



Pope denounces “slanderous communication” of dictatorships

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AFRICAN CATHOLIC BISHOPS LAUNCH GOLDEN JUBILEE YEAR OF SECAM IN UGANDA



Bishops from SECAM’s eight regional conferences pose for a group photo with priests and dignitaries after the official launch of SECAM’s Golden Jubilee year. PHOTO BY: JACINTA W. ODONGO

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Editorial



On July 22, 2018, the Catholic Church in Uganda awoke to the sad news of the death of Rt. Rev. Joseph Oyanga, the Emeritus Bishop of Lira Diocese. Bishop Oyanga, who was the Ordinary of the Diocese from 1989 to 2003, passed on at St. Anthony Hospital in the Archdiocese of Tororo, where he had served as a priest.

I first met Bishop Oyanga in the 1980s when he was in Mbale College as a teacher and later head teacher. He was then Father Joseph Oyanga and had come to our Sub parish for Mass. I was a little boy aspiring to be a priest and I was struck by his smile, friendliness and simplicity. A few years later, I was privileged to be one of the choir members that sang at his Thanksgiving Mass at Nagongera Seminary in Tororo, shortly after his Episcopal ordination and installation as Bishop of Lira Diocese. His smile, friendliness and simplicity remained the same. What a humble servant of God!

The messages from various Church leaders during the requiem Masses, describe Bishop Oyanga as a simple, humble, dutiful and loving person; a man of peace and courage; a true shepherd, teacher and musician. All these and many other attributes of Bishop Oyanga are special gifts and blessings that God gave us through him. We thank God for the gift of our Bishop and we pray that He rewards him with the Glory of Heaven.

Fr. Philip Odii
Editor/Executive
Secretary of Social
Communications

African Catholic Bishops launch Golden Jubilee Year of SECAM in Uganda



Bishops from various SECAM regional conferences during the Eucharistic celebration in Rubaga Cathedral

By Jacinta W. Odongo

Media Officer, Uganda Episcopal Conference

On Sunday, July 29, 2018, Bishops representing various regional and national conferences and other Church institutions in Africa converged at Rubaga Cathedral in Kampala, to officially launch the year-long Golden Jubilee celebrations of the Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar (SECAM).

The celebrations began with a procession of priests and Bishops from SECAM's eight regional conferences. SECAM President, Most Rev. Gabriel Mbilingi, also the Archbishop of Lubango Archdiocese in Angola presided over the launch of the year-long celebrations.

Hundreds of faithful including dignitaries from Buganda Kingdom and religious men and women were in attendance at the launch.

While delivering his homily, Rt. Rev. Sithembele Sipuka, Bishop of Mthatha Diocese in South Africa and second vice president of SECAM, appealed to his fellow Bishops and faithful to put their efforts and resources together to develop the Church.

"In relation to us bishops of SECAM, today's Gospel is teaching us that while we are not able to do everything we want to do because of lack of funds, if we combine the little monies we have, we can do wonders. If each bishop can make his contribution of five barley loaves every year in the form of five hundred dollars, we would

enable SECAM to do a lot more than it has been able to do in the past fifty years," said Bishop Sipuka.

Reflecting on Pope Francis' encyclical 'The Joy of the Gospel', in which the Holy Father expresses sorrow about many pastoral workers, including consecrated men and women, who are concerned more about their personal freedom, Bishop Sipuka urged Pastoral Agents to refrain from the temptation of materialism and corruption tendencies: individualism; self-seeking; love of money; power and comfort.

He said that materialistic tendencies have made many pastoral agents to see their work as a mere appendage to their life and relaxation, than about evangelisation.

"Pastoral workers who fall into a lifestyle which leads to attachment to financial security or to a desire for power or human glory at all cost, rather than giving lives to others in mission," Bishop Sipuka quoted Pope Francis' encyclical adding "If we are honest, we will realise that the Pope here is not only talking about Europe, this truth applies to us in Africa as well."

He appealed to his fellow bishops to carefully select and form the next generation of pastoral agents at the dawn of the 50 years of the existence of SECAM, and told them to use their influence to engage with governments at national, regional ►



Bishop Sipuka gives his homily

► and continental level on broad issues of human rights and environment in order to fight against poverty, diseases, social injustices, war and corruption.

The bishop emphasized the need for working hard to fight poverty by urging the faithful to grow basic food for consumption in their homesteads in order to increase food security.

In his speech, the Chairman of the Uganda Episcopal Conference (UEC) and Archbishop of Gulu, Most Rev. John Baptist Odama acknowledged with appreciation the presence of the various representatives of the various SECAM's regional conferences and other Church institutions.

He said it was a great honour for Uganda to organize both SECAM's inauguration and the forthcoming Golden Jubilee, thus called upon Ugandans to behave in an exemplary manner.

Earlier during Holy Mass, Most Rev. Cyprian Kizito Lwanga, the Archbishop of Kampala Archdiocese welcomed the visiting Bishops from SECAM's eight regional conferences to Rubaga Cathedral, and briefed them about the history of the Cathedral, which he said it hosted Blessed Pope Paul VI in 1969 when he inaugurated SECAM.

"This Cathedral has hosted three Popes who have visited Uganda in the past years including Blessed Pope Paul VI in 1969 when he inaugurated SECAM. Moreover, it is built where the palace of the King of the Buganda Kingdom, Muteesa I, used to be. This place, therefore, is of great significance," he said.

SECAM was born out of the will of

African bishops during the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) as the bishops wanted to establish a forum in which they could speak with one voice on matters pertaining to the Church in Africa. The establishment of SECAM is, therefore, the result of the bishops' resolution to build a continental structure in order to bring forth the African vision to the whole Church.

His Holiness Pope Paul VI presided over SECAM's inauguration in July, 1969 in Kampala during his first visit to Africa.

Meanwhile, Archbishop Mbiligi unveiled SECAM's Golden Jubilee logo and prayer toward the end of the Eucharistic celebration. He said the monthly thematic celebrations will be held in all Catholic Church Dioceses across Africa until July 2019, under the theme: "Church-Family of God in Africa, Celebrate your Jubilee! Proclaim Jesus Christ your Saviour." The jubilee celebrations will be held on 28th July, 2019.

REGIONAL CONFERENCES OF SECAM

1. Association of Episcopal Conferences of Central Africa (ACEAC),
2. Association of Episcopal Conferences of Central Africa Region (ACERAC),
3. Regional Episcopal Conference of West Africa (RECOWA/ CERAO);
4. Assembly of the Catholic Hierarchy of Egypt - (AHCE);

5. Regional Episcopal Conference of North Africa (CERNA);
6. Association of Member Episcopal Conferences of Eastern Africa (AMECEA);
7. Inter-Regional Meeting of the Bishops of Southern Africa (IMBISA)
8. Episcopal Conferences of the Indian Ocean (CEDOI)

JUBILEE CALENDAR

July 29, 2018: Opening of the Jubilee in Kampala, in all the churches of Africa and Madagascar and in all communities and institutions.

