



Pope Francis appeals for peace in Syria

» **VATICAN** Page 19

RELIGIOUS LEADERS AND CATHOLIC PROFESSIONALS UNITE IN PRAYER



A section of the participants pose for a group photo with religious leaders (COURTESY PHOTO)

Story on Page 2

BISHOPS APPLAUD UHURU KENYATTA AND RAILA ODINGA FOR RECONCILING

» **AMECEA** Page 11

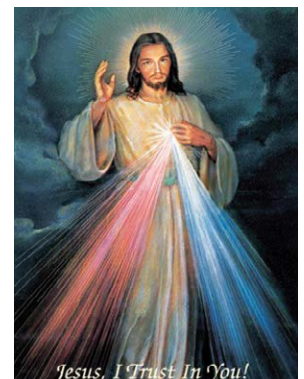


Inside

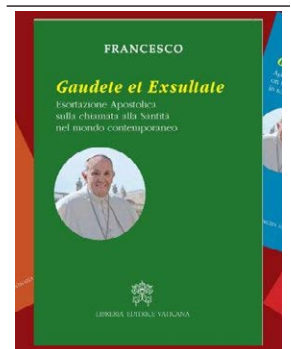
Pilgrims' registration starts ahead of the 2018 Uganda Martyrs Day celebration » **Page 4**

Archbishop Odama asks Christians in Gulu to pray for peace in South Sudan » **Page 6**

Young People from AMECEA Region attend Pre-Synod Meeting in Rome » **Page 9**



Pope Francis on Divine Mercy Sunday: 'Contemplate boundless love' » **Page 16**



The new Apostolic Exhortation of Pope Francis (On the Call to Holiness in Today's World)

Editorial

We read from the Scriptures that after rising from the dead and before ascending into heaven, our Lord Jesus Christ appeared to his disciples several times. One may wonder why he kept appearing to them. One obvious reason is that he wanted to strengthen their faith by proving to them that he is truly risen and he was still with them. He needed to dispel their feelings of abandonment, fear, and uncertainty about the future.

There are moments in life when we too may feel alone, uncertain and afraid. During such moments, we all need some assurance from somebody to give us the strength and confidence to move forward. Each time we come together to celebrate the Eucharist and indeed to pray, it is an opportunity for us to experience the presence of Jesus and to get his assurance that we are not alone in the journey of life. It is an opportunity for him to strengthen our faith and to whisper to us the words, "Do not be afraid, I am with you". In the gospel of Matthew 18: 20, Jesus himself tells us that, "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there I am in their midst".

As we celebrate the Easter Season, let us seek to strengthen one another, support one another, and uplift one another, following the example of our Lord who strengthened his disciples and continues to strengthen us.

I wish you a Blessed Easter Season

Fr. Philip Odii
Editor/Executive Secretary of
Social Communications

Religious leaders and Catholic professionals unite in prayer

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

On Saturday March 24, 2018, religious leaders from the Catholic Church and Catholic professionals across the country gathered at Silver Springs Hotel, Bugolobi in Kampala for the first-ever National Prayer Breakfast for Catholic Professionals (NPBCP).

The inaugural NPBCP was held under the theme: "And You Will Be My Witnesses". Its objective was to remind Catholic professionals all over the country of their roles in their respective capacities and to encourage spiritual growth, brotherhood as well as seeking God's guidance.

The colorful event began with a Holy Mass that was led by the Secretary General of the Uganda Episcopal Conference (UEC), Msgr John Baptist Kauta and concelebrated by other priests. Over 200 Catholic professionals were in attendance including lawyers, doctors, teachers, farmers, journalists, economists, bankers, administrators, nurses, social workers, accountants and soldiers among others.

It was graced by the Executive Director of the Uganda Bankers Association, Wilbrod Humphreys Owor who represented the Deputy Governor of the Bank of Uganda, Dr. Louis Kasekende as the Guest of Honour. In his speech, Owor said that professionals should use their callings to strengthen their professions.

"Professionals should derive growth through communication and mobilize for professionalism. We should steer our brothers and sisters in the right direction," he said.

During his address, keynote speaker Prof Charles Olweny, a professor of medicine and former vice-chancellor at Uganda Martyrs University, outlined a number of important characteristics that applies virtually to any type of business and profession.

"What is expected of a profession includes: great communications skills; good work place ethics; polished image to match; neat in appearance (exceed company's dress code); demeanor should exude confidence; be polite when interacting with customers, superiors and co-workers," he said adding that professionals should also be reliable- find a way to get a job well done;

respond to requests promptly; be competent- strive to be experts in their fields including continued education and be ethical at all times.

He also urged them to always maintain poise, observe phone etiquette by identifying themselves by their full names, company and title; to avoid dominating conversations but instead listen to the other party and write correspondence.

"A good professional should always account for his/her actions at all times. If you make a mistake own up to it and try to fix it. Do not blame others," he noted.

The speaker further elaborated on the theme of the day (confer Acts 1:8) and urged the participants to be true witnesses of Christ. He said: "witnessing is personal; witnessing is profoundly a spiritual activity; witnessing is Christ centered and witnessing requires faith, prayer and power of the Holy Spirit. In order to make something a habit we must have knowledge, which is the theoretical paradigm i.e. what to do and why; we need skill, which is the how to do and we need desire, which is the motivation, the want to do."

There was also a panel discussion, which was moderated by Prof Olweny, the Vicar General of Kampala Archdiocese, Msgr Larry Ssemusu and the Chief Executive Officer of the Uganda Institute of Banking & Financial Services.

The inaugural NPBCP was organized by the Lay Apostolate Department of the UEC in collaboration with the Catholic Association of Professionals of Uganda (CAPU). It will be held annually to promote spiritual growth and professionalism among the Catholic professions.

CAPU is a lay apostolate movement that unites Catholic men and women who are professionals and intellectual in Uganda. Its aim is to promote human values and active apostolate in all aspects of life and in particular : facilitate contacts, share knowledge, skills and experience; assist members to witness Christ in their daily lives and occupations; provide on-going formation in social doctrine and undertake common projects for peace and social developments. It is a member of the Uganda National Catholic Council of Lay Apostolate.

