



Vatican awarded international prize for video on migrants, refugees » **VATICAN** Page 19

NAMUGONGO SHRINE FILLS TO CAPACITY AS MILLIONS HONOUR UGANDA MARTYRS



A section of pilgrims and liturgical dancers during the entrance procession of the 2018 Uganda Martyrs Day celebration at Namugongo Catholic Shrine
(PHOTO BY JACINTA W. ODONGO)

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19TH AMECEA PLENARY ASSEMBLY
JULY 28-30, 2018
ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA

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- Mt of Beatitudes
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- Mt Zion
- Cana
- Mary's Well
- Uper Room
- Nazareth
- Garden Tomb
- Sea Galilee Boat Ride
- Church of Multiplication
- Plam Sunday Road
- Dead sea
- Sycamore tree
- Western wall
- The shepherd's field
- Church Of Holy Sepulchral
- River Jordan Baptism site
- Baniyas, Caesarea Philipi
- Jericho
- Pyramids and sphinx of Giza
- Red Sea Close Over
- Virgin Mary church
- Mt Sinai
- Burning Bush

10 DAYS ISRAEL- HOLY MISSION

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DIVINE HOLY LAND SITES

- Pyramids and sphinx of Giza - (Egypt)
- River Nile Cruise - (Egypt)
- Red Sea - (Egypt)
- Virgin Mary church - (Egypt)
- Mt Sinai - (Egypt)
- Burning Bush - (Egypt)
- Petra - (Jordan)
- Madaba - (Jordan)
- Mt. Nebo - (Jordan)

10 DAYS ISRAEL- HOLY MISSION

EGYPT - ISRAEL HOLYLAND EXPERIENCE

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Editorial



June 3rd is no doubt a very special day in Uganda. It is a day when we honour the Uganda Martyrs and it is observed as a national public holiday. Our Muslim brothers and sisters in the country commemorate their Martyrs on June 1st.

During the preparations for the celebrations of 2017 and 2018, I had the opportunity to participate in the National Organizing Committee meetings convened by the Ministry of Tourism, Wild Life and Antiquities. I was so impressed by the fact that we planned and held joint press conferences as Catholics, Anglicans, Muslims and representatives of various government ministries and institutions. I saw this as one of the fruits of the blood of our martyrs. It brings to mind Pope Francis' statement when he was receiving the head of the Armenian Apostolic Church on May 8, 2014. The Holy Father stated thus: "As in the ancient Church, the blood of the martyrs became the seed of new Christians, so too in our time the blood of innumerable Christians has become a seed of unity."

The majority of the Uganda Martyrs were condemned to death by King Mwanga II in Munyonyo and they stood together irrespective of their faith affiliations. From Munyonyo they walked together (Catholics and Anglicans) and were burnt alive together in Namugongo, with exception of a few who were killed at different places. May the blood of these heroes of faith become a seed of unity, love and reconciliation in our country and region.

Fr. Philip Odii
Editor/Executive Secretary
of Social Communications

Namugongo Shrine fills to capacity as millions honour Uganda Martyrs



Archbishop Obbo, the main celebrant gives his homily during the Martyrs Day celebration.

By Jacinta W. Odongo

Media Officer, Uganda Episcopal Conference

The Namugongo Catholic Shrine was filled to maximum capacity on June 3, 2018, as millions of enthusiastic pilgrims from different parts of the country and beyond gathered to honor the Uganda Martyrs in grand style.

According to the organizers, about four million pilgrims took part in the 2018 Uganda Martyrs Day (UMD) celebration which marked 132 years since the martyrdom at Namugongo. It was a unique celebration as it was celebrated alongside the centenary (100 years) celebration of the martyrdom of the two Catechists from Paimol: Blessed Daudi Okelo and Blessed Jildo Irwa who were killed in 1918. The two Blessed Martyrs are usually commemorated on October 20 but they were remembered in a special way on June 3.

The colorful celebration was animated by the Archdiocese of Tororo under the theme: "Let us Walk in the Light of God as a Family" (1 John 1:5-10). It kicked-off at 9.30 am with a grand procession of bishops and priests from Uganda and other countries, who received a rousing welcome from the jubilant pilgrims, choir and liturgical dancers. The procession started from the Basilica up to the Sanctuary, amid cheers and chants from the thrilled pilgrims that kept on

waving at the bishops and priests, who were vested in red chasubles symbolizing martyrdom. The thrilling mood at the Shrine was beyond control despite the hot scorching sun.

In his homily, Most Rev. Emmanuel Obbo, urged the pilgrims to emulate the Uganda Martyrs by denouncing bad practices in the families.

"Such convincing Faith should inculcate in us the courage to challenge the bad practices in our families today", he said adding that "today's family is characterized by signs of man's refusal to abide by God's commandment of love".

"Today we experience negative signs of degradation disturbing fundamental values in our families: domestic violence which may end up in murders; lack of tolerance and love; the growing numbers of divorces; the scourge of abortion; search for quick money, devil worship under the disguise of freedom of worship, sex deviations, lies, corruption, human trafficking, discriminations especially against the poor, the weak and the under privileged, and so forth," he added.

He also called upon the faithful to witness Christ in every family which is the first school in every nation. "The Martyrs we are honouring came from fam-

ilies and some of them were family heads. There is no doubt therefore that their Martyrdom had an impact on their families.”

Reflecting on the theme, the Archbishop said John teaches us that, “God is light and there is no darkness in Him.” He noted that the entire Christian community that became children of God through the Sacrament of Baptism cannot come to its destination except under the guidance of the Light of God, which brightens one’s way, enables one to love and to see the needs of others.

He also challenged the youth to live responsibly and overcome negative tendencies by seeking God’s true love as well as work towards peace building in the country.

In his speech, the UEC Chairman, Most Rev. John Baptist Odama, also the Archbishop of Gulu reiterated Archbishop Obbo’s message on the importance of a family and urged the pilgrims to be the salt of the earth.

“As a nucleus of the Church, each family is a domestic Church and shares in the roles of Christ who is the light of the world. Christ has called us to be the salt of the earth and light of the world. It is this light that we must shine on the world as Christians through our actions,” Archbishop Odama said.

The celebration was graced by President Yoweri Museveni, who was the chief guest and his wife, Janet Museveni, also the First Lady of Uganda and Minister of Educa-

tion and Sports. President Museveni in his speech applauded the security forces for maintaining law and order at the Shrine despite the huge turnout.

“I want to congratulate the security forces because such big functions can attract all sorts of bad people. Therefore, I congratulate them for always making sure big numbers like these ones come and go back safe,” Museveni stated.

The Vice President of Uganda, His Excellency Edward Ssekandi, former First Lady of Tanzania, Mama Maria Magige Nyerere, wife of the late President Julius Nyerere, the Chief Justice of Uganda, Bart Magunda Katureebe and the Deputy Chief Justice Alfonse Owiny-Dollo among other politicians, were also in attendance.

Meanwhile, the testimony of the Uganda Martyrs to die for their faith in the imitation of Jesus Christ has always inspired many pilgrims to make this spiritual journey of renewing their faith each year. Nineteen year-old, Karla Rickers, from the Archdiocese of Hamburg in Germany is one of the pilgrims who celebrated the 2018 UMD.