August 2018: Jubilee around Ecclesial Communities

September 2018: Jubilee around the word of God (The role of catechists or animators)

October 2018: Jubilee around the mission and the Movements for the Apostolate (Religious)

November 2018: Jubilee around the saints and martyrs of Africa and Madagascar

December 2018: Jubilee around life and creation

January 2019: Jubilee around the Family (and interreligious dialogue)

February 2019: Jubilee around the sick

March 2019: Jubilee around refugees, migrants and displaced persons

April 2019: Jubilee around vocations, childhood and youth

May 2019: Jubilee around Mary and the Woman

June 2019: Jubilee around the socio-professional groups and political actors

July 2019: Solemn celebration and closing of the Jubilee in Kampala and all the churches of Africa and Madagascar

Pictorial of SECAM Golden Jubilee Year Launch



H.E Berhaneyesus Cardinal Souraphiel, immediate former chairman of AMECEA with Most Rev. Cyprian Kizito Lwanga of Kampala Archdiocese at the launch of year-long jubilee celebration of SECAM



A section of the faithful during the celebration at Rubaga



The choir during the launch



Children placing flags of SECAM's regional and national conferences



SECAM President, Most Rev. Gabriel Mbingi, the Archbishop of Lubango archdiocese in Angola gives his final blessings after the Eucharistic celebration



Bishops from SECAM's eight regional conferences pose for a group photo after the official launch of SECAM's Golden Jubilee year.

SECAM unveils Logo on the occasion of its Golden Jubilee launch



SECAM's Golden Jubilee logo that was unveiled at the launch

By Fr. Don Bosco Onyalla,
Catholic News Agency for Africa

The President of Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar (SECAM), Most Rev. Gabriel Mbilingi, also the Archbishop of Lubango Archdiocese in Angola has unveiled the logo for SECAM's Golden Jubilee year-long celebrations.

Archbishop Mbilingi unveiled the logo on July 29, 2018, at Rubaga Cathedral during the official launch for SECAM's 50th anniversary celebration that will climax on July 28, 2019.

The event took place at the end of the Eucharistic celebration after being brought in front of the altar by two youth.

Speaking at the unveiling ceremony, Rt. Rev. Emmanuel Badejo, the Bishop of Oyo Diocese (Nigeria) who chairs the Committee of Bishops for Communications in Africa (CEPACS) explained the various symbols on the SECAM Golden Jubilee logo.

"The circle and the African map are merged together, to give the idea and the picture of Africa as a continental family; a family of pastoral collaboration, solidarity, showing Africa's

characteristics to the whole world. The circle reflects unity and oneness: May Africa remain one Africa," Bishop Badejo revealed.

He added, "The cross found in the middle of the African map is the same as the cross in the SECAM logo, but in this one, it reflects the victory of Christ over death and trials: May Christ be Lord over deaths and trials in Africa."

Bishop Badejo also said that the open African map reflects that the Church in Africa is open to its Islands and to the rest of the world as it has always been, and it shows the traditional warm welcoming of Africa, its hospitality, and true sense of community as we have witnessed today.

The prelate noted that the logo depicts the theme of the Golden Jubilee: "Church – Family of God in Africa! Celebrate your Jubilee, Proclaim Jesus Christ your Savior".

"The people in the logo, represent you and us, everybody; the people represent the larger family of Africa, in Africa, in Madagascar, in the Islands, in the diaspora, in the high seas, in

the desert, wherever Africa may be and within the wider SECAM fraternity, which is celebrating the jubilee and proclaiming Christ," he explained.

He pointed out that the number 50 on the logo is designed in a free form to showcase and envisage a frame for a smooth-flowing celebration throughout the Golden Jubilee year.

"The colors used for the logo are the colors you find in the SECAM logo. The additional golden color brings out the celebratory nature of this celebration today and of the entire Jubilee Year, and it also represents the colors of the Holy See. Therefore, the Church in Africa is one with the universal Church; Africa and the universal Church remain one, with Christ we remain one. May our unity and peace be one day completely restored through Christ our Lord," Bishop Badejo concluded, receiving a resounding Amen in song from the congregation of over 2000.

SECAM President then solemnly declared the Golden Jubilee officially and formerly open in the words, "For the glory of God, for the salvation of all His people in Africa and in the world, and for the growth of the Church, family of God in Africa, I hereby formally declare the Golden Jubilee Year for the Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar open, in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit."

SECAM President then presented to the representatives of the various regional Bishops' conferences "tools" that will be employed in celebrating the Golden Jubilee across Africa in parishes, devotional groups, homes, and institutions. Each pack contained hard copies of the Jubilee Logo, prayer, the working document, and a memory stick will soft copies of all the material, which can be distributed among clergy, religious and faithful in the various regions of the Church in Africa.

THE SECAM GOLDEN JUBILEE PRAYER

God our Father, we praise you for your infinite goodness for the Church in Africa and Madagascar, particularly for the gift of SECAM. We thank you for the first missionaries. In your eternal wisdom, you have blessed our Continent with much human, spiritual and natural resources; for this we thank you and we glorify you.

As we celebrate the fifty years of SECAM, we acknowledge our sins and pray for repentance from our failings of bad governance, corruption, violence and misuse of all your gifts.

Give us greater love for our continent; help us to celebrate its rich

and natural resources with sincere gratitude in our hearts and help us to use it for the good and well-being of all the people of Africa and beyond.

Almighty God, send us a fresh outpouring of your Holy Spirit in this year of jubilee, for a veritable conversion and reconciliation among ourselves, in order to bear greater witness to Jesus Christ our Saviour. Mary Immaculate, Queen of Africa, pray for us!

All you Holy Martyrs of Uganda and Saints of Africa and Madagascar, pray for us! Amen.

Married couples urged to support natural family planning methods



One of the natural family planning methods, the Standard Days Method with cycle beads

By Jacinta W. Odongo

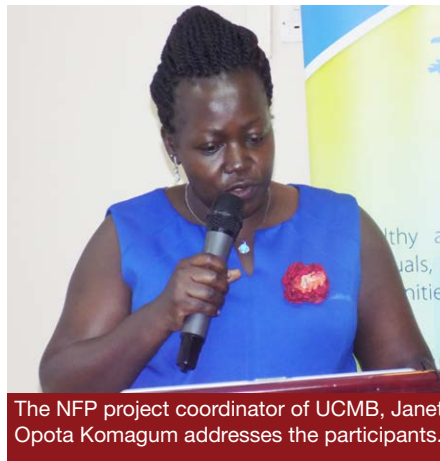
Married couples in Uganda have been urged to support natural family planning methods as it promotes a holistic approach to family planning, respects procreation and has the potential to deepen the intimacy of husband and wife.

The call was made by the Natural Family Planning Project Coordinator of the Uganda Catholic Medical Bureau (UCMB), Janet Opota Komagum during the UCMB national dissemination meeting on Natural Family Planning (NFP) in the Catholic network at Hotel Africana on July 10, 2018.

Komagum told couples that by respecting the love-giving and life-giving natures of marriage, NFP can enrich the bond between husband and wife.

