of the Diocesan Communication Coordinators on the fundraising drive for the UCTV, Bishop Muhirwa urged all Catholics in Uganda and well-wishers to contribute at least Uganda

Shillings 2, 000 per person towards the project.

“As Catholics we have so much potential to do many things and if that potential is unleashed we can go very far. We have clear structures in our dioceses right from the parishes to the sub-parishes up to the small Christian communities. I, therefore appeal to each one of us to contribute at least UGshs2, 000 but to those who can afford to give more the better,” Bishop Muhirwa said.

The UEC acquired an operating

license from Uganda Communications Commission (UCC) last and is now in the final stages of putting the Uganda Catholic Television (UCTV) on air.

The bishop, who is also the patron of the UCTV Fundraising Committee, said that with determination, focus and creativity the new Catholic television will be able to take-off early 2019. “I have confidence that this will be the best television in Uganda. It will not only be for Catholics but also for non-Catholics,” he added.

In a report presented by the Executive Secretary of Social Communications Department, Rev. Fr. Philip Odii, who is also a member of the UCTV Fundraising Committee, noted that the fundraising drive will be held beginning mid December 2018, and all the money should be deposited directly into the TV project bank account and mobile money accounts.

“This committee will be responsible for organizing and coordinating all the fundraising activities of the TV project. They will also organize for the opening of the TV project bank account and mobile money accounts,” reads a section of the report.

The report further states that the clergy, religious, catechists, various Church leaders and all Catholic media institutions in Uganda should be requested to popularize this appeal and to guide the people on how they can submit their contributions.

“The Committee proposes that the Diocesan Communication Coordinators should be the fundraising agents and coordinators in the Dioceses,” reads a section of the report.

Meanwhile, in the same report, it was indicated that the launch of the TV testing will be done before March, 2019. The normal TV broadcasting will commence as soon as the financial and technical requirements are in place.

The new television will be tailored to promote the work of evangelization and integral human development in the country.

KEY LITURGICAL EVENTS FOR JANUARY 2019

January 1- New Year/the Octave Day of Christmas: Solemnity of the Blessed Virgin Mary

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 6-The 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.

January 13-The Baptism of the Lord

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.

January 17- Memorial of Saint Anthony, Abbot

The Church commemorates St. Anthony, the father of monks, from the 3rd century. He retired to the desert at about the age of eighteen in order to live in perfect solitude. He laid the foundation 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. 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 fasting, 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."

January 21-Memorial of Saint Agnes, Virgin and Martyr

Agnes is one of the most glorious saints in the calendar of the Roman Church. She triumphed over her tender age as well as over the merciless tyrant. To the crown of spotless innocence she added the glory of martyrdom. When the Diocletian persecution was at its height, and when priests as well as laymen were apostatizing from the faith, Agnes, a girl of twelve, freely chose to die for Christ. When she was commanded to offer incense to false gods, she raised her hand to Christ and made the Sign of the Cross. When the heathens threatened to bind her hand and foot, she herself hastened to the place of torture as a bride to her wedding feast. Pain had no terror for her—although the fetters slipped from her small hands while even the pagan bystanders were moved to tears.

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 24-Memorial of Saint Francis de Sales, Bishop and Doctor of the Church

Francis was born on August 21, 1567, and ordained to the priesthood in 1593. Most widely known is the saint's Introduction to the Devout Life, which, with the Imitation of Christ, is rightly considered the finest outline of Christian perfection. Francis' Introduction proves to the world that true piety makes persons amiable, lovable and happy. A renowned and holy friendship existed between him and St. Frances de Chantal. In cooperation with her he founded the Visitation Nuns in 1610. Out of love for his own poor diocese, he refused opportunities for advancement, including the cardinalate. In recognition of the Introduction and his other writings, Francis has been declared a doctor of the Church.

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.

January 26-Memorial of Saints Timothy and Titus, bishops

St. Timothy, born in Galatia in Asia Minor, was baptized and later ordained to the priesthood by St. Paul. The young Galatian became Paul's missionary companion and his most beloved spiritual son. St. Paul showed his trust in this disciple by consecrating him bishop of the great city of Ephesus. St. Timothy was stoned to death thirty years after St. Paul's martyrdom for having denounced the worship of the goddess Diana. St. Titus, a convert from paganism, was a fellow laborer of St. Paul on many apostolic missions. St. Paul later made him bishop of Crete, a difficult charge because of the character of the inhabitants and the spread of erroneous doctrines on that island. St. Paul's writings tell us that St. Titus rejoiced to discover what was good in others and drew the hearts of men by his wide and affectionate sympathy.