“I am from Germany but currently staying in Soroti Diocese. I heard so many good things about the Uganda Martyrs from the people of Soroti. I was told that they were killed for refusing to denounce their faith and that each year their celebration is usually a very huge event so I wanted to experience it for the first time. I



19 year-old, Karla Rickers, from the Archdiocese of Hamburg

came here this morning at 6.30 am with my two friends also from Germany,” she said.

“I would like the Uganda Martyrs to pray for me together with my family and friends for good health, success and peace,” she added.

The devotion to the Uganda Martyrs has transformed many people’s lives and has become the source of strength amid the challenges and difficulties many Christians go through in their lives.

The June 3, celebration usually marks the commemoration of the heroic faith of the Martyrs, both Catholics and Protestants, who were burnt to death on the orders of Kabaka Mwanga II, the then king of Buganda between 1885 and 1887, for refusing to denounce their faith.

The Archdiocese of Tororo led the 2018 celebration on behalf of Tororo Ecclesiastical Province which comprises of the Dioceses of Jinja, Kotido, Moroto, Soroti and Tororo. The Archdiocese last led the UMD celebration in 1998.

Pictorial of 2018 Uganda Martyrs Celebrations at Namugongo



An altar boy leads a procession of priests and bishops during the celebration



A procession of bishops during the celebration

Pictorial of 2018 Uganda Martyrs Celebrations at Namugonggo



Priests carrying the relics of the Uganda Martyrs



A lady carries The Book of the Gospels in a symbolic basket replicating the Basilica at Namugonggo Catholic Shrine.



The choir from the Archdiocese of Tororo leading pilgrims in hymns



Pilgrims carrying offertory gifts



Security Officers maintain order at Namugonggo during the Uganda Martyrs celebration



The bishops pose for a group photo with President Museveni and the First Lady after the Holy Mass of the Uganda Martyrs Day Celebration

Archbishop Obbo urges youth to lead responsible lives, seek God's true love

By Media Officer, UEC

The Archbishop of the Archdiocese of Tororo, Most Rev. Emmanuel Obbo has challenged the youth to lead responsible lives and overcome negative tendencies by seeking God's true love.

Archbishop Obbo said the youth are living today in a world with globalized culture which puts emphasis on none issues rather than loving God and the neighbour.

"The world is today eroded by self-fulfillment, selfishness, individual rights, egocentric attitudes, adamancy, revenge, etc. These negative tendencies are not different from that of the 'rich fool' (LK.12:15-21) and will lead us to darkness. As young people work for peace, not violence because violence gives birth to violence," the Archbishop said in his homily.

The prelate was speaking at Namugongo Catholic Shrine during the 2018 Uganda Martyrs Day (UMD) celebration held on June 3.

He further reiterated Pope Francis's message to the youth that he delivered at Kololo Grounds during his 2015 visit to Uganda, where the Pope aware of the obstacles that the youth encounter, consoled them (youth).

"Whenever you have a problem, a setback, a failure, you must anchor your heart in God's love, for it has the power to turn death into life and



Archbishop Obbo gives his homily

to banish every evil," the Archbishop quoted the Pope's message.

Archbishop Obbo also called on parents to ensure that they give the best guidance and direction to their children so as to mould them into better persons in future. He stated that a bad family life affects the youth negatively and the people around them.

"When there is no love and true friendships in the family, young people are forced on the streets for friendship thus joining wrong people that will never make them grow. Parents, therefore, you have the responsibility before God; to bring up your children and family in God-fearing manner,"

he said adding "Together we have to support our youth in their search for life and we encourage our communities to listen to them, dialogue with them, and respond boldly and without reservation to the difficult conditions in their growth."

He also condemned the recent rise of kidnappings in the country that has caused panic among the citizens due to the fear of losing their loved ones.

The 2018 UMD celebration was animated by the Archdiocese of Tororo under the theme: "Let us Walk in the Light of God as a Family" (1 John 1:5-10). The Archdiocese last led the celebration in 1998

Lets us continue to pray for the soul of our late colleague, Geraldine N. Lwanyaga

By Media Officer, UEC



Last year, on June 20, we lost one of our dear colleagues Mrs. Geraldine N. Lwanyaga. She passed on at Nsambya Hospital after a short illness.

Geraldine, as many used to call her, was working as an Administrative Assistant of the Social Communications Department of the Uganda Episcopal Conference, at the time of her death. She was not just a colleague but also a mother, sister and friend to many. She is survived by her husband and two children. May we continue to pray for her soul to Rest in Peace.

Vox Pox from the pilgrims about 2018 Uganda Martyrs Day celebration

By Media Officer, UEC

Every June 3, millions of pilgrims from Uganda and across the world make pilgrimage to Namugongo Catholic Shrine for the Uganda Martyrs Day celebration. This year's celebration attracted over three million pilgrims. *Our reporter Jacinta W. Odongo* spoke to some of the pilgrims that attended the 2018 celebration at Namugongo.

Keta Monica Mwalweni, 38 years old, from Archdiocese of Lilongwe, Malawi



Keta Monica Mwalweni

This is my sixth time to come to Namugongo Catholic Shrine for the Uganda Martyrs Day celebration. I first attended the celebration in 2012 and since then I have never looked back. Although the place is too far from Malawi, the faith that I have in the Uganda Martyrs is too strong that I always keep coming back each year. Every time I make a pilgrimage here, something amazing always happens in my life. I have realized that it's the Martyrs work of intercession that has helped me to become who I am today.

This year, I came to pray for my eight year-old daughter to grow up in a Christian way and receive abundant endless blessings from the Almighty God.

Edward Murage Chuma, 69, from Nyahuru Diocese, Kenya

I came to Namugongo by bus with



Edward Murage Chuma and his wife

my wife Cecilia and a group of other pilgrims from my home parish. We left Nyahuru Diocese on Thursday May 31, 2018 and arrived here on Friday June 1. For the past eight years, I have been coming to this Shrine to honour the Uganda Martyrs and to seek for God's favour through their intercession. I have seen so many wonderful things happening in my life and these have inspired me to continue making this annual pilgrimage without fail. This year, I would like the Uganda Martyrs to intercede for me for good health and for the success of my daughter in her Master's degree as she will be presenting her Master's degree Thesis this week.

Besides, I have come to give thanks to God for healing my wife last year. She had a problem with her back bone and, in fact she was scheduled to go to India for an operation last year. We had processed everything for our trip to India including our passports, but prior to that trip, she suggested that we come to Namugongo for the intercession of the Uganda Martyrs. And, it was during that pilgrimage to Namugongo that she felt a sharp healing relief on her back and got healed. We later went for check-up to the hospital and same the doctors who had referred her for that operation declared that her back was very normal! This was a great miracle through the intercession of the Uganda Martyrs.

Marcel Ume, 54, from Archdiocese of Abuja, Nigeria

This is my first time to come here for prayers. I am part of the Knights of St. Matthias Mulumba in Nigeria, and today is his (St. Matthias's) Feast Day. I



Marcel Ume

arrived here on May 29 with other 49 pilgrims from our group (the Knights of St. Matthias Mulumba) and, upon arrival we visited the trails of the Uganda Martyrs so as to experience their pain and last moments before their martyrdom. We also visited various projects that we support here in Uganda including orphanages and hospitals.