Pictorial of the 2018 National Prayer Breakfast



Priests during the NPBCP Holy Mass



The choir that led the liturgy during the Holy Mass



The keynote speaker, Prof. Olweny gives his speech



L-R: Prof. Olweny , Vicar General of Kampala Archdiocese, Msgr. Larry Ssemusu and the CEO of the Uganda Institute of Banking and Financial Services



A section of the participants during the National Prayer Breakfast



Msgr Kauta and the Chief Guest, Mr. Owor



A section of the pilgrims at Namugongo catholic shrine in 2017

(By Jacinta W. Odongo).

Pilgrims' registration starts ahead of the 2018 Uganda Martyrs Day celebration

By Media Officer, UEC

Preparations for the 2018 Uganda Martyrs Day (UMD) celebration are in high gear. With less than two months to the much anticipated celebration in the history of the Catholic Church in Uganda, pilgrims from across the world have already begun registration.

As of Wednesday, March 14, 2018, over 400 international pilgrims from Malawi, South Africa and Tanzania had confirmed participation in the June 3 event. Moreover, foot pilgrims from Tororo Archdiocese, the animators of the 2018 UMD celebrations, have also begun registration. Tororo Archdiocese will animate the celebrations on behalf of Tororo Ecclesiastical Province which comprises of the Dioceses of Jinja, Kotido, Moroto, Soroti and Tororo.

In an interview with the convener of Pilgrims Committee for the 2018 UMD celebration, Theresa Obbo, during the third preparations meeting of the Central Organizing Committees at the Uganda Catholic Secretariat on March 14, 2018, registration of pilgrims is open and underway.

"We have already started the registration process of both local and international pilgrims. We have so far received a list of names from Malawi, South Africa and Tanzania as well as from the foot pilgrims in Uganda," she said adding that "We encourage pilgrims especially from outside Uganda to register with us so as to guide them upon arrival on certain things such as vigil Masses, accommodation and offertory among other things."

She added that pilgrims, especially those who intend to travel to Namugongo on foot, should go for thorough medical check-up before starting the journey to avoid injuries along the way or preventable deaths.

The UMD celebration usually attracts millions of enthusiastic pilgrims from across the world including the East African Community member countries besides hosts Uganda, United States of America, Nigeria, Mexico, Malawi, Italy, Zambia, Australia, Singapore, South Africa, India, Ireland, United Kingdom, Germany and Canada among other countries.

Millions of these pilgrims usually travel by air, road and on foot to mark

this celebration at Namugongo Catholic Shrine which transforms many lives. It is a journey that sometimes takes a whole month, weeks or days depending on where the pilgrims come from but, the testimony of the Uganda Martyrs to die for their faith in the imitation of Jesus Christ usually inspires them to make this spiritual journey of renewing their faith. Their (Uganda Martyrs) intercession 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.

In the Catholic Church, the Martyrs are venerated for their heroism in professing and witnessing to their faith. They have an intercessional role for those who are still struggling in life's journey to join them triumphantly at the end of their earthly lives.

This annual celebration usually marks the commemoration of the heroic faith of the Martyrs, both Catholic and Protestant, 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.

Diocesan Farm Managers undergo six-month training on Agri-entrepreneurship practices

By Media Officer, UEC

In an effort to enhance crop production and promote self-reliance in the Dioceses, Diocesan Farm Managers are undergoing a six-month training on Agri-entrepreneurship practices to enhance their technical know-how to help run the Diocese's farm lands.

The Agricultural Initiative program, which kicked-off in January 2018, will be underway until June 2018 under the sponsorship of the Pontifical Mission Societies (PMS) of the United States of America (USA) in collaboration with the PMS-Uganda.

According to the Monitoring and Evaluation Officer of the Agricultural Initiative Program, PMS-Uganda, Angella Namugenyi, the main objective of this initiative is to empower Diocesan Farm Managers with modernized skills and knowledge of managing their farms towards self-reliance and to provide agricultural loans to Church Institutions.

"We are very grateful to PMS-USA for their partnership in this program. This Agricultural Initiative Enterprise aims at giving agricultural loans to managers of Catholic Farm Institutions. In addition to the loans, the initiative will empower managers with financial and business skills to handle and manage agricultural loans adequately and become self-sufficient in producing food for their own use," she said adding that this is a fundamental starting point for improved food security and increased food production in the country.

She reiterated that self-reliance is the way forward for the Church in Africa. "All Episcopal Conferences in the continent have continuously emphasized the importance of Church institutions being self-reliant. Some have issued pastoral letters on the theme of self-reliance, while others have explicitly included it in their institutional goals."

The training methodology includes both practical and theoretical skills training: presentations, discussions, group work, peer sharing, business field assignments and coaching. Some of the topics for discussion are: the technical aspects of standard farming operating procedures, foundations of sustainable agricultural, management of livestock and crops, land prepara-



Diocese Farm Managers during a field training



Some of the crops and farming methods used (COURTESY PHOTOS)

tion, seed production and irrigation regulations. It is a practical, hands-on approach in the field which will enable farmers to learn the intricacies of plant growth, harvesting, seed extraction, processing and packaging.

The six-month Agricultural training is facilitated by Agricultural and Business Experts from National Agricultural Research Organisation (NARO) and Uganda Martyrs University.

The Agricultural Initiative is a result of the address by the Holy Father to the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) delegates who met in Rome in October 2013 on Food insecurity in Africa and need for intervention. The

Pontiff said that Africa is very rich with resources and there was need of assisting them to have a permanent solution to the recurrent famine and drought rather than interventions of the humanitarian response.

In November 2013, Fr. Andrew Small, OMI, PMS National Director of the USA picked-up the Popes appeal and invited the PMS National Directors of Africa seeking to establish availability of land and ownership by the Catholic Church. Since then, the initiative has been implemented in different African nations including AMECEA countries with Kenya being a success case study.

Archbishop Odama asks Christians in Gulu to pray for peace in South Sudan



Bishops from different religious denominations carry a cross during the joint Way of the cross PHOTO BY JOHNISAN OCAKACON

By Johnisani Ocaakon

The Archbishop of Gulu and Chairman of the Uganda Episcopal Conference (UEC), Most Rev. John Baptist Odama has appealed to Christians in the Acholi Sub region to pray for peace in South Sudan.

The Archbishop was speaking during a joint Way of the Cross on March 30, which started from Christ Church parish of the Diocese of Northern Uganda and ended at Saint Basil the great Orthodox Parish in layibi Division Gulu Municipality. It attracted thousands of Christians from three different denominations: Catholic, Anglican and the Orthodox Churches in the Acholi Sub region.