January 28-Memorial of Saint Thomas Aquinas, Priest and Doctor of the Church

St. Thomas Aquinas is the Dominican order's greatest glory. He taught philosophy and theology with such genius that he is considered one of the leading Christian thinkers. His innocence, on a par with his genius, earned for him the title of "Angelic Doctor".

St. Thomas ranks among the greatest writers and theologians of all time. His most important work, the Summa Theologiae, an explanation and summary of the entire body of Catholic teaching, has been standard for centuries, even to our own day. At the Council of Trent it was consulted after the Bible. He died in 1274, at the age of fifty, in the abbey of Fossa Nuova. He is the patron saint of schools and of sacred theology.

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

Dictatorship of Noise



Fr. Lazar Arasu Priest and School Administrator

Cardinal Robert Sarah in his compelling book, “The Power of Silence” calls the forcefulness of noise as dictatorship—forceful, manipulative, devious and oppressive. As dictatorship, noise is enslaving and yoking. Noise strips us of peace of mind, tranquility and stillness of body, mind and soul. Noise makes us addicted to it leaving us helpless and craving for more noise.

Have you ever noticed how we run from silence and how enthusiastic we are for noise? We have got used to (rather forced into) noise created by cars, industries, entertainment and communication gadgets. Our homes, streets and towns are filled with noise. Of course often we have no control over them, but we have built apathy for the situation. We console ourselves saying that the modern world is like this. Noise seems to be the price we pay for being modern and sophisticated.

One has to make a decisive effort to keep silence which is not always easy. Silence can be created and maintained only by a collective effort of the community—people who share our life and environ. It is also the paramount duty of the state and local governing bodies and security agencies to maintain silence and enforce the existing laws on noise pollution.

Modern world through its technological advancement has taken a particular pace of growth that it has adopted for its existence; it is nothing but noise production. Sometimes no one seems to complain about the noise that is forced upon us in our living areas. Unable to control the situation, we are left helpless and find ourselves at the

mercy of noise. Almost in every town in Uganda music is played throughout the night and no one seems to care or everyone has got used to it. But the irony is, even the very personnel or the public bodies that are mandated to control the noise seem not bothered about it or they even enjoy it.

Silence also helps us to focus on what is important at time moment of life. It is only when we can find silence that we can be more attuned to our inner voice and the prompting of God that is speaking within us, guiding us with how to respond to the situations that come up in our lives.

Recently when I met a police officer in the early hours of the morning I began my conversation talking about the noise in the area, but before I started my lamentation, he said, “the party in the town was good last night.” I was left to wonder and I found myself out of place in the conversation and noisy environment. Often in the name of funeral rites people play noise (call it music) throughout the night. I often wonder how little children, sick and elderly cope with this situation.

We are left to wonder: What has happened to rules and regulations on

noise pollution? Is it in order to play loud music and make noisy announcements and advertisements from moving vehicles in busy roads? Do we respect areas surrounding hospitals, schools and residential areas? What about churches those preach charity becoming uncharitable and nuisance with overnight noisy prayers? Can we apply the famous rule of Idle and Disorderly on those who make excessive and polluting noises? When will our security agencies and institutions of social services save us from hurting noises?

I tend to believe that silence ought to be enjoyed rather than forced upon. It is a matter of self-discipline, maturity and courteousness. Silence ought to be enjoyed rather than keeping it. It is the highest state of education to realize that silence is beautiful, powerful and healing. It is a moment of introspection and healing. Silence is the medicine for modern maladies created by pollution of all types, both internal and external.

Modern world alienates us from our own self. We fail to find the comfort zones where we can rest our body, mind and soul. We lose our identity and a sense of self. Silence can enable us to go within ourselves and find a remedy for stress and anxiety. We can more easily relax if things are quiet. We can remove ourselves from the confusion and chaos of the world and discover many things in our lives for which we can be grateful and find a sense of fulfilment.

Silence also helps us to focus on what is important at time moment of life. It is only when we can find silence that we can be more attuned to our inner voice and the prompting of God that is speaking within us, guiding us with how to respond to the situations that come up in our lives.

Silence also teaches us that simplicity and joy are close companions. The more silence a person has in one's life the more he or she can notice and savour the simple joys of life, without the entire world's many distractions. It is only in silence we become creative and come to know our potentiality and all that we can achieve using our talents and resources that are around us

The other side of the widow's coin



By Msgr. John Wynand Katende

A report by the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa has ranked Uganda the 17th among the countries with highest level of income inequality in Africa. Many of the world's people, actually, live in conditions of extreme poverty. This is the other side of the story of the Widow's Coin in Luke 21:1-4.