Just in line with the law of Christ and the fact that somebody can give up his life to serve God, I was inspired by the story of these Martyrs. I pray to God to replicate that kind of faith in us Christians of today as we are faced with many challenges. In today's celebration, I would like the Uganda Martyrs to intercede for all African countries so that we can have true good leaders at heart who make wise political and economical decisions.

Phiona Honerkamp, 19, Osnabrück Diocese, Germany



Phiona Honerkamp

This is my first time to come to Namugongo for the Uganda Martyrs celebration. I heard many positive things about it from friends back in Kumi District where I am currently residing, and I decided to make a pilgrimage this year. I came with another priest from Kumi and I am very happy to be here. I came to pray for my family and my personal needs as well as to see the history of the Uganda Martyrs. I was shocked to see the huge numbers of people gathered at one place for prayers. I have never seen such a huge crowd in my life that is brought together because of faith! Not even in Germany. To me this is something very special.

Charlotte Lorenz, 19, Osnabrück Diocese, Germany

I am from Germany but currently I live in the Diocese of Hoima since September 2016. I learned about the Uganda Martyrs Day celebration from one of the priests in Hoima who told me about it and how the Diocese led the 2017 celebration. So I decided to come this year because I wanted ▶



Charlotte Lorenz

▶ to see what this UMD is all about. I was so touched by the huge numbers of pilgrims, both young and old when I arrived here at Namugongo. The Martyrs are an inspiration to many, especially Catholics and Protestants as they inspire us on how to always stand for (our own opinion in) our faith. I would like them to intercede for me to continue being strong in my faith.

Ruby Tombindo, 48, Archdiocese of Harare, Zimbabwe



Ruby Tombindo

I run a travel agency in Zimbabwe and I have always organized pilgrimages for many people to different places: Holy Land; Spain and France. However, I have never organized for a pilgrimage to Uganda and Rwanda. Thus, this year I decided to organize one to Namugongo and Kibeho as I have heard so many good things about these places. We started from Kibeho in Rwanda then came at Namugongo on May 31 where we spent the whole day in prayers. We also got a chance to follow the Uganda Martyrs trail from Munyonyo up to Old Kampala.

The Uganda Martyrs bring a feeling that no one can explain because they knew they were going to be killed, but they kept on following the instructions of their executioners. They were not afraid to let the executioners take away their bodily flesh but not their faith, which is a great challenge on our faith. Being my first time here, I have a special prayer request to the Martyrs; I want them to intercede for my country for peace and stability especially as we are approaching our general elections

due July 30. Moreover, I want them to pray for me for good health, stronger faith and peace in my heart and my family.

Catherine Wanjiku, 56, Nyahururu Diocese, Kenya



Catherine Wanjiku

This is the second time to come here for this pilgrimage since 2015. I arrived at Namugongo on June 1 with a group of about 40 people having left Nyahururu by bus on May 31. My pilgrimage this year to Namugongo is to give back thanks to the Almighty God for the great things He has done in my life, since my first visit in 2015 when I had countless problems. I also want to pray for all my friends who have sent me here to pray for them through the Uganda Martyrs.

Rose Kingori, 52, Nakuru Diocese, Kenya



Rose Kingori

This year's pilgrimage is my first to Namugongo. I used to hear great things about Namugongo from my fellow parishioners and I am glad that I finally made it to this Shrine. I have already presented my prayer intentions to the Uganda Martyrs and being my first visit, I know the Almighty God will answer. I want the Martyrs to pray for my son for healing because he is sick and to pray for my family for abundant blessings as well as all my friends that sent me here for prayers with their personal needs.

MP Bernard Atiku, 40, Arua Diocese

Since childhood, Uganda Martyrs Day has been a special day in my life. Even now as a Member of Parliament



MP Bernard Atiku

(MP), I always come here with my family because I believe Martyrs Day is one of those special days to renew our faith, therefore it's a day that I wouldn't want to miss out. As a politician I would like the Uganda Martyrs to intercede for peace and security in my country especially with the recent increase of kidnappings and killings of children and women who are being murdered as human sacrifice. I also pray for road safety following the rampant road carnage.

MP Lucy Akello, also the Chairperson of Catholic Community at Parliament, 37, Gulu Archdiocese



MP Lucy Akello

I have been here so many times as I was once a student at Uganda Martyrs' Secondary School Namugongo. As the Chairperson of Catholic Community at Parliament, I have seen how the numbers of pilgrims keeps increasing in every celebration. This year we registered 60 MPs and we organized three buses to bring them here. But, the three buses were all filled up and some MPs had to use their own personal vehicles therefore this shows that the pilgrimage to Namugongo has grown from strength to strength.

As we were coming here we had to recite a rosary through the intercession of the Uganda Martyrs for true leadership in our country and many other things that have gone wrong in the past few days. We have a special request to the Uganda Martyrs for our country because there are a lot of cruel things happening which includes kidnappings and killings. I also asked them to pray for me as an individual to be able to overcome challenges wisely.

Pontifical Mission Societies- Uganda gets new National Director



Fr. Pontian, the new national director of Pontifical Mission Societies (PMS)

By Jacinta W. Odongo

The Uganda Episcopal Conference (UEC) has announced the appointment of Rev. Fr. Pontian Kaweesa, of the Diocese of Kiyinda-Mityana, as the new National Director of Pontifical Mission Societies (PMS) Uganda, with effect from January 18, 2018.

Fr. Pontian has been appointed for a five year-period by the Prefect of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples in Vatican, Cardinal Fernando Filoni. He will serve as the National Director of PMS for the Pontifical Mission Works of the Propagation of Faith, St. Peter Apostolate, The Holy Childhood Society, Pontifical Missionary Association for the Clergy and Men & Women Professing Evan-

gelical Counsels.

His appointment was announced by the UEC Secretary General, Msgr. John Baptist Kauta during the weekly Mass at the Uganda Catholic Secretariat.

In a recent interview, Fr. Pontian, told New Contact that he is excited about his new job and is looking forward to the spirit of collaboration.

“First and foremost, I would like to continue to promote the PMS, their work and animation, and to bring them to the forefront as the instruments of evangelization in a new way, just as the Pope has asked us,” he said.

“I am looking forward to the spirit of collaboration with the bishops,

priests, diocesan directors of PMS, the religious and all the faithful at all levels in the country,” he added.

Prior to his new assignment, Fr. Pontian was the Diocesan director of the PMS in the Diocese of Kiyinda-Mityana for over 10 years. He also served as a lecturer at St. Mbaaga Major Seminary in Ggaba from 1996 to-date, where he taught Sacramental Theology, Christology and De Gratia (formation of seminarians to become future priests).

The new National Director was born on February 14, 1963 in Nkozi, and was ordained a priest on July 16, 1994 for the Diocese of Kiyinda-Mityana. After his primary studies he began his priestly formation at the Minor Seminary in Nswanjere, then in Nyenga and in Bukalasa. He studied philosophy at Katigondo Major Seminary in Masaka, and from 1994-1996 obtained a Master’s degree in Spirituality and a Licentiate in Theology at the University of St. Mary of the Lake in Chicago. Upon completing his Master’s degree, he returned to Uganda and was appointed as a lecturer at St. Mbaaga Major Seminary.