Archbishop Odama, the Bishop of the diocese of Northern Uganda Johnson Gakumba and the Dean of the Orthodox Church, Fr Julius Orach led the Christians in the joint Way of the Cross prayers. The three Religious denominations in the Acholi Sub region resolved to hold each year a joint Way of the Cross for Christians to emulate the suffering of Jesus Christ on the cross and as a sign of peace and unity.

“THERE IS NO PEACE IN SOUTH SUDAN, AND THE WAY OF CROSS SHOULD HELP US TO PRAY FOR THEM SO THAT GOD GIVES PEACE TO THE PEOPLE OF SOUTH SUDAN”

The resolution was arrived at during a crisis meeting convened by the governing council of Acholi Religious Leaders’ Peace Initiative (ARLPI) chaired by Archbishop Odama. The intent was to reconcile members of the Catholic, the Anglican and Orthodox Churches.

In his message, the prelate emphasized that the Way of the Cross should help believers to pray for the citizens of South Sudan who are left with no peace in their country.

“There is no peace in South Sudan, and the Way of the Cross should help us to pray for them so that God gives peace to the people of South Sudan” he said.

He added that showing love to each other can bring peace in the country, adding that people should enact in acts of charity for peace to

prevail in their life time.

He cited a disputed Apaa region in Amuru District where residents are living in fears of eviction to remain calm to enable government and other stakeholders to dialogue for peace to prevail in the area.

Archbishop Odama noted; “Religious leaders, government and cultural leaders, and other stakeholders should see that what is happening in Apaa is inhuman and it calls for immediate dialogue to help lives of these people in a reasonable manner”.

He reiterated that unity is strength and people must endeavor always to respect each other to show eternal love of God to everyone.

Meanwhile, Bishop Gakumba of the Diocese of Northern Uganda urged Christians to practice what they have learnt during the joint Way of the Cross to help them develop in their spiritual life.

“I urge you that the unity we have started will continue and no one will detach us from this unity developed under Uganda Joint Christians Council” Gakumba said.

In his speech, the Dean of Orthodox Church in Acholi sub region urged Christians to prepare to welcome the risen lord on Easter Sunday by repenting their sins to remain holy as they wait for His resurrection.

He said on such days many believers tend to do evil deeds such as heavy consumption of alcohol and drug abuse which does not reflect on the Christian way of living.

Good Friday is observed during Holy Week as part of the Paschal Triduum. The Stations of the Cross are a 14-step Catholic devotion that commemorates Jesus Christ’s last day on Earth. The way of the Cross is the symbol of the triumph of good. By His sufferings on the Cross our Lord Jesus Christ washed away the sins of mankind, conquered the devil, abolished death and opened the way to eternal life for man. The Cross bears witness to God’s infinite love for sinful mankind. But the Cross is much more than a symbol; it possesses spiritual power.

Pictorial of the Way of the Cross in Gulu



Christians take part in the joint Way of the Cross in Gulu



Religious leaders participating in the joint Way of the Cross



A man acts as Jesus in the joint Way of the Cross



"Jesus" falls during the joint Way of the Cross



"Roman Soldiers" prepare to nail "Jesus" on the cross



Soldiers prepare to crucify "Jesus"

Bishop Kakooza urges Christians to remain firm in the Catholic Church



Bishop Kakooza receives offertory from students

By Annet Nantale

Lugazi Communications Office

The Bishop of Lugazi Diocese, Rt. Rev. Christopher Kakooza has called on Christians to remain firm in the Catholic Church.

Bishop Kakooza made this appeal on February 25, 2018, while speaking at the Diocesan anniversary celebration to mark 21 years of existence at Our Lady Queen of Peace Cathedral in Lugazi. He presided over the Holy Mass that was concelebrated by the Bishop Emeritus of Lugazi Diocese, Rt. Rev. Matthias Ssekamanya, several priests and religious.

In his homily, Bishop Kakooza explained that: “the Catholic Church is like a boat in which all Catholics must keep sailing until they reach the shores (heaven).”

He added that the Church is too big and can accommodate every Catholic thus; there is no need for Christians to use small boats in order to reach the shores.

Talking about the Diocesan theme for this year, the bishop clarified that the theme will remain the same as the one for last year: “Let us be firm in

“LET US BE FIRM IN FAITH BY RELIVING OUR BAPTISMAL PROMISES”

faith by reliving our Baptismal Promises”, however, the focus for this year is “Catechism and the Church”.

He thanked the Christians for their continued support to the Diocese and appealed to them to continue with the same spirit for the Diocese to realize its Mission.

The Bishop also commissioned 18 catechists who had completed their two year training course at St. Joseph’s High School Namagunga.

In his speech, the Minister of State for Higher Education, Hon. J.C Musingo congratulated the Diocese upon celebrating 21 years of existence and thanked the church for the commendable job in the development of the country. He appreciated the two pupils who read the first and second readings fluently during Mass and promised to pay their school fees for this year.

The celebration was organized by



Priests in a procession



Bishop Kakooza with the Band from Uganda Martyrs Junior Boys Namilyago



Bishop Kakooza poses for a group photo with the choir after Mass

Kayunga Deanery which was given the responsibility of animating all the Diocesan Celebrations for this year.

Meanwhile, thousands of pupils and students from Catholic founded and Catholic oriented schools in Lugazi Diocese made pilgrimage at Our Lady Queen of Peace Lugazi Cathedral from March 15-16 to deepen their faith.

During the pilgrimage, Bishop Kakooza appealed to the pupils to always give alms to the less privileged children by availing them with scholastic materials like books, pens, pencils and other necessities using their Lenten collection.

The prelate also called on to the teachers to organise a day for Catechism in all the schools because this year is a year of reliving the Catechism on the Sacraments

Young People from AMECEA Region attend Pre-Synod Meeting in Rome



Cornelius Opollo (Second Left in Checked Shirt) Kenyan Representative at The Pre-Synod Meeting in Rome, during his visit to AMECEA Secretariat in Nairobi with Rev. Fr. Joseph Healey, MM, and Colins Ongoma from Ngong Diocese. On extreme right is Rev. Fr. Emmanuel Chimombo Coordinator AMECEA Pastoral Department

By Pamela Adinda,
AMECEA Online News

Out of the eight Episcopal Conferences that make the AMECEA Region, participants from six conferences joined the Holy Father Pope Francis at the Pre-Synod Meeting in Rome from March 19-24, 2018.