Prior to witnessing the widow's tithing, Jesus addresses a religious and political system that is run by a few wealthy and powerful individuals at the cost of the poor. These elite use their social placement, power, and wealth rather selfishly. Wealth clouds moral judgment and triggers the propensity to cheat or break the law. When it comes to tithing and giving to other causes, the poor end up giving more, by percentage of their resources, than the wealthy. The widow might have been systematically corrupted into being compelled

to give far beyond what hurts her and her dependents. Jesus clearly condemns this. He invites us to challenge the structures that allow it to continue.

Poverty is experienced by actual human beings, created in the image of God. The poor are needy, destitute, having to beg, because they have been dispossessed of their rightful place in their community. They generally have no power in society to influence the important economic and political decisions that could change their situation. The present international economic situation is morally unacceptable, because it is based on self-interest, competitive, profit-seeking, market-economy, higher levels of consumption and the unsustainable exploitation of the environment.

The plight of the poor is a major concern in the ministry of Jesus Christ (Lk. 4.18). When he says "you always have the poor with you", he is not condoning, but merely pointing to the factors that discriminate and prevent the poor from escaping from the spiral of poverty in which they are trapped (Mk. 14.7). A practical Christian response to poverty is an integral part of the Church's mission.

The trap these days is that the Church so often collaborates with the very people Jesus is criticizing, instead of being more focused on the hearts and minds of the flock. Preachers of the prosperity gospel are also part of the problem. By insisting that wealth and poverty are

the direct result of either God's blessing or curse, end up distorting the message about God and his offer of salvation. People must be taught the value of work (2 Thessalonians 3:10).

As poverty is caused largely by some people's desire to gain excessive riches at the expense of others, it can be ended by people's determination to share resources equitably. The poor need proper access to decision-making processes, redress against violence and manipulation in a properly respected process of law, opportunities for social services, a healthy environment and regular paid employment.

The best way to achieve this is by supporting the poor in their struggle for recognition by helping them to gain a measure of control over their own destiny. This is the essence of "Jesus' manifesto" in Luke 4.16-21. The Lucan version of the Sermon on the Mount connects a great blessing for the poor, when the kingdom comes, with a reversal of fortune for the rich (Luke 6:20-25).

The Church must be a model of a sharing community; rejecting the temptation to gain wealth at the expense of others (Acts 2. 44-45, 4.34-37). From its very beginning the Church has shown a special care for the poor. Preferential option for the poor and the vulnerable, is one of the basic principles of the Catholic social teaching. Most of the educational and medical institutions began their life by giving free services to the poor.

WISE QUOTES FOR REFLECTION

Start by doing what's necessary; then do what's possible; and suddenly you are doing the impossible. – **St. Francis of Assisi**

It does not matter how slowly you go as long as you do not stop. – **Confucius**

Success is not final, failure is not fatal: it is the courage to continue that counts. – **Winston Churchill**

Believe in yourself. You are braver than you think, more talented than you know, and capable of more than you imagine. – **Roy T. Bennett**

Your true success in life begins only when you make the commitment to become excellent at what you do. – **Brian Tracy**

If you set goals and go after them with all the determination you can muster, your gifts will take you places that will

amaze you. – **Les Brown**

Strength does not come from physical capacity. It comes from an indomitable will. – **Mahatma Gandhi**

Success means doing the best we can with what we have. Success is the doing, not the getting; in the trying, not the triumph. Success is a personal standard, reaching for the highest that is in us, becoming all that we can be. – **Zig Ziglar**

Strength doesn't come from what you can do. It comes from overcoming the things you once thought you couldn't. – **Rikki Rogers**

Staying positive does not mean that things will turn out okay. Rather it is knowing that you will be okay no matter how things turn out. – **Unknown**

Better to Die of Hunger than Receive foreign Aid Attached to Homosexual Conditions, Says Cardinal Pengo

By Sarah Pelaji, TEC

His Eminence Polycarp Cardinal Pengo, the Archbishop of Dar es Salaam has implored the Tanzanian government not to accept foreign aid from western countries which come with conditions of homosexuality.

Cardinal Pengo made the remarks during the Holy Mass of harvest that was held in November at Msimbazi Centre in Dar-es-Salaam.

The Cardinal said that there are some threats from developed countries alleging that “they will stop support us if we are against homosexuality. It is better to die of hunger than to receive aid and be compelled to do things that are contrary to God’s desire,” Cardinal Pengo said adding that “the sin of homosexuality was the cause of destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah and that, these things are contrary to God’s plan in creation and should not be accepted at all.”