He also served as a chaplain of sportsmen and legio Mariae, president of the board of St. Kizito Bbanda senior secondary school, member of the council of Ggaba primary teacher’s college among other positions.

Fr. Pontian has replaced Rev. Fr. Philip Balikuddembe, who served as the PMS National Director for a period of 11 years.

LITURGICAL KEY EVENTS FOR JULY

July 3- Feast of Saint Thomas, Apostle

Best known for his initial unwillingness to believe the other apostles in their claim that Jesus had risen from the dead, St. Thomas can teach the faithful about believing without seeing. After Pentecost, St. Thomas is traditionally believed to have preached the Good News to the Persians and Medes, until he reached India, where he evangelized and was eventually martyred in 72 A.D. St. Thomas’ feast was formerly celebrated on December 21, and he is the patron of architects and builders.

July 11- Memorial of Saint Benedict, Abbot

St. Benedict was born at Nursia in Umbria in about 480 and was sent to Rome to be educated, but soon left the world to live a solitary life at Subiaco. After living in a cave in the mountains for two years as a hermit, he had acquired such a reputation that disciples came in numbers to join him and important Roman families entrusted him with the education of their children. He organized a form of monastic life in twelve small monasteries. Under his guidance, as abbot, the monks vowed to seek God and

devoted themselves to work and prayer. A few years later St. Benedict left the district of Subiaco to found the great abbey of Monte Cassino on the heights of Campania. There he wrote his Rule in which are wonderfully combined the Roman genius and the monastic wisdom of the Christian East. St. Benedict died in 547.

July 13-23- AMECEA Plenary in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

The Association of Member Episcopal Conferences in Eastern Africa (AMECEA) will hold its 19th AMECEA Plenary Assembly from July 13-23, 2018 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Over 300 guests are expected to attend the 10 day Plenary. The Opening Holy Mass will be held at Ethiopian Millennium Hall while the closing Mass and the plenary Assembly Meeting will take place at the Nativity Cathedral and the UN Economic Commission for Africa respectively.

The AMECEA Plenary Assembly meeting in business session is the supreme authority within the Association and all office bearers and other bodies of the association are ultimately answerable to this authority. The Plenary Assembly meets in ordinary session after every four years. However, an extraordinary meeting can be called whenever it is deemed necessary by the Executive Board or by a majority of the full member Conferences of the Association.

July 25- Feast of Saint James, Apostle

St. James, known as the Greater, in order to distinguish

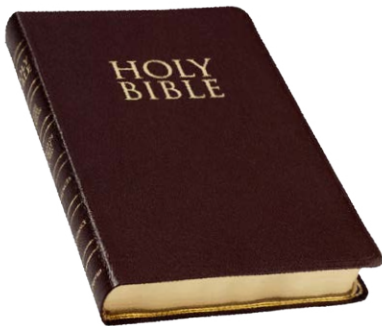
him from the other Apostle St. James, our Lord's cousin, was St. John's brother. With Peter and John he was one of the witnesses of the Transfiguration, as later he was also of the agony in the garden. He was beheaded in Jerusalem in 42 or 43 on the orders of Herod Agrippa. Since the ninth century Spain has claimed the honour of possessing his relics, though it must be said that actual proof is far less in evidence than the devotion of the faithful. The pilgrimage to St. James of Compostella in the Middle Ages attracted immense crowds; after the pilgrimage to Rome or the Holy Land, it was the most famous and the most frequented pilgrimage in Christendom. The pilgrim paths to Compostella form a network over Europe; they are dotted with pilgrims' hospices and chapels, some of which still exist. St. James is mentioned in the Roman Canon of the Mass.

July 26- Memorial of Saints Joachim and Anne, Parents of the Blessed Virgin

It was in the home of Joachim and Ann where the Virgin Mary received her training to be the Mother of God. Thus, devotion to Ann and Joachim is an extension of the affection Christians have always professed toward our Blessed Mother. We, too, owe a debt of gratitude to our parents for their help in our Christian formation.

According to the 1962 Missal of St. John XXIII the Extraordinary Form of the Roman Rite, today is the feast of St. Ann; St. Joachim's feast in this rite is celebrated on August 16. They are the patron saints of grandparents; grandmothers and grandfathers.

LITURGICAL READINGS FOR JULY 2018



Lectionary: 101

Reading 1 EZ 2:2-5

Responsorial Psalm PS 123:1-2, 2, 3-4

Reading 2 2 COR 12:7-10

Gospel MK 6:1-6

JULY 11- Memorial of Saint Benedict, Abbot

Lectionary: 385

Reading 1 HOS 10:1-3, 7-8, 12

Responsorial Psalm PS105:2-3, 4-5, 6-7

Gospel MT 10:1-7

JULY 15- Fifteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Lectionary: 104

Reading 1 AM 7:12-15

Responsorial Psalm PS 85:9-10, 11-12, 13-14

Reading 2 EPH 1:3-14 OR 1:3-10

Gospel MK 6:7-13

JULY 22- Sixteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Lectionary: 107

Reading 1 JER 23:1-6

Responsorial Psalm PS 23:1-3, 3-4, 5, 6

Reading 2 EPH 2:13-18

Gospel MK 6:30-34

JULY 25- Feast of Saint James, Apostle

Lectionary: 605

Reading 1 2 COR 4:7-15

Responsorial Psalm PS 126:1BC-2AB, 2CD-3, 4-5, 6

Gospel MT 20:20-28

JULY 26- Memorial of Saints Joachim and Anne, Parents of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Lectionary: 398

Reading 1 JER 2:1-3, 7-8, 12-13

Responsorial Psalm PS 36:6-7AB, 8-9, 10-11

Gospel MT 13:10-17

JULY 29- Seventeenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Lectionary: 110

Reading 1 2 KGS 4:42-44

Responsorial Psalm PS 145:10-11, 15-16, 17-18

Reading 2 EPH 4:1-6

Gospel JN 6:1-15

JULY 31- Memorial of Saint Ignatius of Loyola, Priest

Lectionary: 402

Reading 1 JER 14:7-22

Responsorial Psalm PS 79:8, 9, 11 AND 13

Gospel MT 13:36-43

JULY 1 - Thirteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Lectionary: 98

Reading 1 WIS 1:13-15; 2:23-24

Responsorial Psalm PS 30:2, 4, 5-6, 11, 12, 13

Reading 2 2 COR 8:7, 9, 13-15

Gospel MK 5:21-43 OR 5:21-24, 35B-43

JULY 3- Feast of Saint Thomas, Apostle

Lectionary: 593

Reading 1 EPH 2:19-22

Responsorial Psalm PS 117:1BC, 2

Gospel JN 20:24-29

JULY 8- Fourteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Catholic Bishops ask government, security agencies to protect Ugandans



Archbishop Odama at a past press conference

By Media Officer, UEC

The Catholic Bishops in Uganda have appealed to the Government and all security agencies in the country to scale up their efforts to protect the life and property of Ugandans.

The bishops said they have noted that for some time now there has been an increase in kidnappings, organized crime and killings in the country.