"NFP respects God's plan for married love. It promotes respect for one's spouse, the virtue of chastity, self-sacrifice, and mindfulness regarding the meaning of married love. It may not always be easy, but if a couple perseveres, NFP can actually help them deepen their relationship with each other and God," Komagum said in her presentation.

She also said that the Catholic Church accepts the existence of family planning, but through natu-



The NFP project coordinator of UCMB, Janet Opota Komagum addresses the participants.

ral methods, noting that the Church through UCMB has trained providers in 31 Catholic health facilities to offer such services in all the dioceses in the country.

"The Catholic Church encourages use of 'natural' contraceptive methods because they respect God's design for married love. In fact, NFP represents the only authentic approach to family planning available to husbands and wives because these methods can be used to both attempt or avoid pregnancy," she explained.

When learning about NFP, it is important to know that: these methods are based on observation of the naturally occurring signs and symptoms of the fertile and infertile phases of a woman's menstrual cycle.

These fertility awareness methods of

family planning include Standard Days Method (SDM) with cycle beads, Two Day Method and Lactational Amenorrhea Method (LAM). Couples using NFP to avoid pregnancy abstain from intercourse and genital contact during the fertile phase of the woman's cycle. No drugs, devices, or surgical procedures are used to avoid pregnancy.

In her presentation, Lauren Van Enk, the program officer of the Institute for Reproductive Health at Georgetown University in USA, noted the benefits associated with fertility awareness methods as compared to artificial family planning methods.

She said that these fertility awareness methods are inexpensive and can easily be used by any woman irrespective of her educational background.

"NFP methods support reproductive health. They are good for the body. The natural methods have none of the harmful side effects caused by contraception, especially artificial contraceptives (e.g., pill, injection, etc.). For the woman, NFP charting can even assist in the diagnosis of underlying medical problems. And, if a couple find they are having trouble conceiving, NFP information can help them pinpoint the most fertile time of the wife's cycle," she noted.

She added that NFP methods have a 98 percent success rate if used absolutely perfectly noting that these methods can be marriage strengthening as it relies on couple communication and behavior change.

"NFP methods require husband and wife to cooperate with each other in the most intimate area of their lives. During times of periodic sexual abstinence, husband and wife live a renewed courtship as they discover non-sexual ways to express their love for each other. Couples learn that they have a shared responsibility for safeguarding God's gifts of human sexuality, marriage and family. They also grow in their understanding of God's will for their family size," she said.

Meanwhile, since 2014, Over 330 UCMB health workers have been equipped with knowledge and skills to offer modern fertility awareness methods and provide informed choice counselling on all methods. As a result of improved stakeholder collaboration, the ministry of health has integrated fertility awareness methods into Uganda's family planning policy documents and UCMB are active members of the NFP technical working groups.

HUMANAE VITAE: Half a Century on—Remaining Faithful to Fertility Regulation with Human Dignity

Dr. RONALD KASYABA

Uganda Catholic Medical Bureau

July 25, 2018 is the 50th Anniversary of Pope Paul VI's Encyclical *Humanae Vitae* (Of Human Life).

The encyclical, which restates the Church's teaching on human dignity, sexuality and its purpose including in the transmission of life and responsible regulation of births continues to be as relevant as it was half a century ago.

The encyclical was explicit on the issue of population growth—which was 'hot' at the time, as it is today and guided that interventions (to regulate fertility) must always take into account and respect the primary and inalienable responsibility of married couples and families, and cannot employ methods, which fail to respect the person and fundamental human rights, beginning with the right to life of every innocent human being.And further adds, "It is therefore morally unacceptable to encourage, let alone impose, the use of methods such as contraception, sterilization and abortion in order to regulate births".

Pope Paul VI had observed that "man's stupendous progress in the domination and rational organization of the forces of nature to the point that he is endeavoring to extend this control over every aspect of his own life -- over his body, over his mind and emotions, over his social life, and even over the laws that regulate the transmission of life", was a dangerous path yet Human life came from God, belongs to God, and goes back to God.

As St. Paul reminds us "You are not your own, you have been bought, and at a price" (1 Cor. 6:19-20), therefore a conjugal act and the openness to the transmission of life as well as regulation of births should always be mindful of the sacredness of the human person.

Pope Paul VI stated in the encyclical, "It is a serious error to think that a whole married life of otherwise normal relations can justify sexual intercourse which is deliberately contraceptive and so intrinsically wrong." In this, Pope Paul reminded us of the Church's teaching on the truth of the act of love in which spouses become sharers of God's creative act and the 'insepara-

bility' of the two meanings of a conjugal act—the unitive and procreative, which as he pointed out, are written by God himself into the nature of a human being (HV, no. 12).

The Church, aware of the various difficulties couples encounter proposed responsible birth regulation options—which in the last 50 years—in response to Pope Paul VI's urgent request of the "commitment of scientists, doctors, healthcare personnel and pastoral workers to make available to married couples all those aids which prove an effective support for helping them fully to live their vocation" (cf. HV, no. 23 – 27) are now available, internationally recognized and classified as modern and effective Fertility Awareness Methods or Natural methods of Family Planning.

Natural family planning refers to methods of avoiding (or achieving) pregnancy that cooperate with a couple's fertility rather than suppress it through the use of drugs or contraceptive devices. These methods involve determining the woman's fertile period and abstaining from intercourse during that time to avoid pregnancy or having intercourse then to achieve pregnancy. Properly applied, these natural methods are in full accord with the teachings of Pope Paul VI and St. John Paul II on the subject of family planning.

Because they take advantage of the body's natural rhythms of fertility and infertility and place no positive obsta-

cles to the transmission of life, they do not fall under the Catholic Church's official ban against artificial contraception. The assumption is, of course, that even when couples are using natural methods, they are not using them to avoid conception for selfish motives but for sound reasons like physical or emotional health or economic circumstances.

Fertility awareness methods (FAMs)—the Lactational Amenorrhea Method (LAM), the Standard Days Method (SDM), and the Two Day Method (TDM)—are safe and effective, and they have important additional benefits that appeal to women and men—in addition to their moral appeal.

The World Health Organization (WHO) Department of Reproductive Health and Research and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) in a technical consultation in January 2015 supported FAMs as modern family planning methods because these methods meet the criteria for modern family planning:

Fertility Awareness Methods;

- Are effective at pregnancy prevention,
- Are safe,
- Are based on a sound understanding of reproductive biology,
- Include a defined protocol for correct use, and
- Have been tested in appropriately designed studies to assess effectiveness under various conditions.

The Standard Days Method is an easy way to track the fertility cycle and fertile window for women whose menstrual cycle lengths are 26–32 days and has proven to be effective from various studies which revealed 95% effectiveness rate in perfect use (when it is used correctly and consistently all of the time) and an 88% typical use rate (takes into account how the average person uses the birth control method in the real world); while The Two Day Method showed an effectiveness rate of 96% with perfect use and over 86% with typical use, also commensurate with barrier methods ▶



Author demonstrating the use of Cyclebeads, a Tool used for SDM

► while the Lactational Amenorrhea Method, which requires that a woman be within 6 months postpartum, exclusively or nearly exclusively breastfeeding, and amenorrheic showed an efficacy of 99% in perfect use and 98% at 6 months in typical use.