He thanked the Tanzanian Government for its position on the matter while stressing that all Tanzanians should say no to homosexual which apparently is encroaching very fast in African countries.

“We cannot accept such displeasing things to God; and if we are starving because we have refused to engage in such acts, then we would rather die with our God. Accepting homosexual is denying God,” Cardinal Pengo further expressed.

It should be noted that recently, the Minister for Internal Affairs, Kangi Lugola, stated that homosexual acts should be shunned by every human being created in the image of God because the act is against human nature and consequently the Government of Tanzania will not accept it.

Cardinal Pengo becomes the second bishop in Tanzania to condemn homosexuality in public. The late Bishop Evaristo Chengula of Mbeya Diocese was the first to warn Tanzania government to not accept homosexual acts several days before he died.



H.E. Polycarp Cardinal Pengo

Social Communications and Pastoral Coordinators resolve to work together in Safeguarding Children from Online Abuse



Participants of AMECEA Workshop on Child Protection.

By Pamela Adinda AMECEA Online News

The National Social Communications and Pastoral Coordinators from AMECEA countries have resolved to work together to raise awareness regarding the risks in the digital world, with respect to primary prevention and safeguarding of children and young people against online abuse, exploitation and radicalization.

The resolution was passed in a workshop that was held in Nairobi from November 19-23, 2018 for the National Pastoral and Communications Coordinators from the AMECEA Region as a response to the need to safeguard children against the threats posed by new media technologies and the internet, exploitation and radicalization in AMECEA Region.

The workshop was based on the action plan of the World Congress on Child Dignity in the Digital World held in Rome, on October 6, 2017; that recognized the need for global dialogue and comprehensive action towards addressing the problem. Participants discussed ways on how to curb threats posed by new media technologies and the internet such as cyber-bullying and intimidation, pornographic and child sexual abuse images proliferating online; and online grooming towards extremism and radicalism.

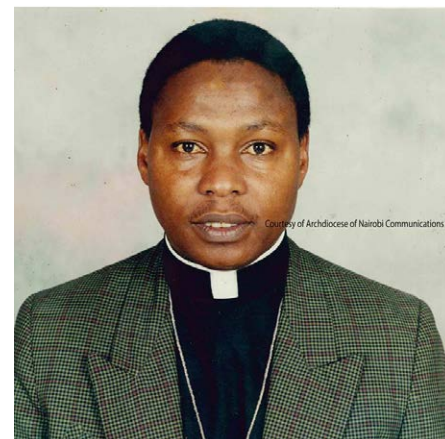
They also identified various gaps as risk factors that ought to be addressed in the context of child protection and safeguarding from online abuse and

exploitation: lack of awareness on the danger of internet use among many children, young people and the general public; the Church in the region being in denial about the reality of child abuse cases happening; this is owing to the fact that no research on child abuse cases have been conducted in any of the AMECEA countries and that what comes out are occasional media reports.

Other gaps identified include lack of proper formation for Pontifical Missionary Society (PMS) animators on the same; lack of ICT Policies regarding protection and safeguarding of children against online abuse and exploitation; lack of awareness regarding Government regulations on internet content and lack of proper Church and Government structures to handle issues of child abuse among others.

The participants resolved to work on awareness creation through use of mass media, seminars and workshops, local activism, lobbying for the incorporation of policies regarding child protection in school syllabi starting with the Catholic institutions and possibility of bringing the discussion to Small Christian Communities (SCCs) and other Churches.

The five-day workshop was organized by the AMECEA Social Communications Department in collaboration with the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops USCCB.



The late Rev. Fr. John Njoroge.

Kenyan Priest of the Archdiocese of Nairobi Killed in a Robbery Attack

By AMECEA reporter

Rev. Fr. John Njoroge Muhia, parish priest at St. Peter Kinoo in the Archdiocese of Nairobi was on Monday, December 10 attacked and killed by robbers on his way to the bank to deposit offerings of the faithful from the Sunday's collection.