“We note with great concern that for some time now there has been an increase in kidnappings, organized crime and killings in our country. We call upon our Government and all security agencies to scale up their efforts to protect the life and property of Ugandans,” the bishops made the comment in a press statement that was released on June 13, 2018, and signed by the Chairman of Uganda Episcopal Conference and Archbishop of Gulu, Most Rev. John Baptist Odama.

Their appeal came after a series of recent kidnappings and murders in the country, for the past few months that in at least one case turned fatal.

The prelates further called upon Ugandans to become more security conscious and to be each other's keeper. They, however, warned the perpetrators against committing these senseless criminal acts, and told them to respect the dignity of human life.

Kidnappings and murder, lately, are certainly on the increase in Uganda. The perpetrators are targeting both ordinary and high-profile citizens, thus causing panic and fear to everyone. A few weeks ago, Arua Municipality Member of Parliament, Ibrahim Abiriga was shot dead together with his bodyguard near his home in Kawanda along the Kampala-Gulu highway. Abiriga, who was famous for his love for the National Resistance Movement party, was killed as he drove his yellow Volkswagen beetle vehicle.

He was gunned down in the evening hours by unknown gunmen reportedly riding on motorcycles in a style similar to the way former Assistant Inspector General of police Andrew Felix Kaweesi was killed last year.

Meanwhile, in the same press statement, the bishops have noted that Government has worked out a policy which has been defined and approved in a document called the National Sexuality Education (NSE). They said that this document gives guidelines to the schools, showing the content and the various age brackets when sexual information and life skills are to be imparted to the pupils. However, the church leaders pointed out that the NSE Framework, though containing some valid ideas and guidelines, fails

to answer some crucial questions and address in an adequate manner some important issues.

“We point out, among other aspects, that the vital role of the family, especially in the early ages is ignored in the new document” and that it exposes children ages 3-5 years to “content and life skills which are not appropriate for their age,” the prelates stated.

Furthermore, the bishops said, the information and life skills provided for upper level students are “open to interpretation and practices which may contrary to moral Christian values.” They also added that the program provides “no provisions or guaranties that school teachers are prepared and able to teach in a balanced and proper way such delicate and emotionally charged topics.”

They emphasized that in the final and published edition of the document, the contributions of the Catholic experts who were asked to contribute remarks and documents about the same document, have been substantially ignored. Hence, should the new NSE Framework remain unchanged; it shall not be introduced and taught in Christian-founded schools.

The church leaders further raised their concern about The National Bio-safety Act 2017 which Parliament approved into law last year, and is now waiting for the approval and signing by the President of Uganda. They stated that the Act does not contain enough guaranties against the risks involved in the use of Genetically Engineered products and Genetically Modified Organisms, particularly the dangerous and long time negative effects for the health of people and animals as well as for the environment.

In the same press statement, they also announced the establishment of a national Catholic Television, called the Uganda Catholic Television, which will be used to promote the work of evangelization and integral human development in the country.

The bishops are appealing to all Catholic faithful and all people of good will to support this project and to pray for its success.

Catholic bishops celebrate dinner with UEC employees

By Jacinta W. Odongo

On Thursday June 7, 2018, the Catholic Bishops of Uganda converged at the Uganda Catholic Secretariat (UCS) premises for a family dinner with its employees.

The dinner began with an opening prayer that was led by the Vice Chairman of the Uganda Episcopal Conference (UEC), Rt. Rev. Joseph Antony Zziwa, also the Bishop of Kiyinda Mityana Diocese. It featured a range of activities: speeches; cutting of the cake and presentation of gifts to several staffs for their individual achievements.

In his speech, the Chairman of the UEC, Most Rev. John Baptist Odama, also the Archbishop of Gulu Archdiocese thanked the Bishops, the UEC Secretary General, Msgr. John Baptist Kauta and the UEC employees for their long term commitment and excellent results.

“As I stand here today, I am grateful to each one of you for their commitment towards the UEC. You are our think-tank, backbone, and shock-absorbers. Let’s always remember to pray for each other and link ourselves to God through the intercession of the Uganda Martyrs,” said Archbishop Odama.



Bishops and the employees of the Uganda Episcopal Conference during the dinner

He also congratulated Msgr. Kauta for marking his 50th anniversary as a priest, and thanked him for his dedication.

The Archbishop further expressed his gratitude to the Archdiocese of Tororo for animating the 2018 Uganda Martyrs Day celebration at Namugongo. Later on, he also launched the new Catholic Directory 2017/2018.

Meanwhile during the dinner, the Archbishop of Mbarara Archdiocese, Most Rev. Paul Bakyenga announced the establishment a new Catholic university in the Archdiocese of Mbarara, University of St. Joseph. He said the new university will be launched on August 13, 2018.

The dinner concluded at around 10pm with a closing prayer and blessing from Archbishop Bakyenga.

WISE QUOTES FOR REFLECTION

“Accept responsibility for your life. Know that it is you who will get you where you want to go, no one else.”
– *Les Brown*

“When one door closes, another opens; but we often look so long and so regretfully upon the closed door that we do not see the one that has opened for us.”
– *Alexander Graham Bell*

“The purpose of life is not to be happy. It is to be useful, to be honorable, to be compassionate, and to have it make some difference that you have lived and lived well.” – *Ralph Waldo Emerson*

“A true friend never gets in your way unless you happen to be going down.” – *Arnold H. Glasgow*

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

“Every accomplishment starts with the decision to try.”
– *John F. Kennedy*

“Faith is taking the first step even when you don’t see

the whole staircase” – *Martin Luther King Jr.*

“If you go to work on your goals, your goals will go to work on you. If you go to work on your plan, your plan will go to work on you. Whatever good things we build end up building us.” – *Jim Rohn*

“The strongest force in the universe is a human being living consistently with his identity.” – *Tony Robbins*

“When you are content to be simply yourself and don’t compare or compete, everyone will respect you.” – *Lao Tzu, Chinese philosopher*

“Care about what other people think and you will always be their prisoner.” – *Lao Tzu*

“Learn to light a candle in the darkest moments of someone’s life. Be the light that helps others see; it is what gives life its deepest significance.” – *Roy T. Bennett*

“Guard well your thoughts when alone and your words when accompanied.” – *Roy T. Bennett*



The Front view of the view of Iceme Marian Shrine before the celebration. 'Maria totoeklesia' means Mary mother of the church. The plaque in white are the prayers to mother Mary.

Bishop of Lira Diocese erects Marian Shrine

By Fr. Tobby Okello

The Bishop of Lira Diocese, Rt. Rev. Joseph Franzelli has erected a Marian Shrine at Iceme Parish in Oyam District, dedicating it to Mary Mother of the Church.

The event was held on May 21, 2018, in the presence of the Bishops from Gulu Ecclesiastical Province (Gulu Archdiocese, Nebbi, Arua And Lira Diocese). Over 50 priests and 60 religious sisters from different congregations were also in attendance.

Bishop Franzelli, who was the main celebrant at the occasion, centred his homily on the Gospel reading of the day, where Jesus presented His mother Mary to John, as his mother and presented John to Mary as her son (John 19:25-34). The bishop said that by so doing, Jesus gave his Mother to the whole Church.