These methods compare favourably well with artificial methods of family planning and they pose no side effects and foster communication and cooperation among the users.

The Catholic Church, through its Health Department—the Uganda Catholic Medical Bureau (UCMB)—with support from partners, has been promoting and supporting FAMs provider training and service provision in

7 (seven) selected hospitals across the country in the last 4 years. The program approach involved facility and community based Natural Family Planning trainings and service provision.

Since 2014, Natural Family Planning Clinics in hospitals have been equipped with counselling aids and material, 138 UCMB facility health workers and 53 community health workers were equipped with knowledge and skills to offer modern fertility awareness methods and provide informed choice counseling on family planning and to-date 49,232 clients have used a modern Fertility Awareness Method—with remarkable increasing demand every year. The program increased

male involvement in couple family planning discussions.

And therefore, at the 50th anniversary of commemoration of the encyclical *Humanae Vitae*, the same year (October 2018) Blessed Paul VI is to be canonized as Saint, the Church celebrates the prophetic message of the encyclical and the fact that the encyclical message still holds true and has been validated by science and research therefore, let us “Consecrate the fiftieth year and proclaim liberty throughout the land to all its inhabitants. It shall be a jubilee for you; each one of you is to return to his family property and each to his own clan (Leviticus 25:10)—Return to the Mother Church’s Teachings.

KEY LITURGICAL EVENTS FOR SEPTEMBER

September 3- Memorial of Saint Gregory the Great, Pope and Doctor of the Church

St. Gregory was born at Rome in 540. He was successively senator and prefect of Rome before the age of 30. After five years he resigned and became a monk, transforming his own house into a Benedictine monastery, and founding six others. At the age of 50 he was elected pope, serving from 590 to 604. In 14 years he accomplished much for the Mystical Body of Christ.

England owes her conversion to him. At a period when the invasion of the barbarians created a new situation in Europe, he played a considerable part in the transitional stage, during which a great number of them were won for Christ. At the same time he watched over the holiness of the clergy and preserved ecclesiastical discipline, as well as attending to the temporal interests of his people of Rome and the spiritual interests of the whole of Christendom. To him the liturgy owes several of its finest prayers, and the name “Gregorian chant” recalls this great Pope’s work in the development of the Church’s chant. His commentaries on Holy Scripture exercised a considerable influence on Christian thought, particularly in the Middle Ages. Together with St. Ambrose, St. Augustine and St. Jerome, he is one of the four great Doctors of the Latin Church. St. Gregory died on March 12, 604. His body lies at St. Peter’s in Rome.

September 8 – Feast of the Nativity of Blessed Virgin Mary

This is the day on which Christians commemorate the birth of Mary, the Mother of God. Her Feast Day has always been celebrated as early as the sixth century. Even though we cannot trace the celebration of the Feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary back any further than the sixth century, the source for the story of the birth of the Blessed Virgin Mary is much older. The earliest documented version is found in the Protoevangelium of James, an apocryphal gospel written about A.D.

The feasts of saints are traditionally celebrated on the

day of their death, because that is the date on which they entered into eternal life. And, indeed, we also celebrate the Blessed Virgin Mary’s entrance into Heaven on August 15, the Feast of the Assumption.

There are only three people whose birthdays have traditionally been celebrated by Christians. Jesus Christ, at Christmas; Saint John the Baptist; and the Blessed Virgin Mary. And we celebrate all three birthdays for the same reason: all three were born without Original Sin.

Mary was born to be the mother of the Savior of the world, the spiritual mother of all men, and the holiest of God’s creatures. Because of her Son’s infinite merits, she was conceived and born immaculate and full of grace. Through her, Queen of heaven and of earth, all grace is given to men. Through her, by the will of the Trinity, the unbelieving receive the gift of faith; the afflicted are tendered the works of mercy; and the members of Christ grow in likeness of their Head. In Mary all human nature is exalted. We rejoice in her birthday, as the Church has done from the earliest times. This is one of the three birthdays in the Church Calendar — the Birth of Jesus (December 25), the Birth of John the Baptist (June 24) and the Birthday of Mary. All three were born without original sin, although Mary and Jesus were conceived without sin, and St. John was cleansed of original sin while in the womb at the Visitation of Mary

September 14- Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross

This feast was observed in Rome before the end of the seventh century. It commemorates the recovery of the Holy Cross, which had been placed on Mt. Calvary by St. Helena and preserved in Jerusalem, but then had fallen into the hands of Chosroas, King of the Persians. The precious relic was recovered and returned to Jerusalem by Emperor Heraclius in 629.

This day is also called the Exaltation of the Cross, Elevation of the Cross, Holy Cross Day, Holy Rood Day, or Roodmas. The liturgy of the Cross is a triumphant liturgy. When Moses lifted up the bronze serpent over ►

► the people, it was a foreshadowing of the salvation through Jesus when He was lifted up on the Cross. Our Mother Church sings of the triumph of the Cross, the instrument of our redemption. To follow Christ we must take up His cross, follow Him and become obedient until death, even if it means death on the cross. We identify with Christ on the Cross and become co-redeemers, sharing in His cross.

We made the Sign of the Cross before prayer which helps to fix our minds and hearts to God. After prayer we make the Sign of the Cross to keep close to God. During trials and temptations our strength and protection is the Sign of the Cross. At Baptism we are sealed with the Sign of the Cross, signifying the fullness of redemption and that we belong to Christ. Let us look to the cross frequently, and realize that when we make the Sign of the Cross we give our entire self to God — mind, soul, heart, body, will, thoughts.

September 15- Memorial of Our Lady of Sorrows

This feast dates back to the 12th century. It was especially promoted by the Cistercians and the Servites, so much so that in the 14th and 15th centuries it was widely celebrated throughout the Catholic Church. In 1482 the feast was added to the Missal under the title of “Our Lady of Compassion. In 1817 Pius VII — suffering grievously in exile but finally liberated by Mary’s intercession — extended the feast to the universal Church.

The title “Our Lady of Sorrows” focuses on Mary’s intense suffering during the passion and death of Christ. “The Seven Dolors,” the title by which it was celebrated in the 17th century, referred to the seven swords that pierced the Heart of Mary. The feast is like an octave for the birthday of Our Lady on September 8th.

September 21- Feast of Saint Matthew, Apostle and evangelist

St. Matthew is known to us principally as an Evangelist, with his Gospel being the first in the New Testament. His Gospel was written in Aramaic, the language that our Lord Himself spoke and was written to convince the Jews that their anticipated Messiah had

come in the person of Jesus. At the time that Jesus summoned him to follow Him, Matthew was a publican, that is, a tax-collector for the Romans. His profession was hateful to the Jews because it reminded them of their subjection; the publican, also, was regarded by the pharisees as the typical sinner.

Not much else is known about Matthew. According to tradition, he preached in Egypt and Ethiopia and further places East. Some legends say he lived until his nineties, dying a peaceful death, others say he died a martyr’s death.