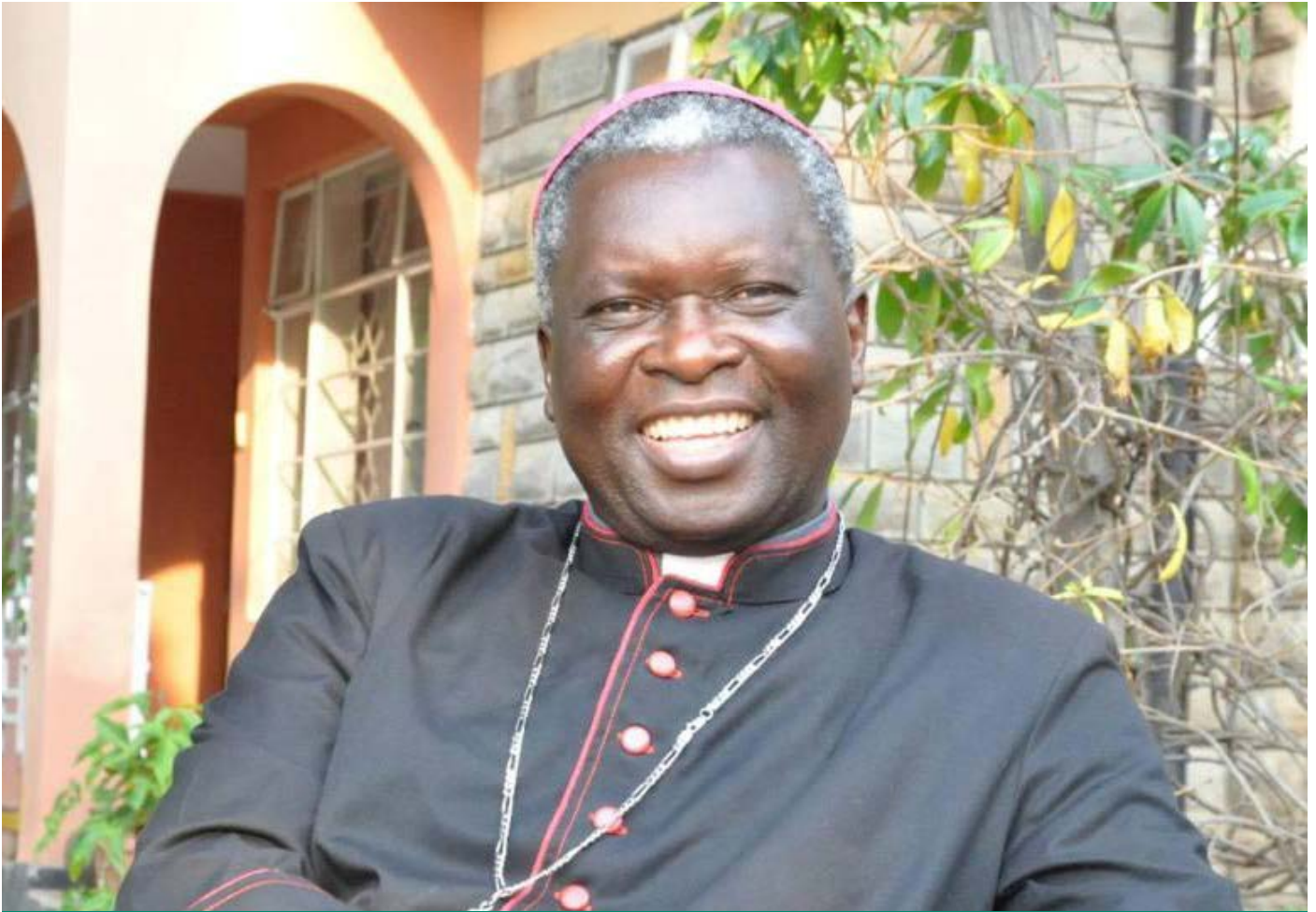
Four robbers approached Fr. Njoroge on two motorcycles on a bumpy road near his parish which is situated in Kiambu County, 25 kilometres from Nairobi City Centre. They forced the priest to stop his car by blocking the way and told him to hand over the bag he had in the car.

When the priest hesitated one of the robbers pulled out a gun and opened fire, shooting him through the windscreen of the car. The bullets hit him on the chest. He was rushed to a near-by hospital by Good Samaritans, but unfortunately was pronounced dead upon arrival. The criminals grabbed the priest's bag and mobile phone and rode away on their motorbikes.

"We are deeply saddened by the killing of Fr. Njoroge. Murder of the Lord's servants is unacceptable" said Fr. Francis Kiarie, who has worked with the slain priest.

Fr. John Njoroge Muhia, 56, was ordained a priest on 30th December 1994. He was laid to rest on Monday December 17 at the clergys' cemetery in Nairobi.