"We hear in today's Gospel that, as he was dying on the cross, Jesus looked to his mother and the disciple whom he loved, and he said to Mary, "Woman, behold, your son," and then to John, "Behold, your mother."



Bishops from Gulu Ecclesiastical Province (Gulu Archdiocese, Nebbi, Arua And Lira Diocese) receiving gifts

"WE ARE UNDER HER CARE. NONE OF US IS AN ORPHAN. SHE INTERCEDES AND PRAYS FOR US, EVEN IF WE DO FORGET,"

We are told that "from that hour the disciple took her into his home," he said.

He noted that the act of Jesus giving his Mother to the Church, shows that He takes care, knows our difficulties, frustrations and sins- most especially selfishness. Thus, urged the pilgrims to make the true presence of Mary felt in their lives.

"We are under her care. None of us is an orphan. She intercedes and prays for us, even if we do forget," he explained.

While erecting the Shrine, Bishop Franzelli said the Church of Iceme was built 40 years ago, through the initiative of Fr. Sebastiano Bianchi, a Comboni priest who dedicated it to the patronage of Mary Mother of the Church, on December 8, 1988, which is the feast of the Immaculate Conception.

He said that Fr. Bianchi received the consent and the blessing of Bishop Ceaser Asili, the first bishop of Lira Diocese and the founder of the religious congregation of the Missionary Sisters of Mary Mother of the Church.

The bishop thanked God for the gift of the Shrine and urged the pilgrims to make regular pilgrimages to the shrine and offer their prayers.

The function also attracted thousands of pilgrims from different parts of the country. Aboke Deanery animated the celebration.

AMECEA 19th Plenary Assembly Preparatory Committee outlines important General Information to the Delegates

By Pamela Adinda, AMECEA Online News



The preparatory committee of the 19th AMECEA Plenary Assembly which is scheduled to take place in Addis Ababa Ethiopia has compiled General Information which is of great interest to the plenary delegates. Among these include Liturgical requirements whereby all members of the Episcopate are required to carry their Black Cassocks, Albs, Mitres, Amices and Cinctures. Also important to note is that all members of the Episcopate will be provided with Stoles and Chasubles for use during all the liturgical celebrations. All priests on the other hand are

required to carry Albs, Amices and Cinctures.

Other important information that the preparatory committee has compiled include weather where delegates are informed that July is very cold and rainy in Addis Ababa, the Capital City of Ethiopia, therefore they should carry warm clothes as well as umbrellas. Other general information such as Ethiopian Currency, electric power sockets and adapters used, security issues, visa requirements, journalistic equipment, health as well as persons to contact are included in the document provided below.

The overall schedule is as follows:

DATE	ACTIVITY	VENUE
Friday July 13, 2018	Arrival of Bishops	Bole International Airport
Saturday July 14, 2018	*Spiritual recollection of Bishops *Arrival of other delegates	UNECA Conference Center Bole International Airport
Sunday July 15, 2018	*Opening Holy Mass *Opening Ceremony (afternoon)	Millennium Hall (near Bole Airport) UNECA Conference Center
Monday July 16, 2018	Study session	UNECA Conference Center
Tuesday July 17, 2018	Study session	UNECA Conference Center
Wednesday July 18, 2018	Study session	UNECA Conference Center
Thursday July 19, 2018	*Departure of other delegates *Free excursions	Bole International Airport
Friday July 20, 2018	Business session	UNECA Conference Center
Saturday July 21, 2018	Business session	UNECA Conference Center
Sunday July 22, 2018	*Closing Holy Mass	Nativity Cathedral
Monday July 23, 2018	Departure	Bole International Airport

UNECA – United Nations Economic Commission for Africa

General Information about Addis Ababa

No.	CATEGORY	GENERAL INFORMATION
1	Liturgical Requirements	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> All members of the Episcopate should carry their Black Cassocks. In addition, they should bring with them their an Albs, Mitres, Amices and Cinctures. All members of the Episcopate will be provided with Stoles and Chasubles for use during all the liturgical celebrations of the Plenary Assembly. All Priests should carry their Albs, Amices and Cinctures for purposes of liturgical celebrations. The liturgical booklet which has already been prepared contains the Order of Mass both in the Latin Rite and Ethiopian Rite (for purposes of the Opening Ceremony) together with the other Prayers during the sessions, that is, Morning and Evening Prayers. Delegates are therefore expected to carry their Breviaries for the other parts of the Liturgy of the Hours.
2	Weather	The weather in Addis Ababa in July is cold and rainy. So pack warm clothes and bring an umbrella.

No.	CATEGORY	GENERAL INFORMATION
3	Currency exchange	<p>Ethiopian currency is called Birr (Ethiopian Birr / ETB). As on May 17, 2018, the exchange rate is: 1 USD=27.79 1 GBP=35.74 1 EUR=32.72</p> <p>You can exchange your currency when you arrive at the airport. The currency exchange office inside the airport is open 24 hours. An individual will also be assigned by the Ethiopian Catholic Secretariat who will exchange your currency for you at the bank using your passport. You will be notified of the contact person on arrival.</p>
4	Language	<p>Amharic is the language used in Addis Ababa but you should not have any problem as most of the people you will meet will understand English.</p>
5	Local calendar and time	<p>Ethiopia is using the Julian calendar, though we also do use the Gregorian calendar. The Julian calendar is 8 years behind the Gregorian calendar. A full year runs from September up to August. Currently (May 2018), we are in the 9th month of the year 2010EC.</p> <p>In Ethiopia, the day is divided into a 12-hour day and a 12-hour night. Morning starts at 7am (meaning 1 in Ethiopia) and evening starts at 7pm (again meaning 1 in Ethiopia.) But most people do understand am/pm as well as the 24-hour format.</p>
6	Accommodation & hotel services	<p>Bishops and Partners will be accommodated at the following address: Intercontinental Addis Hotel P.O.Box 5907 Addis Ababa, Ethiopia Tel. +44 20 3027 6614</p> <p>Other delegates will be accommodated in congregation and guest houses. The name and address of their accommodation will be sent to them after receiving the registration form.</p>
7	Transportation (taxi)	<p>Bishops will be received at the airport by an assigned person and be taken to their hotel. They will be briefed about their transportation services for the plenary.</p> <p>Other delegates who will be arriving on July 14 need to contact the AMECEA desk which will be setup in the airport reception area. The volunteers at the AMECEA desk will then take the delegates to their arranged transportation, which will take them to where they will be accommodated (congregation or guest house.) Please note transportation will be provided for those who have filled and submitted the registration form on time. If any change in flight schedule, please inform us ahead of time. Transportation details for the plenary (driver's name and address, car plate number, etc) will be available at the AMECEA desk upon arrival.</p> <p>For those who might be arriving later than July 14, please let us know ahead of time so that we may arrange transportation and provide further information.</p> <p>Bole International Airport in Addis Ababa has 2 terminals: Terminal 1 (Domestic Terminal) and Terminal 2 (International Terminal.) Please note the arrival and departure flights at Terminal 1:</p> <p>*JUBA.....-JUB *DOHA.....DOH *HARGEISA.....-HGA *DJIBOUTI.....-JIB *MUSCAT.....-MCT *DAMMAM.....-DMM *JEDDAH.....-JED *RIYADH.....-RUH *KUWAIT.....KWI</p> <p>Other international arrival and departure flights are at Terminal 2.</p> <p>For those guests who would like to move around Addis Ababa, you can use the blue taxi (lada) which you can find on any street (and negotiate the price), or the yellow meter taxi (which you have to call or use the meter taxi app to contact one.) You can download the application (RIDE Passenger) on Google Play or iOS. Just in case, you need to be careful in using taxis at night.</p>
8	Communication	<p>Free WIFI is available at the airport, venue (UNECA) and hotels. There is no free WIFI at the Millennium Hall. For those who will be accommodated in congregations and guest houses, there might not be free WIFI in those places. To buy a SIM card, you need passport copy and passport size picture. For any assistance, you will be notified of the contact person on arrival. If you will be using a local SIM card, please register your mobile phone at the airport customs office.</p>
9	Security	<p>The security in Addis Ababa is good. But, in general, you need to be alert for pickpockets.</p>