Pope Francis met around 300 young people representing their peers from the five continents. From the AMECEA Countries, a team of six young people attended: three male and three female. They included: Elisabeth Efrem Estifanos (Female) from the Archdiocese of Addis Ababa, Ethiopia; Cornelius Opollo (Male) from Ngong Diocese, Kenya; Tamandani Kamuyanja (Female) from Zomba Diocese, Malawi; Deogratias Steven Masangia (Male) from Archdiocese of Dodoma, Tanzania; Doreen Shabohurira (Female) from Kabale Diocese, Uganda and Chanda Mulenga (Male) from Monze Diocese, Zambia.

These young men and women were part of the delegation that had the opportunity to express their views to the Holy Father on matters that affect the youth, their ideas, their feelings and their recommendations. Their views will be presented in the 2018 Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops in October in Rome held under the theme: Young People, the

Faith and Vocational Discernment.

Cornelius Opollo who represented Kenya, expressed three major concerns of the young people. On top of his list was poor representation of young people in the Church structures, a scenario which he says is occasioned by lack of opportunities for them to be listened to.

"There is need to recognize that as Young Catholics, we have talents and we can be innovative if given opportunities to explore our talents," he says adding that considering the church structures and hierarchies, opportunities for young people are very limited.

"Young people yearn for church leadership that is ready to listen to their voices, their opinion and their contributions," he explained adding that the majority of young people fail to participate fully in the Church activities such as pastoral council or other church groups because their views or opinion are never taken seriously and nobody wants to listen to them.

The other concern Opollo expressed was about unemployment which he says is a cross cutting issue affecting not only Catholic youth. He explained that there are many young people who have graduated from school as well as others who did not have opportunities to go to school; all of them scramble

"FOR MANY OF US HERE IN AFRICA, WHEN IT COMES TO GETTING OPPORTUNITIES, IT IS USUALLY ABOUT WHOM DO YOU KNOW AT THE HIGHER LEVELS WHO CAN PUSH YOUR AGENDA. THE RESULTS OF SUCH SCENARIOS IS THAT SOME PEOPLE GET OPPORTUNITIES THEY DO NOT DESERVE, WHILE OTHERS WHO ARE MORE QUALIFIED AND MORE DESERVING OF THE SAME OPPORTUNITIES ARE OFTEN LEFT OUT."

for the few job opportunities available and because of economic huddles and constraints, the majority of them who don't succeed in getting something to do end up being frustrated and downcast.

He explained that even though the issue of unemployment is one that the Church on its own cannot tackle, she (the Church) can develop mentorship programs to help young unemployed men and women develop technical knowhow as well as skills that would make more competitive in the job market.

"Such programs would encourage productive interactions between the youth and parishioners who are professionals in various fields and this would help propel the unemployed young people to the job market as well as support them to come up with innovative ways for self-employment."

The third concern Opollo highlighted was social injustices especially discriminations based on ethnicity and nepotism.

"For many of us here in Africa, when it comes to getting opportunities, it is usually about who do you know at the higher levels and who can push your agenda. The results of such scenarios is that some people get opportunities they do not deserve, while others who are more qualified and more deserving of the same opportunities are often left out."

His expectation from the meeting was to hear what other young people from all over the world had to share in terms of their concerns. According to him the meeting was a learning experience and a great opportunity for him to bring inspiring message back home.

Preparations for the 19th AMECEA Plenary Assembly underway

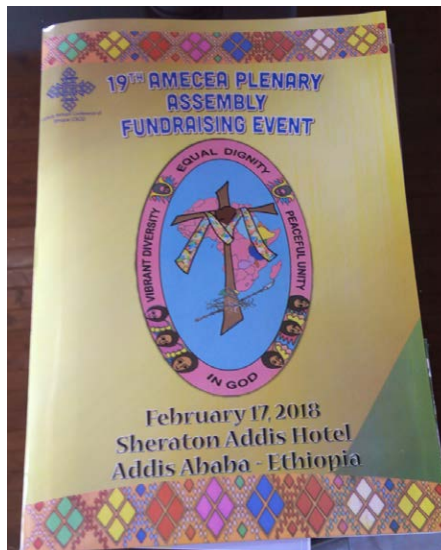
By Pamela Adinda,
AMECEA Online News

Three subcommittees namely logistics, fundraising and communication have reported to be doing well in the preparations for the forthcoming 19th AMECEA Plenary Assembly in Ethiopia.

According to the AMECEA Pastoral Coordinator Rev. Fr. Emmanuel Chimombo who attended the plenary preparation steering committee meeting in Ethiopia on March 19, 2018, the Catholic Church in Ethiopia has taken the plenary issue to heart given that it is the first time in the history of AMECEA for Ethiopia to host the Plenary Assembly, since the conference which initially comprised of Ethiopia and Eritrea was granted full membership in the Association in 1979.

“It is quite commendable that the Ethiopian Bishops conference has taken the plenary issue quite seriously; the steering committee that is organizing all this is really of a high calibre. They have appointed a coordinator whose responsibility is to specifically coordinate the activities of the plenary which involves holding accountable all the sub-committees that have been established,” Fr. Chimombo explained.

Indicating that the sole purpose of their meeting was to exchange ideas between AMECEA Secretariat and the Ethiopian Bishops Conference and also to get updates from each sides regarding their respective obligations as far as the plenary assembly preparations are concerned, Fr. Chimombo said that this was important in order to arrest any huddles, mishaps or chal-



A booklet designed for the AMECEA Plenary Assembly



A candle designed for the AMECEA plenary assembly

lenges that either sides might encounter in the course of preparations and to make sure that both sides are on the same page.

“We noted that in terms of fundraising they have done quite well, almost reaching half their target while anticipating that in the coming one month or two, they will be able to meet their target,” Fr. Chimombo said, adding that logistic issues, which includes receiving delegates on arrival, accommodations, conference facilities among other things have been taken care of.

He further noted that the Liturgy committee, which will take care of the daily prayers organized according to conferences, the opening and closing ceremonies is already in place

He added that the Bishops Conference is receiving a lot of support from different members of the community including the lay faithful who are committed to fully play their roles.