May his soul rest in eternal peace



Most Rev. Philip Arnold Anyolo, Archbishop-Elect of Kisumu

AMECEA Chairman of Social Communication Elevated to Archbishop of Kisumu

By Pamela Adinda, AMECEA Online News

Pope Francis has appointed Rt. Rev. Philip Arnold Anyolo as the new Archbishop for Kisumu Archdiocese in Kenya.

Rt. Rev. Anyolo has been elevated to the new position by the Pope who also accepted the resignation rendered by Most Rev. Zacchaeus Okoth from the pastoral care of the Archdiocese of Kisumu after reaching retirement age.

According to Canon Law (Can. 401 §1) every bishop who has attained 75 years of age is required to present his resignation from office to the Supreme Pontiff.

The acceptance of Archbishop Okoth's resignation and the appointment of Bishop Anyolo were published on the Vatican News Bulletin of November 15, 2018. Until his elevation, the Archbishop-elect has been Bishop of Homa Bay Diocese where

he has served since 2003.

The prelate is also the Chairman of the Kenya Conference of Catholic Bishops (KCCB) and he represents the Conference at the AMECEA Executive Board. This is the second time he is representing the Kenyan Conference at the AMECEA Executive Board. He also serves as Chairman of AMECEA Social Communications Department, a position he assumed in October, 2018. Previously he was AMECEA Chairman of Pastoral Department.

Rev. Fr. Emmanuel Chimombo the Coordinator of AMECEA Pastoral Department who worked closely with the Archbishop-Elect when he was Chairman of Pastoral Department describes him as a man who is very available whenever called upon, passionate about pastoral issues, supportive, calm, receptive and very

approachable.

"The Archbishop-Elect is a real father and embodies a true shepherd. We wish him the very best in his new appointed," says Fr. Chimombo who is also the AMECEA Deputy Secretary.

Born on May 18, 1956, in Tongaren, Bungoma County, Bishop Anyolo was ordained priest for the Diocese of Eldoret in 1983. Pope John Paul II appointed him Bishop of Kericho on December 6, 1995 and was consecrated as Bishop of Kericho on February 3, 1996. On February 20, 2002, the Holy Father John Paul II appointed him as Apostolic Administrator of Homa Bay upon the resignation of Rt. Rev. Linus Okok Okwach. He was later appointed Bishop of Homa Bay on March 22, 2003 and installed as Bishop of Homa Bay on May 23, 2003.

Pope Francis' 2018 'Urbi et Orbi' Christmas Message



Vatican 1 Pope Francis celebrates Mass at Casa Santa Marta (Vatican Media).j

“Dear Brothers and Sisters, Happy Christmas!

To you, the faithful of Rome, to you, the pilgrims, and to all who are linked to us from every part of the world, I renew the joyous proclamation of Bethlehem: “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those whom he favours” (Lk 2:14).

Like the shepherds who first went with haste to the stable, let us halt in wonder before the sign that God has given us: “A baby wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger” (Lk 2:12). In silence, let us fall to our knees and worship.

What does that Child, born for us of the Virgin Mary, have to tell us? What is the universal message of Christmas? It is that God is a good Father and we are all brothers and sisters.

This truth is the basis of the Christian vision of humanity. Without the fraternity that Jesus Christ has bestowed on us, our efforts for a more just world fall short, and

even our best plans and projects risk being soulless and empty.

For this reason, my wish for a happy Christmas is a wish for fraternity.

Fraternity among individuals of every nation and culture.

Fraternity among people with different ideas, yet capable of respecting and listening to one another.

Fraternity among persons of different religions. Jesus came to reveal the face of God to all those who seek him.

The face of God has been revealed in a human face. It did not appear in an angel, but in one man, born in a specific time and place. By his incarnation, the Son of God tells us that salvation comes through love, acceptance, respect for this poor humanity of ours, which we all share in a great variety of races, languages, and cultures. Yet all of us are brothers and sisters in humanity!

Our differences, then, are not a detriment or a danger; they are a source of richness. As when an art-

ist is about to make a mosaic: it is better to have tiles of many colours available, rather than just a few!

The experience of families teaches us this: as brothers and sisters, we are all different from each other. We do not always agree, but there is an unbreakable bond uniting us, and the love of our parents helps us to love one another. The same is true for the larger human family, but here, God is our “parent”, the foundation and strength of our fraternity.

May this Christmas help us to rediscover the bonds of fraternity linking us together as individuals and joining all peoples. May it enable Israelis and Palestinians to resume dialogue and undertake a journey of peace that can put an end to a conflict that for over seventy years has rent the land chosen by the Lord to show his face of love.