No.	CATEGORY	GENERAL INFORMATION
10	Voltage	<p>In Ethiopia, the power sockets are of type C, E, F and L. The standard voltage is 220 V and the standard frequency is 50 Hz.</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: flex-start;"> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>Type C: This socket also works with plug E and F</p> </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>Type E: This socket also works with plug C. Plug F will work if it has an additional pinhole</p> </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>Type F: This socket also works with plug C and E</p> </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p>Type L: This socket also works with plug C</p> </div> </div>
11	Touristic areas	<p>Some touristic areas in Addis Ababa are: National Museum of Ethiopia, Ethnological Museum (inside Addis Ababa University, the former residence of Emperor Haileselassie I), Red Terror Martyrs' Memorial Museum, Tiglachin Monument (& the Ethiopia-Cuba Friendship Memorial Park), Addis Ababa Museum, The Zoological Natural History Museum, Modern Art Museum, Mount Entoto (& Entoto Maryam Church), Yekatit 12 monument, Monument to the Lion of Judah, Menelik II Square, Tewodros Square, Abune Petros Memorial, Gulele Botanical Garden, TOMOCA Coffee, etc.</p>
12	Shopping centers	<p>For traditional items, we have market districts: Shiro Meda & the traditional shops near the main post office.</p> <p>There are also various shopping malls mostly in the Bole area (near Bole Airport): Dembel, Edna, Friendship, Snap, Mafi, Morning Star, Getu, etc. There are also shopping malls in other parts of the city. For more information, please check online.</p> <p>There are various supermarkets, pharmacies, etc all over the city. There is one hypermarket in Megenagna called Shoa Hypemarket (inside Zefmesh Grand Mall.)</p>
13	Meals & Restaurants	<p>Please note that you need to fill the registration form if you have any specific dietary needs.</p> <p>For those who want go out and enjoy the local culinary delights, there are traditional restaurants that provide traditional food and traditional dance in the evening: 2000 Habesha Cultural Restaurant, Yod Abyssinia Restaurant, Dashen Traditional Restaurant, Bata Restaurant and Bar, etc.</p> <p>There are also other restaurants with an international taste.</p> <p>For more information, please check online.</p>
14	Visa	<p>Please make sure you fulfill all visa and entry requirements. For further information, the contact person is: Ms. Mihret Seifu ecc.sdco@gmail.com / mihiret2002@yahoo.com Whatsapp & Viber: +251911874099</p>
15	Journalistic Equipment	<p>Please make note to carry only simple cameras (like tourists do), not heavy journalistic equipment. Such heavy and many equipment would need prior permission from the Ethiopian authorities, which the individual / journalist has to request ahead of time. For more information, the contact person is: Ms. Makeda Yohannes makjour@gmail.com +251911480336</p>
16	Health	<p>Medical professionals and ambulances will be available at venues for any emergencies.</p> <p>For those who would like to use the UN Health Care Center, the prices in USD range from \$2 up to \$300.</p>
17	Contact persons	<p>General: Secretary General – Fr. Hagos Hayish, C.M., hagoscmecssg@gmail.com mobile: +251 911509143</p> <p>Deputy Secretary General – Fr. Teshome Fikre fteshomew@yahoo.com mobile: +251 930097686</p> <p>Visa Section: Ms. Mihret Seifu ecc.sdco@gmail.com / mihiret2002@yahoo.com mobile: +251911874099</p> <p>Transportation: Mr. Asfaha Woldu asfaha.woldu@gmail.com mobile: +251 911229576</p> <p>Accommodation: Mr. Mesay Mario mesaymario@gmail.com mobile: +251 911172637</p> <p>Health: Br. Hugo Verhulst hverhulst1@gmail.com mobile: +251 911098965</p> <p>(Other) contact persons for various categories will be provided upon your arrival.</p>

Rebuilding Lives of Refugees in Palabek, Uganda



Fr. Lazar Arasu SDB
Priest and School Administrator

The presence of refugees and immigrants is a reality in the world of today. The number of refugees today seems to be the highest in human history. People become refugees due to civil war, many forms of violence, political instability, and economic uncertainty, instability due to human and natural disasters, ecological destruction and human rights violations. People also move in search of better life away from one's own homeland.

Every refugee is in need of something. They need personal security and safety, food, clothing, shelter, education and all that is needed for human survival. These unfortunate displaced people are often at the mercy of the host country, local population and the aid agencies. While there are many good hearts dedicating their lives for the betterment of the refugees, regrettably many registered Charities and Organizations look for opportunities to harvest riches and push in their own agenda. Refugee situations could be a good opportunity for the Church and other Faith-Based Organization to give witness to their beliefs and humane practices.

Christian tradition believes in Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy. Refugees stand in need of all the acts of mercy every Christian can exercise. These vulnerable people are hungry, thirsty, naked, sick, lonely, imprisoned

in strange situations and several lose their lives. Refugees often call out to the Consecrated Religious Men and Women to stand by them. Indeed it is a great opportunity to exercise Religious institutes' charisma and objectives in a concrete. Religious Sisters, Brothers and Priests are in a better position to reach-out to the refugees without looking for any reward or personal gains.

Reaching out to refugees in Palabek in northern Uganda has been a moving experience for me for the past one year. I consider this a special inspiration and call from God to exercise my priestly and pastoral ministry to the most vulnerable in the world of today. Since the refugee population is dominated by young people, it is an apt way to exercise my Salesian vocation serving the youth in vulnerable situation. I thank God for this beautiful experience and His grace that He has bestowed on me and through me, my institute has taken up this ministry in a larger scale in Uganda. We are waiting for more graces from God and His Church in the months and years to come.

The very beginning of Refugee Ministry has been very providential for me. I was serving at a Catholic university in Gulu, the largest town in northern Uganda, in the Archdiocese of Gulu. The ministry began in a providential manner on 18th June 2017, the Feast of Corpus Christi—Body and Blood

of Christ. The Superior General of the Salesians of Don Bosco had asked the Salesians working in Uganda to see if possible offer some services to refugees from South Sudan who were already about a million in Uganda. Though this call was at the back of my mind, I went to visit the Refugee Settlement in Palabek out of curiosity!