“Despite the political uncertainties in the country following the recent resignation of the Prime Minister of Ethiopia, all the plenary preparations are going on well. All the dioceses are actively involved in preparations and have especially taken to heart the issue of publicity by ensuring that all necessary material to promote publicity are brought to the faithful,” Fr. Chimombo explained adding that as a result the Catholic Church has become more visible than before.

A number of items have been made for publicity purposes and these includes special key holders with inscriptions of the AMECEA Plenary Assembly, pamphlets, files, fliers, banners, candles and all these bears the Plenary Assembly dates as well as the theme.

“Of course there is also the AMECEA Plenary Assembly Prayer published in both Amharic and English languages and is recited daily at the parishes throughout the country,” Fr. Chimombo said.

NEW CONTACT ADVERTISING RATES

SPECIFICATION	AMOUNT	OFFERS
Back Cover Page	2,500,000	An equivalent advert in the electronic version plus Editorial boost
Inside Back Cover	2,000,000	An equivalent advert in the electronic version plus Editorial boost
Inside Front Cover	2,000,000	An equivalent advert in the electronic version plus Editorial boost
Centre Spread	5,000,000	An equivalent advert in the electronic version plus editorial boost
Full page	1,500,000	
Half Page	750,000	
Quarter Page	300,000	
Classified	150,000	

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

Bishops applaud Uhuru Kenyatta and Raila Odinga for reconciling



From Left- Rt. Rev. John Oballa Owaa, KCCB Administrator and Bishop of Ngong, Rt. Rev. Philip Anyolo, KCCB Chairman and Bishop of Homabay and H.E. John Cardinal Njue, Archbishop of Nairobi during the press conference in Nairobi

By Rose Achiego,

Waumini Communications

The Bishops of Kenya have acknowledged the gesture of President Uhuru Kenyatta and Rt. Hon. Raila Odinga, in meeting and extending hands of reconciliation among themselves as a sign of their commitment in collaborating towards uniting the deeply divided and polarized Country.

Delivering a press statement at the Queen of Apostles Clergy House in Nairobi on March 14, 2018, The Chairman of the Kenya Conference of Catholic Bishops (KCCB) and the Bishop of Homabay, Rt. Rev. Philip Anyolo said the public gesture of reconciliation and their desire to move the Country forward following the year-long electioneering campaigns last year is obviously a relief to many Kenyans.

"We, therefore, laud this gesture and hope that it is an opening to a greater commitment towards seeking real solutions to a more just, democratic and prosperous country where every Citizen has an opportunity to develop. This gesture also enhances our conviction that dialogue is possible," Bishop Anyolo who is the Local ordinary for Homabay Diocese said.



The Kenyan bishops during the meeting (AMECEA PHOTOS)

"WE, THEREFORE, LAUD THIS GESTURE AND HOPE THAT IT IS AN OPENING TO A GREATER COMMITMENT TOWARDS SEEKING REAL SOLUTIONS TO A MORE JUST, DEMOCRATIC AND PROSPEROUS COUNTRY WHERE EVERY CITIZEN HAS AN OPPORTUNITY TO DEVELOP. THIS GESTURE ALSO ENHANCES OUR CONVICTION THAT DIALOGUE IS POSSIBLE,"

He reminded Kenyans that as Bishops they have in the past called on all leaders and stakeholders to employ constructive dialogue as the only way of resolving conflict adding that Kenya has gone through very trying moments.

"With this latest development we believe it is only the beginning of charting out the path that gives room to everybody to engage in uniting and reconciling Kenyans. This beginning should now accommodate all stakeholders and Kenyans and be open to addressing all the issues that are of concern to this Country. We see the new found collaboration of the two leaders as creating the environment for this dialogue," he stressed.

The Bishops promised their committed to pursuing the path of national dialogue through an inclusive participatory process from the grassroots to the national level. "To achieve this, during the Lenten Campaign launch on February 10th 2018 in Kisumu, we initiated the process by commissioning our Christians beginning with the Small Christian Communities to reflect on issues affecting our country."

The bishops through Rt. Rev. Anyolo urged all leaders across the political divide to support the path so that it does not remain a public relation exercise or a show of two individuals. "As this goes on, it is very important to recognize the role of the opposition in any democratic society, to check on the government for better service delivery. We still emphasize that at all times and in all situations there must always remain the respect for the rule of law and institutions," he said.

He also said that the state of insecurity in some parts of the country was also of great concern to the Bishops. "Recently, there were incidents of insecurity in Mount Elgon and in parts of Northern and Coastal regions. The government has a primary mandate to protect its people and must therefore ensure people live without fear as they go about their daily endeavors," he said.

The however thanked all Kenyans for their continued prayers and maintaining peace even at critical moments of the recent past. We pray that God blesses Kenya and God blesses our people. In anticipation we wish each one of you a happy Easter and the joy of the resurrected Christ.

Vocation: Art of Listening and Accompaniment



Fr. Lazar Arasu SDB

(Synod of Bishops for Youth, October 2018)

The word 'vocation' can be explained as a calling, inclination, aptitude and ability. It is an urge to do something; it is a passion towards something that you want to achieve and find fulfilment in doing it. Vocation is all about listening, following, training, and committing oneself to a particular mission that you feel attracted to.

Vocation is a call. It is something heard as an inner voice, sometimes seen as a mental image, sometimes felt as a push from behind, and sometimes experienced as the voice of God from above. It is a call that urges you to go past the surface level and do something that has lasting value.

Though vocation can be given or sort at a different point in life and situation, it is a matter that affects young people. Adolescence and young adults are in a precarious stage in life when they ought to discern and make a choice on what they want to do with their life that is ahead of them. This task can be baffling, confusing, and even mystifying. At this moment listening and accompanying becomes a necessity.

Listening in this case, is a dialogue between the young person and God, who calls the young person to listen to the calling. Here intermediaries such as parents, pastors and spiritual guides also help the young to listen better and help the young to discern according to the call of God.

Our God is God of accompanying. He journeys with us as he journeyed with the people of Israel and their leaders. God accompanied Jesus, His Son in his ministry of redemption. In turn Jesus accompanied the Apostles and other disciples in their way to the

Gospel and ministry.