September 29- Feast of Saints Michael, Gabriel, and Raphael, archangels

The liturgy celebrates the feast of these three archangels who are venerated in the tradition of the Church. Michael (Who is like God?) was the archangel who fought against Satan and all his evil angels, defending all the friends of God. He is the protector of all humanity from the snares of the devil. Gabriel (Strength of God) announced to Zachariah the forthcoming birth of John the Baptist, and to Mary, the birth of Jesus. His greeting to the Virgin, “Hail, full of grace,” is one of the most familiar and frequent prayers of the Christian people. Raphael (Medicine of God) is the archangel who took care of Tobias on his journey.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church teaches us that, “[T]he existence of the spiritual, non-corporeal beings that Sacred Scripture usually calls “angels” is a truth of faith. The witness of Scripture is as clear as the unanimity of Tradition.”

Angels are pure, created spirits. The name angel means servant or messenger of God. Angels are celestial or heavenly beings, on a higher order than human beings. Angels have no bodies and do not depend on matter for their existence or activity. They are distinct from saints, which men can become. Angels have intellect and will, and are immortal. They are a vast multitude, but each is an individual person. Archangels are one of the nine choirs of angels listed in the Bible. In ascending order, the choirs or classes are 1) Angels, 2) Archangels, 3) Principalities, 4) Powers, 5) Virtues, 6) Dominations, 7) Thrones, 8) Cherubim, and 9) Seraphim.

WISE QUOTES FOR REFLECTION

“It’s not when my voice is raised that you should worry. It’s when I have nothing more to say,” — **J. Iron**

“Happiness cannot be travelled to, owned, earned, worn or consumed. Happiness is the spiritual experience of living every minute with love, grace, and gratitude,” — **Denis Waitley**

“We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, therefore, is not an act but a habit,” — **Aristotle**

“Train your mind to see the good in everything. Positivity is a choice. The happiness of your life depends on the quality of your thoughts,” — **Anonymous**

“If you don’t make mistakes, you aren’t really trying,” — **Coleman Hawkins**

“God has placed you where you’re at in this very moment for a reason, remember that and trust He is working everything out!” — **Anonymous**

“Wise men talk because they have something to say; Fools, because they have to say something,” — **Plato**

“Even small waves make it to shore. Use the potential you have through intention and action and enjoy your journey.” — **Tony Curl**,

“Until you cross the bridge of your insecurities, you can’t begin to explore your possibilities,” — **Anonymous**

“The one who walks with the crowd will usually go no further than the crowd. But those who walk alone are likely to find themselves in places no one has ever been before,” — **Albert Einstein**

Church pays tribute to late Bishop Oyanga of Lira Diocese

By Fr. Tobby Okello and
Dorothy Anguparu

Catholic Bishops in Uganda, last month, paid tribute to the Bishop Emeritus of Lira Diocese, Rt. Rev. Joseph Oyanga, who died on Sunday, July 22, 2018.

Bishop Oyanga, 82, passed away at around 1.00 am at St. Anthony Hospital in Tororo Archdiocese where he succumbed to cardiac failure.

His personal doctor, Fr. Dr. Sam Okori told mourners during a requiem Mass at Uganda Martyrs Cathedral Nyangole in Tororo on July 24, 2018, that the Bishop died after battling a long illness which caused him difficulty in breathing.

In his condolence message, the Chairman of Uganda Episcopal Conference (UEC), Most Rev. John Baptist Odama, also the Archbishop of Gulu urged Christians to emulate the life of Bishop Oyanga.

Archbishop Odama described him as an easy-going, simple and gifted person, who steered Lira Diocese well for 14 years.

"The late Bishop was a man of Arts and Music. He exhibited this when he was a Choir Director at Ggaba Major Seminary. He loved local music and was very fond of Jim Reeves song "across the bridge," said Archbishop Odama.

He also recognised his special contribution in the field of education saying the late prelate served in the past years as the chairperson of the UEC Education Commission.

"His oversight role at Uganda Martyrs University Nkozi and Rubaga Social Training Centre was commendable," the Archbishop added.

The Bishop of Lira Diocese, Rt. Rev. Joseph Franzelli, the successor of Bishop Oyanga, thanked the late for his good work in the Diocese as a teacher and shepherd. "His time in Lira was a difficult one but as a good shepherd, he stayed with the people and didn't run away during the Lord's Resistance Army insurgency," said Bishop Franzelli.

He recalled the last will of Bishop Oyanga when he and a number of the clergy men and women as well as the laity visited him at Aber Hospital, which called for unity and peace in the Diocese.



The late Bishop Oyanga

"HIS TIME IN LIRA WAS A DIFFICULT ONE BUT AS A GOOD SHEPHERD, HE STAYED WITH THE PEOPLE AND DIDN'T RUN AWAY DURING THE LORD'S RESISTANCE ARMY INSURGENCY," SAID BISHOP FRANZELLI.

Bishop Franzelli also delivered condolence messages from Pope Francis and Fernando Cardinal Filoni, the Prefect of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples in Vatican, to the mammoth congregation.

Meanwhile, Most Rev. Emmanuel Obbo, the Archbishop of Tororo said Bishop Oyanga was a humble, dutiful and loving person adding that he was always smiling, even in suffering.

He noted that the people of Tororo and Soroti Dioceses, who turned up for the funeral in big numbers, did not only come as neighbours but also as mourners to bid farewell to a brother

and a friend.

Bishop Oyanga was born on February 28, 1936 in Omoro village in Lira District. He was ordained a priest at Tororo Diocese on May 19, 1963, and worked in the Archdiocese of Tororo until July 14, 1989, when he was elected the second bishop of Lira Diocese. He served as a formator and Rector of Nagongera seminary for many years, and as head teacher for Mbale College and St. Peter's College Tororo.

On October 1, 1989 he was ordained bishop of Lira Diocese, and later retired in December 2, 2003 after age 75.

He was laid to rest on Thursday July 26, 2018, at Lira Diocese Bishops Ground. From the eulogies and the magnitude of people who attended this funeral Mass, the late Bishop left a lasting legacy in the life of the Church in Lira, Uganda and beyond. He will be remembered for his service during his 55 years of priesthood and 20 years of Episcopate.

May his soul rest in eternal peace.

Ediofe Cathedral in Arua marks 100 years

By Simon Onziga
Radio Pacis

On August 5, 2018, Ediofe Cathedral Parish in the Diocese of Arua commemorated its centenary anniversary with a grand celebration that attracted thousands of faithful.

The Apostolic Nuncio to Uganda, H.E. Michael August Blume presided over the Thanksgiving Mass for the Centenary, which was concelebrated by several bishops and priests. Some of the bishops present were: Rt. Rev. Joseph Franzelli of Lira Diocese, Rt. Rev. Santus Lino Wanok of Nebbi Diocese, Rt. Rev. Martin Luluga Emeritus of Nebbi Diocese, Rt. Rev. Giuseppe Filippi of Kotido Diocese and Rt. Rev. Sabino Ocan Odoki Bishop of Arua Diocese.