As I was driving around in the settlement, I found a group of about 100 Christians praying under a large tree. I stepped out of the car and walked straight in front of them with my Mass Kit. The Para-liturgy was led by a seasoned Catechist Eugenio, who himself was a refugee. He was engrossed in prayer with closed eyes, seated on a piece of tree. He had finished preaching and two little girls were collecting offertory using a piece of cloth. I tapped the shoulders of the catechist to usher him. When he looked up, I said, "I am a priest and I would like to celebrate Mass." With awe he exclaimed, "It is a miracle!" He commanded the choir to start the entrance hymn right away. All eyes were focused on me, wondering who this Indian priest is and what is happening to them.

As I began the Mass, I asked them when they last attended Mass. They said that it was for the Feast of Corpus Christi in 2016, a year ago! The singing was full of joy and wonder. Many asked for absolution so that they could receive Holy Communion.

At the end of the Mass they asked me, if I can come the following week to have Mass for them. Without a second thought I said, 'Yes, I will come.' After exchanging telephone numbers, some pleasantries and listening to their stories I came back to my residence in Gulu which is about 100 kilometers from Palabek, in Lamwo district. In the middle of that same week I received a call from Robert, a leader among the Catholic refugee community and he enquired, "We are a large community in another zone and we would like to have Mass, will you come?" And I replied, "When I finish Mass with my previous group, I will come and see you." ►



Refugees fleeing from war



Refugees line up to receive aid.

► The following Sunday set a phase for my imminent ministry. A large group of over 300 people, mostly adults gathered under a large Shea-Butter tree patiently singing and waiting for me. It was one of the moving liturgies in my priestly ministry. At the end of the Mass, a woman leader spoke up, "We have been here in this wilderness for over three months, not visited by any priest; and having been left alone, amidst non-Catholics our heads were down. Now that we have seen you, our heads are up. God has visited his people!" These words moved me to tears and brought me to the refugee camp every week; we had wonderful liturgies every Sunday, and sometimes had meetings during week days. The same catholic community built a little hut for me to live. From August to December 2017 Catechist Eugene hosted me in his little home cared for all my needs.

Uganda hosts over one million refugees, majority of them coming from South Sudan. Others come from Democratic Republic of Congo, Eritrea, Somalia, Burundi and few other countries. It is said that Uganda leads in hosting refugees. In welcoming the refugees the credit goes to the ordinary, often poor citizens of Uganda rather than anyone else. In spite of the large number of refugees, no conflict has been reported among the host communities and refugees.

Large camps are situated in the north-west districts such as Arua, Yumbe, Adjumani and Moyo each having hundreds of thousands of refugees. Palabek Refugee Settlement is in mid-north of the country in Lamwo district. It has about 42,000 refugees settled in eight zones. Zones are further divided into Blocks. Each block may have over 100 households. Each household has five to seven persons, not necessarily belonging to a family. Each house-

hold is given a plot of land measuring 30X30 meters. In the given land they build their little hut, a latrine and cultivate some food. It is called settlement, because people will be allowed to live as long as they want. They will not be asked to go to their country. The host country is making an effort to resettle people away from their land in conflict. Hence it is called Settlement rather than Camp.

The settlement process started in March 2017 and people are arriving in hundreds to-date—late April 2018. Women and children constitute 86% of the settlement; others are young male adults and 1% of elderly men and women. The settlement is full of young adolescent girls. Often it makes us wonder, what is their future? How can we be of service to them? Young male adults, who are only a few, are believed to be guarding their properties in their home-countries and fighting in warring factions.

On their arrival, a household is given one tarpaulin, few tree-poles, few meters of ropes, a set of cooking utensils, a solar light and sleeping mats for each person. It is up to the refugees to fend for other needs such as clothes and other basic necessities of daily living. Often refugees arrive at the camp hungry, thirsty and with clothes they have on their bodies. In tears they narrate many atrocities and human rights violations they have gone through at the time of leaving their home land.

Human life is not only food, clothing and shelter. Refugees are in need of security, education, psychosocial support and several other basic things for meaningful life. People have been reduced to zero. They have lost their homes, properties, and above all their dear ones and their dignity as human beings.

Here in this Settlement several agen-

cies are involved in providing food, education and other livelihood. Salesians of Don Bosco are offering the much needed psychosocial support and pastoral care for thousands of Christians. Salesians are also running four nursery schools for over 1000 little children who have been not taken care of for several months. They are in the process of constructing a Vocational/ Technical Training Centre with the intention of offering life-skills and preparing young people for employment in the near future. Currently there are four priests sharing the lives of refugees living with them in little huts.

The presence of Salesians and later assisted by Maryknoll Missionaries have been period of grace for refugees! Several hundreds of infants and children have been baptized. Preparations for other sacraments are under way. Sunday Liturgies are celebrated in nine little chapels, mostly under the trees. Training programmes and peace education for catechists, youth leaders and animators have begun. Conversations with refugees reveal that conflicts and wars are going on in the neighbouring countries due to intolerance among tribes, lack of leaders in communities and civil societies as well as lack of civic sense and skills for life.

Refugee Ministry ought to include integral formation of refugees meeting the needs of their daily life, offering education, strengthening their strength of character and personhood and giving them spiritual assistance that shape their life. All these need lot of planning, resources and personnel. Let us heed the call of the Church and Pope Francis to open our hearts, homes, communities and the Church in welcoming and rebuilding the lives of refugees.

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

Vatican awarded international prize for video on migrants, refugees

By Robin Gomes

A Vatican video campaign on migrants and refugees has become an internationally-recognized best practice in promoting positive change in society through social advertising.

The International Social Advertising Festival or Publi-festival awarded its “Best Strategy in Social Action” prize to a video made by the Section for Migrants and Refugees of the Vatican Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Promotion. The video was produced by the agency La Machi Communication for Good Causes.

The 12th edition of Publi-festival took place Friday night, June 15 at the Fernando Rojas Theater of the Círculo de Bellas Artes in Madrid, Spain, in which agencies and advertisers from all over the world took part.

The 3½-minute piece has Pope Francis explaining the 4 active verbs on which he proposes basing the actions of governments, organizations and citizens to engage the problematic of human mobility: to Welcome, to Protect, to Promote, and to Integrate.

The video, available in nearly 30

languages, was first shown at the ‘stock-taking’ session for the United Nations Global Compact on Migrants (Puerto Vallarta, Mexico), in December 2017, and in the High Commissioner’s Dialogue on Protection Challenges for the Global Compact for Refugees at the Palais des Nations (Geneva). It has also been presented at UN headquarters in New York and many other places worldwide.

“Pope Francis gives the Christian and indeed civilized response to the pressing needs of vulnerable people on the move,” said Fr. Michael Czerny, the Under-Secretary of the Section for Migrants and Refugees of the Dicastery, during the award ceremony.

“In images, music and movement,” he said, “the video makes the Holy Father’s urgent appeal so real.” “We are happy to help this touching and indeed motivating message reach millions of concerned people everywhere.”

The Publi-festival also gave an award to a video-spot on the latest Apostolic Exhortation of Pope Francis, “Gaudete et Exsultate”, on the call to holiness in today’s world. The 2½-minute spot was produced by Vatican Media with the collaboration of the La Machi Agency.

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