However, in this modern age of media and technology, listening and accompanying seems to be weak or neglected. Though initially young people are taken up by modern trends and gadgets at hand they soon feel empty and left alone. They look for guides and directions. Finally what satisfies them are models and examples to follow rather than rhetoric bombardments.

In relations with teenagers and young people, authentic listening means: Encouraging openness to others; openness with our whole person, paying full attention to what the person communicates and actively engaging in understanding what one wants to communicate. Moreover, it means listening with true concern and with true empathy. It is about identifying ourselves with and walking with the other person.

It is listening to their struggles and weaknesses, to their joys, sufferings and expectations. It also requires a certain inner silence, which has its starting point of acceptance of people as they are and in the situation they find themselves in.

Accompanying teenagers and young people involve: knowing the way they walk, to what extent they are located and where they are heading, so as to be able to walk together as Jesus walked with his apostles and disciples as he did along the road to Emmaus.

Following her master, the Church is our mother and guide. The organisation of the forthcoming Synod of Bishops for Youth in October 2018 takes the theme: "Young People, the Faith and the Discernment of Vocation," as an "expression of pastoral concern of the Church for the young" and is

"in continuity with the findings from the recent synodal assemblies on the family and with the contents of the post-synodal apostolic exhortation, *Amoris Laetitia*."

The synod, "wishes to accompany young people along their existential journey towards maturity so that, through a process of discernment, they can discover their life plan and achieve it joyfully, opening themselves up to an encounter with God and humanity and actively taking part in the building of the Church as well as the society."

With this Synod, "the Church has decided to examine herself on how she can lead young people to recognize and accept the call to the fullness of life and love and to ask young people to help her in identifying the most effective ways to announce the Good News today"

In the process of guiding young people two elements of vital importance in today's world are, 'listening and personal accompaniment.' There are thousands of good young people who are open to life, eager to be formed and to learn; they are in search for meaning in life. Many of them have a great and generous heart, and wish to serve others, to do something for others, to help and to volunteer.

There are young people who request our help to continue to grow and mature in their faith. And there are others who do not ask explicitly, but who feel a great need for a personal encounter and for being listened to. There are many who would be willing to take a personal and communal path of discernment and accompaniment.

In the words of Fr. Angel Fernandez Artime, the Superior General of the Salesians of Don Bosco, "...the Church is asking the pastors, youth leaders, teachers and animators: what are we waiting for? Why do we not decide to be much more available to accompany all our young people in what is most important to their lives? What is holding us back? Why "being busy" or "spending time" in other things when this is a real priority for education and evangelization?"

Therefore, are we ready to taking this challenge on behalf of youth?

The Power of Your Words



By **Barbara Nabukenya**

I make part of my living speaking words, and that is a responsibility I don't take it lightly. The Bible says life and death are in the power of the tongue (Proverbs 18:21). Words have great power. My words have helped heal marriages.

That gives me an immense appreciation for words. Galatians 6:7-8 says, "Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life." The Bible shows us three laws of sowing and reaping.

The first law: You reap what you sow.— You can't plant a field with tomato seeds and then harvest a crop of corn. In the same way, you can't expect a good response when you constantly use negative words. Cuss out your

spouse, threaten divorce, tell them they're ugly, those things won't bring a positive result in your marriage.

Those are destructive words and they will bring destruction into your marriage because you reap what you sow. Words have the power of death and can tear your marriage apart. You can't just say whatever you want because what you sow will come back into your life.

The second law: You reap much more than what you have sown.— Think about maize. Plant a seed and it may grow into a stalk of maize with hundreds more seeds, all of which you can plant and grow more maize. It's exponential growth. We can feed the world with a single seed of maize.

Likewise, your words have a disproportionate impact on your life. Like a giant ship steered by a tiny rudder, your tongue can determine the direction of

your life. It can tear your marriage apart or it can evoke the blessings of heaven and build a remarkable marriage.

When you speak positive, healing words to each other, when you praise your spouse rather than tearing him or her down, you'll reap an enormous, exponential impact on your marriage. Words can bring enormous change.

The third law: Planted seeds don't sprout immediately.— There's a delayed impact after you sow a seed, and rarely does it happen overnight. While you're waiting for your positive words to blossom into something of value, you need to have faith and perseverance.

That's when the next verse in the passage becomes important. "And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart" (Galatians 6:9). Every seed has its due season.

Whether raising your children to love God or speaking hopeful words into your marriage, sometimes you have to wait for a seed to bear fruit. Keep doing good and don't grow weary!

So pay attention to your words. Are you speaking good words toward your spouse and into your marriage? Are you planting beneficial seeds? Or are you planting negative seeds that could cause destruction? Whatever the case, understand that your words are powerful, and you'll reap what you sow.

Blessings

WISE QUOTES FOR REFLECTION



"A little bit of mercy makes the world less cold and more just." - **Pope Francis**

"Embrace uncertainty. Some of the most beautiful chapters in our lives won't have a title until much later." - **Bob Goff**

"You get in life what you have the courage to ask for." - **Oprah Winfrey**

"There are two types of people who will tell you that you cannot make a difference in this world: those

who are afraid to try and those who are afraid you will succeed." - **Ray Goforth**

"Anybody can sympathise with the sufferings of a friend, but it requires a very fine nature to sympathize with a friend's success." - **Oscar Wilde**

"Successful people do what unsuccessful people are not willing to do. Don't wish it were easier; wish you were better." - **Jim Rohn**

"Life is inherently risky. There is only one big risk you should avoid at all costs, and that is the risk of doing nothing." - **Denis Waitley**

"Character cannot be developed in ease and quiet. Only through experience of trial and suffering can the soul be strengthened, ambition inspired, and success achieved." - **Helen Keller**

"The difference between who you are and who you want to be is what you do." - **Unknown**

"Keep on going, and the chances are that you will stumble on something, perhaps when you are least expecting it. I never heard of anyone ever stumbling on something sitting down." - **Charles F. Kettering**

LITURGICAL READINGS FOR APRIL 2018



APRIL 1- Easter Sunday - The Resurrection of the Lord - The Mass of Easter Day

Lectionary: 42

Reading 1 ACTS 10:34A, 37-43

Responsorial Psalm PS 118:1-2, 16-17, 22-23

Reading 2 COL 3:1-4 Or 1 COR 5:6B-8

Gospel JN 20:1-9 or MK 16:1-7 or LK 24:13-35

APRIL 8- Second Sunday of Easter (Or Sunday of Divine Mercy)