May the Child Jesus allow the beloved and beleaguered country of Syria once again to find fraternity after these long years of war. May▶

the international community work decisively for a political solution that can put aside divisions and partisan interests, so that the Syrian people, especially all those who were forced to leave their own lands and seek refuge elsewhere, can return to live in peace in their own country.

My thoughts turn to Yemen, in the hope that the truce brokered by the international community may finally bring relief to all those children and people exhausted by war and famine.

I think too of Africa, where millions of persons are refugees or displaced and in need of humanitarian assistance and food security. May the Holy Child, the King of Peace, silence the clash of arms and allow a new dawn of fraternity to rise over the entire continent, blessing the efforts of all those who work to promote paths of reconciliation in political and social life.

May Christmas consolidate the bonds of fraternity uniting the Korean peninsula and help the path of rapprochement recently undertaken to continue and to reach agreed solu-

tions capable of ensuring the development and well-being of all.

May this blessed season allow Venezuela once more to recover social harmony and enable all the members of society to work fraternally for the country's development and to aid the most vulnerable sectors of the population.

May the Newborn Lord bring relief to the beloved land of Ukraine, yearning to regain a lasting peace that is slow to come. Only with a peace respectful of the rights of every nation can the country recover from the sufferings it has endured and restore dignified living conditions for its citizens. I am close to the Christian communities of the region, and I pray that they may develop relationships of fraternity and friendship.

Before the Child Jesus, may the inhabitants of beloved Nicaragua see themselves once more as brothers and sisters, so that divisions and discord will not prevail, but all may work to promote reconciliation and to build together the future of the country.

I want to mention, too, all those

peoples that experience ideological, cultural and economic forms of colonization and see their freedom and identity compromised, as well as those suffering from hunger and the lack of educational and health care services.

A particular thought goes to our brothers and sisters who celebrate the Birth of the Lord in difficult, if not hostile situations, especially where the Christian community is a minority, often vulnerable or not taken into account. May the Lord grant that they, and all minorities, may live in peace and see their rights recognized, especially the right to religious freedom.

May the little Child whom we contemplate today in the manger, in the cold of the night, watch over all the children of the world, and every frail, vulnerable and discarded person. May all of us receive peace and consolation from the birth of the Saviour and, in the knowledge that we are loved by the one heavenly Father, realize anew that we are brothers and sisters and come to live as such!"

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.



A UN peacekeeping armoured vehicle in Beni, DRC. (AFP or licensors)

Holy See urges greater investment in peace and security in Africa

By Robin Gomes

The Holy See is calling the international community to create greater collaboration and truly effective and collective engagement with local populations of Africa to put its “incredible resources”, both human and natural, to good use and build peace and security in the continent.

Archbishop Bernardito Auza, the Holy See’s Permanent Observer to the United Nations in New York made the call on November 20, 2018 during an open debate at the Security Council on peace and security in Africa.

Youth

The Vatican diplomat particularly drew attention to the young people and the natural resources of Africa. He said the young and vibrant populations of Africa deserve better access to quality education and to decent work so as to realize their great potential, thus enabling these

young men and women to be key players in building up their own countries and taking their rightful place as future leaders.

Without schooling or formation of any kind, Archbishop Auza pointed out, young people are without prospects and become a prey to a future of exploitation and violence.

Natural resources

The Filipino archbishop also said that “the abundant natural resources in Africa become a curse when their exploitation does not benefit the people, and worse when wars and conflicts are exacerbated or even artificially provoked to provide a smokescreen for illicit and abusive exploitation of those precious resources.”

In this regard, he recalled Pope Francis who noted that “there are powers who seek only to take the great wealth of Africa ... but they

don’t think about helping it to grow.”

UN peacekeeping

Drawing attention to the situation of peace and security in Africa, Archbishop Auza said that the UN’s peacekeeping missions in the continent are engaged in the “arduous task” of re-establishing peace, protecting civilians, facilitating political processes and building bridges with a view to restoring justice and laying the foundations for lasting stability.

The Vatican diplomat regretted that the good works of these men and women in ‘blue helmets’ are at times destroyed by the enemies of peace. Africa’s armed groups and terrorist organizations that are often manipulated by political machinations from within or from without the borders of their country, he said, cause chaos to reign.

The Holy See called on the international community to collaborate and invest more on peacekeeping in Africa saying that while significant financial resources are devoted to Africa in terms of development programmes, the cost of peacekeeping represents only a minuscule portion of the world’s military spending.

Panama Archbishop: WYD 2019 will be “a great celebration of faith”



Archbishop José Domingo Ulloa of Panama.