In his homily, Archbishop Blume, who was recently appointed as the Papal Nuncio to Hungary, urged the faithful to embrace missionary work so as to support the work of evangelization across the world.

He also expressed his gratitude to the faithful for their efforts towards reconciliation and harmony in the diocese.

While delivering his speech, Bishop Odoki congratulated all the parishioners of Ediofe parish for their support and paid great tribute to the Comboni missionaries who brought the faith in the diocese.

He noted how the diocese has expanded to 52 parishes since its consecration with a population of over 2 million Catholic Christians.

The prelate further said the celebration of the centenary was happening in a year when the diocese is also celebrating its 5th Synod, urging the faithful to pray for the success of the synod to live to its theme of growing together as a family church.

The Mass concluded with the laying of the foundation stone for the construction of a multimillion storeyed parish hall project, centenary bell and the construction of the Cathedral tabernacle, by the Papal Nuncio.



The Apostolic Nuncio to Uganda lays the foundation stone for the construction of a multimillion storeyed parish hall project.



Bishops and priests pose for a group photo after the centenary celebrations

“To change the world we must be good to those who can’t repay us”

POPE FRANCIS

Offering Responsible Sex Education



Fr. Lazar Arasu SDB

Often newspapers report suspicious and unevaluated sex education being offered to children in our schools. It is even surprising how faith based schools managed by religious people are trapped into this kind of education. Sex Education is education to humane love and education to responsible family life. It ought to be given by people of credibility, wisdom and human sensibility. Recently the Holy father, Pope Francis published a thought provoking document on Family Life. Perhaps we can take a leaf from it on sex education

When Pope Francis spoke on the issues of sexuality people in popular media pushed him aside and asked him to concentrate on issues of the Church rather than issues of bedroom. But sexuality is not merely a bedroom issue. It envelops the whole human nature, body, soul and spirit. The issues of sexuality touch the areas of faith, moral, social, emotional and spiritual aspects. Surely this pontiff has shown concern over many social and moral issues that concern the world. He believes that change can be brought in the world and societies only if necessary changes are brought about in individuals and families.

In his recent document *The Joy of Love (Amoris Laetitia)* he dedicates an entire chapter on sex education that ought to be given to children and young people starting from homes. He acknowledges that in the early 1960s Church already spoke of “a positive and prudent sex education” to be imparted in children and adolescents “as they grow older”, with “due weight being given to the advances in the psychological, pedagogical and didactic sciences”. Due to the eroding of cultures and traditional modes of teaching, the much needed sex education is missed out or pushed to others such as schools, NGOs those who are less concerned or less prepared for it.

The Pope believes that it is the paramount duty of the parents to impart this education as a “parental concern”. When sex education is offered within the family setting it is always done with love, concern, sensitivity meeting the needs of children in the family. Sex education ought to be personal paying attention not only to the body, but also to spirit and soul.

In the global scene the Church proposes and gives moral guidelines on human sexuality more than any other social institution. The Church does so in spite of its own limitations, failures and even amidst issues of scandal. That is the prophetic vocation of the Church. Offering education to love and sexuality is a teaching responsibility of the Church, which always remains its challenge. “It is not easy to approach the issue of sex education in an age when sexuality tends to be trivialized and impoverished,” writes Pope Francis. “It can only be seen within the broader framework of an education for love, for mutual self-giving. In such a way, the language of sexuality would not be sadly impoverished but illuminated and enriched.”

Offering sex education is a challenging task to anyone who honestly wants to offer to the young a love that is enduring and morally sound. It is no place for compromise, negotiation or trial and error method. It is an education that affects life of people, especially the young. It is truly educational to love responsibly.

To keep this education integral and upright, the educator should focus on providing information while keeping in mind that children and young people are yet to mature and they ought to receive them in right doses suitable for their age and situation.

Pope Francis feels that young people are often overwhelmed and overloaded with new ideas and suggestions on

human sexuality through various forms of media and pornography that act only as stimuli and deform sexuality. He asserts that sex education that teaches “protection” by “safe sex” are incomplete and “convey a negative attitude towards the natural procreative finality of sexuality, as if an eventual child were an enemy to be protected against,” the Pope confirms. “This way of thinking promotes narcissism (vanity and selfishness) and aggressivity in place of acceptance. It is always irresponsible to invite adolescents to toy with their bodies and their desires, as if they possessed the maturity, values, mutual commitment and goals proper to marriage.”

Amoris Laetitia highlights the educator’s duty to teach children about the biological realities of God’s creation, and this includes the reality of masculine and feminine bodies. It is learning to accept oneself, respect each other and take responsibility for one’s actions done on our body and by the body.

The Pope also gives advice on practical issues such as being modest and dressing appropriately. He says candidly, “A sexual education that fosters a healthy sense of modesty has immense value, however much some people nowadays consider modesty a relic of a bygone era.” He warns the youth against deceptive nature of sex and prays for mature love. Young people should not be deceived into confusing two levels of reality: “sexual attraction creates, for the moment, the illusion of union, yet, without love, this ‘union’ leaves strangers as far apart as they were before”.

The document also stresses the parents’ right in educating their children — a right which should be complemented, not hindered, by schools, government bodies or other groups and organisations. “The overall education of children is a ‘most serious duty’ and at the same time a ‘primary right’ of parents,” writes Pope Francis. “This is not just a task or a burden, but an essential and inalienable right that parents are called to defend and of which no one may claim to deprive them.”

Given to our own situation with the weakening morals in sexuality, child abuse, teenage pregnancy, abortion, defilement and rape, paying attention to the Pope’s simple, yet profound message on love and sexuality will help us to find joy in loving and growth in mature love and responsibility.

www.arasulazar.org

UEC Chairman applauds Ethiopia-Eritrea leaders for peace deal

“HUMAN BEINGS SHOULD NOT BE ENEMIES OF ONE ANOTHER AS THEY ARE BROTHERS AND SISTERS AND IMAGES OF GOD. WE BECOME RICHER WHEN WE ARE LIVING IN HARMONY WITH ONE ANOTHER, AND WE SUPPORT ONE ANOTHER WHEN WE ARE AT PEACE THAN WHEN DIVIDED WHICH BRINGS ABOUT POVERTY AND THAT IS NOT GOOD FOR HUMANITY,”

The Peace deal agreement has coincidentally taken place when the bishops from the AMECEA Region are meeting in Ethiopia for the 19th AMECEA Plenary held under the theme ‘Vibrant Diversity, Equal Dignity, Peaceful Unity in God in the AMECEA Region’. Both Ethiopia and Eritrea are in the AMECEA Region.

Archbishop Odama further said that the AMECEA bishops are proud of the Peace deal boost for regional security and economic growth.

“Human beings should not be enemies of one another as they are brothers and sisters and images of God. We become richer when we are living in harmony with one another, and we support one another when we are at peace than when divided which brings about poverty and that is not good for humanity,” the Archbishop explained.