Lectionary: 44

Reading 1 ACTS 4:32-35

Responsorial Psalm PS 118:2-4, 13-15, 22-24

Reading 2 1 JN 5:1-6

Gospel JN 20:19-31

APRIL 9- Solemnity of the Annunciation of the Lord
Lectionary: 545

Reading 1 IS 7:10-14; 8:10

Responsorial Psalm PS 118:2-4, 13-15, 22-24

Reading 2 1 JN 5:1-6

Gospel JN 20:19-31

Memorial of Saint Stanislaus, Bishop and Martyr

Lectionary: 269

Reading 1 ACTS 5:17-26

Responsorial Psalm PS 34:2-3, 4-5, 6-7, 8-9

Gospel JN 3:16-21

Third Sunday of Easter

Lectionary: 47

Reading 1 ACTS 3:13-15, 17-19

Responsorial Psalm PS 4:2, 4, 7-8, 9

Reading 2 1 JN 2:1-5A

Gospel LK 24:35-48

Fourth Sunday of Easter
Lectionary: 50

Reading 1 ACTS 4:8-12

Responsorial Psalm PS 118:1, 8-9, 21-23, 26, 28, 29

Reading 2 1 JN 3:1-2

Gospel JN 10:11-18

Feast of Saint Mark, evangelist
Lectionary: 555

Reading 1 1 PT 5:5B-14

Responsorial Psalm PS 89:2-3, 6-7, 16-17

Gospel MK 16:15-20

Fifth Sunday of Easter
Lectionary: 53

Reading 1 ACTS 9:26-31

Responsorial Psalm PS 22:26-27, 28, 30, 31-32

Reading 2 1 JN 3:18-24

Gospel JN 15:1-8

SOCIAL COMMUNICATIONS OFFICE LIRA CATHOLIC DIOCESE

Social Communication Coordinator
Lira Catholic Diocese
P.O. Box 311, Lira-Uganda
Mobile +256772660817
E-mail: lidisoc2018@gmail.com
www.liradiocese.org



The Bishop
Lira Catholic Diocese
P.O. Box 311, Lira-Uganda
Mobile +256782976906
E-mail: liradio1968@gmail.com
www.liradiocese.org

PRESS RELEASE

Date: 04.04.2018
For immediate release

Lira Diocese denies a sensational Daily Monitor Newspaper story

The Social Communications Office of Lira Diocese hereby wishes to make clarifications on the Daily Monitor Newspaper article of Monday 2nd April 2018, with the headline "Bishop Franzelli hits out at Anglican counterpart".

The above headline distorts the reality, turning an expression of sincere regret into an attack to the leader of the Anglican community in Lira.

The truth is that both at the end of the Way of the Cross on Good Friday and in his Easter message, Bishop Joseph Franzelli expressed his regret for the absence of the Anglican community in this year ecumenical celebration of the Way of the Cross in Lira Town. He said and wrote: "...The Ecumenical Way of the Cross through Lira Town... has been somehow a maimed one because of the absence of our brothers from the Anglican community".

He also informed people that the Bishop and the faithful of the Diocese of Lango had timely been invited to participate in the ecumenical way of the cross, but Bishop Alfred Olwa through his office answered that that for this year they were not ready to join their Orthodox and Catholic brothers in the act of faith; may be in the next year.

Therefore, it is out of order for an article from a reputable newspaper - which wrongly names Retired Bishop Rt. Rev. John Charles Odur Kami as the leader of the Diocese of Lango - to falsely attribute to the Bishop of Lira Diocese a polemic attitude through a sensational headline which can breed ill feelings and conflict between the Catholics and the Anglicans in Lango Sub region.



-End-

THEME FOR WORLD COMMUNICATION DAY 2018

"The truth will set you free." (Jn 8:32).

**Fake News and
journalism for Peace**

- Pope Francis

LITURGICAL KEY EVENTS FOR MARCH-APRIL

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

St. Joseph was the spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary and the foster-father of Jesus. His important mission in God's plan of salvation was "to legally insert Jesus Christ into the line of David from whom, according to the prophets, the Messiah would be born, and to act as his father and guardian" (Directory on Popular Piety and the Liturgy). Most of our information about St. Joseph comes from the opening two chapters of St. Matthew's Gospel. No words of his are recorded in the Gospels; he was the "silent" man. We find no devotion to St. Joseph in the early Church. It was the will of God that the Virgin Birth of Our Lord be first firmly impressed upon the minds of the faithful. He was later venerated by the great saints of the Middle Ages. Pius IX (1870) declared him patron and protector of the universal family of the Church.

March 25 -Palm Sunday

This is the final Sunday of Lent, the beginning of Holy Week and the day which commemorates the triumphant arrival of Christ in Jerusalem days before he was crucified. On Palm Sunday faithful often carry palm fronds, representing the palm branches the crowd scattered in front of Jesus as he rode into Jerusalem, as a sign of homage. This was a customary practice for people of great respect. The use of a donkey instead of a horse is also highly symbolic; it represents the humble arrival of someone in peace. During the Palm Sunday Holy Mass, palms are distributed to parishioners who carry them in a ritual procession into church. The palms are blessed and many people use them to make small crosses or other items of personal devotion. These may be returned to the church, or kept for the year because the palms are blessed. Instead, they are appropriately gathered at the church and burned to create the ashes that will be used in the following year for Ash Wednesday observance. The colors of the Mass on Palm Sunday are red and white, symbolizing the redemption in blood that Christ paid for the world.

March 30 - Good Friday

This is the day which Catholics commemorate the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. Catholics are joined by almost all other Christians in solemn commemoration on this day. It is also a legal holiday around much of the world. According to the gospels, Jesus was betrayed by Judas on the night of the Last Supper, commemorated on Holy Thursday. Jesus was convicted and crucified for proclaiming to be the King of the Jews

April 1 - Easter Sunday

Easter is the celebration of Christ's resurrection from the dead. It is celebrated on Sunday, and marks the end of Holy Week, the end of Lent, the last day of the Easter Triduum (Holy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter Sunday) and the beginning of the Easter season of the liturgical year. As we

know from the Gospels, Jesus Christ rose from the dead on the third day following his crucifixion, which would be Sunday. His resurrection marks the triumph of good over evil, sin and death. It is the singular event which proves that those who trust in God and accept Christ will be raised from the dead. Since Easter represents the fulfillment of God's promises to mankind, it is the most important holiday on the Christian calendar. The Easter date is movable and always falls on a Sunday between March 22 and April 25.