By Robin Gomes

Preparations are underway for the Catholic Church's World Youth Day (WYD) that will take centre stage in Panama City, January 22-27, 2019. Pope Francis is scheduled to join the celebrations January 23 onwards.

Organizers of the 2019 WYD in Panama presented the event at a press conference in Rome on December 11. Addressing journalists at the press conference in Rome, Archbishop José Domingo Ulloa of Panama said that the WYD will be “a great celebration of faith.” “We are waiting for the Pope and for the hope he will bring for all of Central America.”

Referring to the October Synod of Bishops in the Vatican on young people, he said that they will be urged to be protagonists of change to build a different world as Mary did with her unconditional “yes”.

The theme of the 34th WYD is, “I am the servant of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word.” (Lk 1:38).

Pope Francis' message to young people for World Youth Day

Archbishop Ulloa said that other themes that will dominate the youth meet will be migration, indigenous people, environment and the role of women.

World converging on Panama

Facts and figures of this great Church event were presented at a press conference in Rome on Tuesday. More than 200,000 participants from 155 countries are expected at the WYD. 47,000 have completed their application formalities and another 168,000 are completing them, said Giancarlo Candanedo, director of communication for WYD Panama. Many more, he said, will be coming without registration.

243 are expected from China and 450 from Cuba. Muslims will also be in attendance, hailing from Jordan and Palestine.

More than 37,000 volunteers from Brazil, Costa Rica, France and Poland

are involved in logistics, assistance and preparation.

Migration

Alluding to the Central American migrant caravan, Arch. Ulloa said the issue of immigration will be a dominant theme during the WYD because the Church cannot bear the suffering and pain that many people go through.

“Young people being forced to emigrate, many suffering at the hands of drug traffickers,” are just some of the challenges that many young people face, he said. “I am convinced that Pope Francis will be bringing the theme of hope,” he said, adding young people need opportunities.

Women

The Panama WYD will also highlight the role of women in the Church. Archbishop Ulloa pointed out that one cannot conceive a Church, especially that of Latin America and Central America, that is not kept together by women.

To stress this fact, the statue of Our Lady of Fatima will be displayed at the global youth event. “For us, the emphasis will be on the role of women,” Arch. Ulloa said, explaining that the WYD will be a “great opportunity to bring forward all the good that women have done through history.”

Indigenous

Among the participants will also be some 1000 young indigenous people from various parts of the world who will be participating in the World Indigenous Youth Gathering 2019 (EMJI) that will take place in Soloy, Panama, January 17 to 21.

Models for youth

The archbishop pointed out that the Central American Church is one of martyrdom, and the young people have credible models in saints such as Romero, Rose of Lima, José Sánchez del Río and John Paul II. He confirmed that the Pope will meet all the bishops to feel their pulse.

Families

Arch. Ulloa said the Church of Panama is reaching out to young people who have no financial means to join the WYD. Many families will host pilgrims “precisely because the key is to share”, he stressed.

At the end of the meeting, the organizers provided a sample of Panamanian hospitality by way of a traditional song and dance (watch video below).

Happy 82nd Birthday, Pope Francis!



Pope Francis at the General Audience, which took place in the Paul VI Hall (Vatican Media)

By Vatican Radio

Ad multos annos, Franciscus!

Pope Francis on Monday December 17, 2018 celebrated his 82nd birthday. He once described birthdays as an occasion in which to “remember all that God has done for us”, saying that “memory is an aspect of life.” and that it is “a great misfortune to lose the memory of all that God has done for us.”

The Pope’s birthdays are always memorable occasions: last year, he threw a “Pizza Party” in which he served a 4m long pizza. The year he hosted a birthday breakfast, to which he invited eight homeless people to taste sweets from his country of origin – Argentina. Three years ago, thousands of people gathered to dance a tango “en masse” for the Pope in St Peter’s Square.

This year the Pope chose to celebrate his birthday a day early, by throwing a small party for himself and a group of children who are receiving medical care from the “Santa Marta” Paediatric Dispensary inside the Vatican. The children surprised him with a huge cake and the Pope thanked them, expressing how glad he was to be with them. The atmo-



Pope blows candles on his birthday

sphere was so warm that the Pope stated that he thought that if the Holy Family had been living in Rome and Baby Jesus had had a cold, Mary would have surely taken him to the dispensary to be treated. The children at the dispensary, said the Pope, have so much to teach us

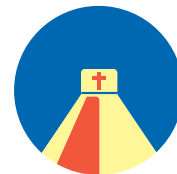
Well-wishers in the Vatican and around the world sent their greetings as the Holy Father celebrated his 82nd birthday.

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