Meanwhile, in 2017, a delegation of AMECEA Bishops visited Eritrea to express their solidarity with the Church in Eritrea in their concerns and challenges. The delegation met with the Eritrea’s Religious Leaders (Muslims, Orthodox and Evangelical) at Regional level held a mutual discussion that culminated with a recommendation to have Inter-Religious cooperation and unity which is the best instrument of love and respect. They also encouraged all Government officials to foster good working relationships with the Church and to create a good atmosphere for mutual dialogue, peace and stability in the region.

The 20-year conflict between the two countries has torn apart families and communities from both countries despite sharing the same culture and speaking the same language. However, following the Peace deal, a new era is set to begin in both countries that will unite these families and communities once again.



Archbishop Odama greets the congregation during the AMECEA Plenary Mass in Ethiopia.
PHOTO BY: JACINTA W. ODONGO

By Jacinta W. Odongo, Addis Ababa

The Chairman of the Uganda Episcopal Conference (UEC), Most Rev. John Baptist Odama has lauded the efforts of Ethiopia’s new Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed and President Isaias Afwerki of Eritrea in implementing a Peace Agreement that is expected to boost stability and peace between the two countries, after a 20-year border conflict.

Eritrea’s President arrived in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia on Saturday July 14, 2018 for a three-day state visit, his first in two decades. His visit came a week after Ethiopia’s Prime Minister also made a landmark visit to Asmara, Eritrea on Sunday July 8, 2018 in an effort to end the conflict between his country and Eritrea. The two leaders signed a Peace deal while in Eritrea and agreed to end their two-decade conflict.

In an interview with AMECEA News Online during the 19th AMECEA Ple-

nary in Addis Ababa Ethiopia held from July 13-23, 2018, Archbishop Odama said that the new relationship between the two countries will bring lasting peace in the Horn of Africa.

“I have heard the good news that the President of Eritrea and the Prime Minister of Ethiopia have removed the boundaries that used to hinder them from meeting each other and also the citizens of either side to interact,” said Archbishop Odama who is also the Archbishop of Gulu Archdiocese in Uganda.

He added: “This is the greatest news for us people in the AMECEA Region and I thank God for it. The whole of AMECEA Region, Africa as well as the world at large should appreciate this because it is a very good example. Therefore, I congratulate the Prime Minister of Ethiopia and the President of Eritrea.”



Delegates during the 19th Plenary Assembly in Addis Ababa. PHOTO BY JACINTA W. ODONGO

Ethiopia hosts 19th AMECEA Plenary Assembly

By Jacinta W. Odongo, Addis Ababa

The 19th AMECEA plenary was held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia from July 13-23, 2018.

The 10 day Plenary, which brought together about 100 bishops from the AMECEA region, was under the theme, 'Vibrant Diversity, Equal Dignity, Peaceful Unity in God in the AMECEA Region'.

The former Deputy Secretary General of AMECEA, Rev. Fr. Chris Ndaga said the plenary featured six agenda items: Spiritual Recollection for the Bishops; the Official Opening Ceremony of the Plenary; Workshop by the Dicastery on the Promotion of Integral Human Development, Study Session, Business Session and the Closing Ceremony.

Each Agenda of the plenary was held under a different sub-theme. The Spiritual Recollection for the Bishops ran under the sub-theme Solidarity and Communion while the Opening Ceremony of the plenary, which was launched in a grand Eucharistic Celebration, was held under the sub-theme, Celebrating Vibrant Diversity.

The Workshop by the Dicastery on the Promotion of Integral Human Development ran under the sub-theme, AMECEA championing for Integral Human Development.

On the other hand, the Study Session and Business Session, which were held from July 18-21, 2018, ran under the sub-themes, Peaceful Coexistence and Unity as well

as Sustainability of AMECEA Institutions and Ownership of AMECEA Institutions respectively.

The Closing ceremony for the Plenary was held on Sunday July 22, under the sub-theme Celebrating Our Oneness. This is the first time for Ethiopia to host the AMECEA Plenary.

Some of the delegates from different Church institutions that took part in the plenary included: delegates from Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar (SECAM), Missio AACHEN, Missio MUNICHEN, Roman Curia, United States Conference of Catholic Bishop (USCCB), SIGNIS, Catholic Relief Services (CRS) and CAMECO.

Others were Church in Need, International Missionary Society, Association of Consecrated Women in Eastern and Central Africa (ACWECA), International Young Christian Society African Coordination Team, International Young Christian Workers Coordination Team and CAFOD among others.



Archbishop Odama (left) shares a light moment with one of the main sponsors of the 19th AMECEA Plenary

Bishop of Solwezi, Zambia elected New Chairman of AMECEA

By AMECEA Online News,
Addis Ababa

The Catholic Bishops of the Association of Member Episcopal Conferences in Eastern Africa (AMECEA) have elected Rt. Rev. Charles Kasonde, Bishop of Solwezi, Zambia as Chairman of AMECEA.

Bishop Kasonde, who was an AMECEA Executive Board delegate from Zambia and Chairman of the AMECEA Social Communications Commission, was elected on 21st July 2018 during the business session of the 19th AMECEA Plenary Assembly.

He takes over from H.E. Berhaneyesus D. Cardinal Souraphiel, Archbishop of Addis Ababa, Ethiopia who served as Chairman for one term of four years.

Speaking at the Official Closing



Former AMECEA Chairman, H. E. Berhaneyesus Cardinal Souraphiel (right) introduces the new AMECEA Chairman, Bishop Kasonde.

Mass of the AMECEA Plenary Assembly on July 22 in Addis Ababa where he was the main celebrant, the new-

ly-elected Bishop expressed gratitude to the AMECEA Bishops for trusting and having confidence in him and other office bearers, who were elected and appointed to various positions during the 19th Plenary.

“May I ask for your support and collaboration, in synodality and communion,” he said adding that “As we are closing our plenary Assembly, I want to ask you all to live the theme of the Plenary: Vibrant Diversity, Equal Dignity, Peaceful unity in God in the AMECEA Region. And remain committed to the common initiatives of AMECEA.”

Bishop Kasonde was born on 14 December 1968 and was ordained as a priest on August 4, 2001 in Ndola, Zambia. He was appointed Bishop on 23 March 2010 and consecrated as a Bishop on 29 May 2010.

The Chairman of AMECEA is elected every Four Years during the business session of the Plenary meeting. The position is held for a maximum of two terms.

New Coordinator for AMECEA Social Communications Department takes office

By Pamela Adinda
AMECEA Online News

Rev. Fr. Andrew Kaufa, a Montfort Missionary from Malawi is the new coordinator for the AMECEA Social Communications Department.

Fr. Kaufa is taking over from Rev. Fr. Chrisantus Ndaga of Mahenge Diocese, Tanzania, who served the department for ten years.

Speaking to AMECEA Online News, Fr. Kaufa said that he is looking forward to collaborating with the National Communications Coordinators from all AMECEA Countries in implementing the resolutions of the just concluded 19th AMECEA Plenary Assembly in Addis Ababa Ethiopia as well as achieving the greater mission of AMECEA Bishops.

“In working together, we will identify the needs in the communications apostolate and see how to address them, guided by the strategic direction of AMECEA. The just concluded AMECEA 19th Plenary Assembly in Addis Ababa Ethiopia emphasized on the importance of digital communication technology for pastoral work, it is therefore upon us to come



Rev Fr Andrew Kaufa AMECEA PHOTO

together and see how we can work towards achieving this,’ Fr. Kaufa explained.

Rt. Rev. Charles Kasonde, the newly-elected chairman of AMECEA has extended warm his welcome to Fr. Kaufa as he begins his tenure at AMECEA Secretariat in Nairobi.

“We say ‘Karibu sana’ and we wish you success in your work as the new Coordinator for Social Communication Department. May your coopera-

tion with all your brothers and sisters that you will find at the Secretariat help you to settle and succeed in doing the work of Christ with zeal and vitality,” Bishop Kasonde who is the local Ordinary of the Diocese of Solwezi Zambia, said in a message that he shared with the AMECEA Online News.

The outgoing coordinator of AMECEA Social Communications Department Fr. Ndaga said that he believes Fr. Kaufa will be able to steer the department to greater heights adding that change is good and when a new person comes in.

Born in 1969, Fr. Kaufa, SMM who comes from Dedza Diocese in Malawi was ordained a priest in July, 2000. He holds a PhD in Business Management and Master’s Degree in Media Studies from Daystar University, Kenya.

He is the former Director of Luntha TV, a National Catholic TV Station run by Montfort Missionaries in Malawi. Fr. Kaufa also worked as a national Communications Coordinator for Episcopal Conference of Malawi (ECM) between 2013 and 2016 where he was instrumental in communications during the preparations as well as the activities of the AMECEA 18th Plenary Assembly, which was held in Malawi in 2014.

Pictorial of AMECEA Plenary in Addis Ababa



Bishops from AMECEA region in a procession for the opening Mass of the 19th AMECEA Plenary



A section of the faithful during the Opening Mass of the 19th AMECEA Plenary



Bishops during the AMECEA Plenary Closing Mass



Delegates pose for a group photo with the sponsors (seated front row in suits), who sponsored the 19th AMECEA Plenary in Ethiopia



The former AMECEA Chairman, Cardinal Berhaneyesus, Archbishop of Addis Ababa



Uganda bishops and delegates



Pope meeting a family at Tuxtla Gutierrez, Mexico, on February 15, 2016. Pope meeting a family at Tuxtla Gutierrez, Mexico, on February 15, 2016.

Pope denounces “slanderous communication” of dictatorships

By Robin Gomes

If you want to destroy institutions or people, you start by speaking ill of them. This is the “slanderous communication” that Pope Francis exhorted Christians to watch out against in his homily at Mass on June 18 in the chapel of the Vatican’s Casa Santa Marta residence.

Slander makes martyrs of innocents

The Pope was reflecting on the episode in the First Book of Kings, where Jezebel, the cruel wife of King Ahab of Samaria, used slander and falsehood to have Naboth killed in order to take possession of his vineyard which her husband greatly coveted.

The Pope described Naboth as a “martyr of fidelity to the inheritance” that he had received from his forefathers: “an inheritance of the heart”.

He said the story of Naboth is repeated in the story of Jesus, Saint Stephen and all the martyrs who

were falsely condemned with slander. The episode also reflects the ways of “many heads of state or government”. One begins with a lie and, “after having destroyed both a person and a situation with slander”, one judges and condemns them.

Dictatorship of evil communication

Pope Francis pointed out that even today this method of slanderous communication is used in many countries. Media and communication law is brushed aside with the entire communication system handed to a company or a group that weakens democratic life with slander and falsehood. The judges then condemn these weakened institutions and destroyed people. That’s how dictatorship works, the Pope said.

The Pope said all dictatorships began by adulterating communication by putting it in the hands of an unscrupulous person or government.

The seduction of scandals

This also happens in daily life, the Pope pointed out, saying one begins to destroy a person by starting with communication – speaking ill of others, slandering and spreading scandals, which he said have great seductive power.

Good news doesn’t seduce, it passes by, but a scandal draws attention. This is how a person, institution and country end up in ruins.

The Pope said many persons and nations have been destroyed by evil and slanderous dictatorships, such as in the last century. He particularly pointed to the example of the persecution of Jews, who because of a slanderous communication did not deserve to live and thus ended up at Auschwitz.

Calling it a horror, the Pope said it happens even today in small societies, in persons and in many countries.

The Pope said James the Apostle speaks precisely of the “destructive capacity of evil communication”. The Holy Father thus exhorted Christians to re-read the episode of Naboth and think of the many people and countries destroyed by dictatorships of ‘white gloves’.



Blessed Pope Paul VI

Pope Paul VI who died 40 years ago underscored the centrality of man

Blessed Pope Paul VI who died on August 6, 1978, will be declared a saint on October 14. On the occasion of his 40th death anniversary, his postulator, Fr. Antonio Marrazzo spoke to Vatican News about the late pontiff's legacy.

Blessed Pope Paul VI who will be declared a saint on October 14, died 40 years ago on August 6, 1978. Looking back at the 15-year pontificate, his postulator or promoter for canonization, Redemptorist Father Antonio Marrazzo, spoke to Vatican News saying Paul VI gave a new direction to the Church's journey on earth. The Italian priest said that in his writings and testament Paul VI revealed his understanding of man, especially as the image of God.

Man, image of God

The priest noted that 40 years after his death the Church continues to take a different path as indicated by the

Second Vatican Council and taught by Paul VI, which consists in putting man at the center, not so much in his anthropological aspect as an end in itself but rather as an image of God - man as willed by God in his likeness, a man who has value and dignity".

The Redemptorist priest explained that Paul VI had this outlook as a young priest and always showed his concern for the least, lost and last of the world. According to Paul VI, we must regard man as God wants it - with tender mercy and love that is not based on condemnation but on understanding and saving because in every man there is an image of God that we must help re-emerge and resurface.

Fr. Marrazzo said that Paul VI was elected to carry forward the Second Vatican Council and guide it with a steady hand to make a "Samaritan" Church, the "handmaid of humanity" that is more inclined to "messages of trust" than "foreboding omens".

Unborn life

Pope Paul's landmark encyclical "Humanae Vitae", fifty years ago, affirmed the intimate union between conjugal love and openness to life. In this regard Fr. Marrazzo pointed out that both the miracles attributed to the intercession of Paul VI are regarding fetuses, i.e. unborn life. Hence, he said, Paul VI could be regarded as the protector of unborn life.

The Redemptorist priest explained that the miracle considered for Paul VI's canonization is regarding a woman from Verona whose unborn child was in danger of being born dead or heavily deformed with a very slim chance of survival due to the lack of amniotic fluid.

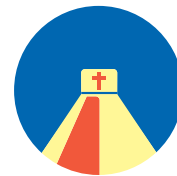
A gynecologist suggested to the family to pray to Paul VI around the time he was being beatified in October 2014. The girl born on Christmas day that year is healthy today, he said. These two miracles, Fr. Marrazzo said, prove that from unborn life come forth persons who have already been considered children by God.

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