April 9- Solemnity of the Annunciation of the Lord

The Solemnity of the Annunciation celebrates the coming of the Angel Gabriel to the Virgin Mary to announce to her the special mission God had chosen for her in being the mother of His only son.

We are continually reminded of the importance of this feast to our salvation in various devotional prayers. Two examples that highlight the importance of this feast are the Joyous Mysteries of the Rosary and the Angelus

The feast of the Annunciation began to be celebrated on this day during the fourth and fifth centuries, soon after the date for celebrating Christmas was universalized throughout the Church. This feast celebrates the Incarnation of the Second Person of the Trinity and the salvation of all mankind.

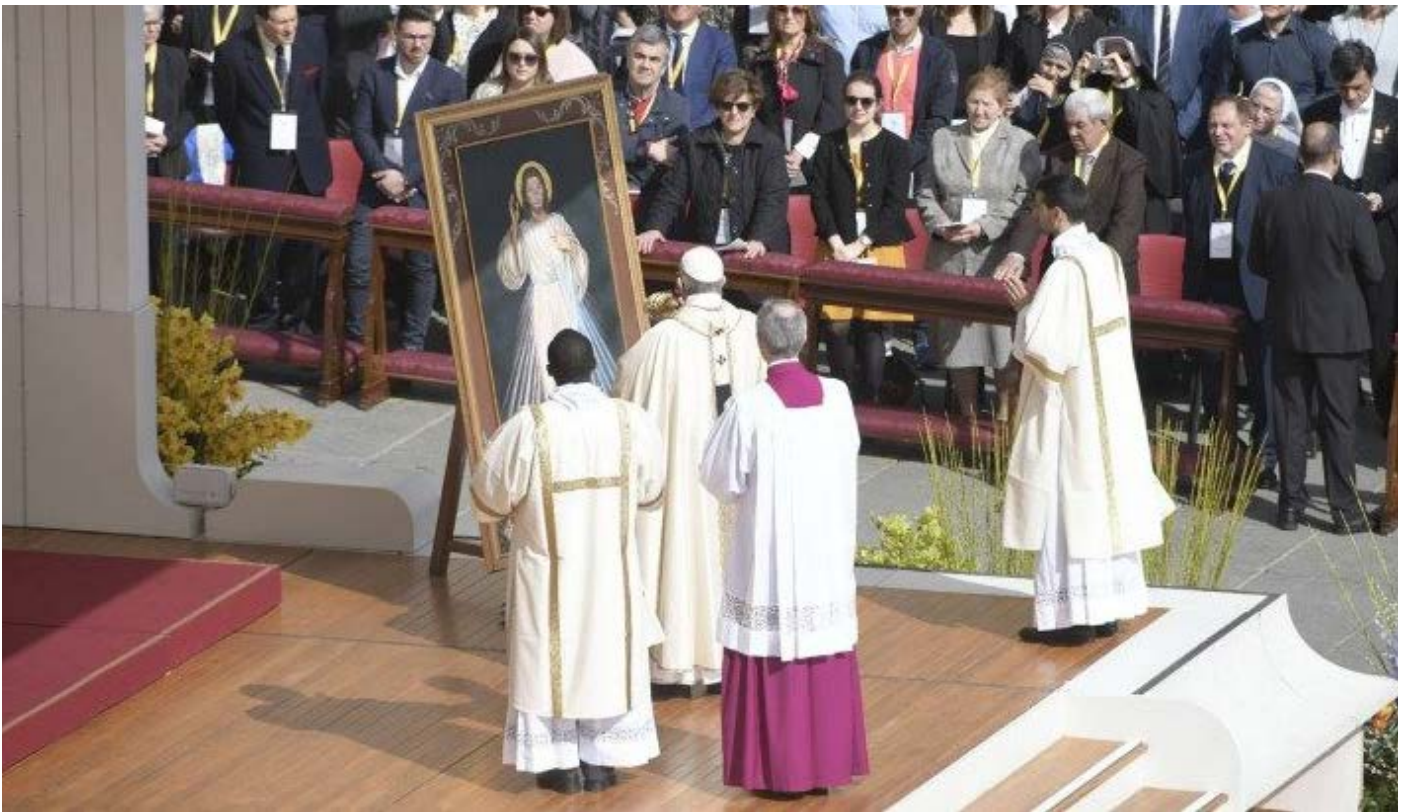
April 11- Memorial of Saint Stanislaus, Bishop and Martyr

St. Stanislaus was the Bishop of Krakow, Poland. A champion of the liberty of the Church and of the dignity of man, he defended the lonely and the poor. When he reproached King Boleslaus II for his immoral life, political and social corruption, the king himself killed him during Mass. He is the patron saint of Poland.

Saints John the Baptist, Thomas Becket, Thomas More, and Stanislaus are a few of the prophets who dared to denounce corruption in high places. They followed in the footsteps of Jesus himself, who pointed out the moral corruption in the religious leadership of his day

April 25- Feast of Saint Mark, Evangelist

The second Gospel was written by St. Mark, who, in the New Testament, is sometimes called John Mark. Both he and his mother, Mary, were highly esteemed in the early Church, and his mother's house in Jerusalem served as a meeting place for Christians there. St. Mark was associated with St. Paul and St. Barnabas (who was Mark's cousin) on their missionary journey through the island of Cyprus. Later he accompanied St. Barnabas alone. We know also that he was in Rome with St. Peter and St. Paul. Tradition ascribes to him the founding of the Church in Alexandria. St. Mark wrote the second Gospel, probably in Rome sometime before the year 60 A.D.; he wrote it in Greek for the Gentile converts to Christianity. Tradition tells us that St. Mark was requested by the Romans to set down the teachings of St. Peter.



Pope Francis celebrates Mass on Divine Mercy Sunday

Pope Francis on Divine Mercy Sunday: 'Contemplate boundless love'

On the Second Sunday of Easter, Divine Mercy Sunday, Pope Francis' homily focused on Doubting Thomas' who eventually "falls in love with the Lord."

By Sr. Bernadette Mary Reis, fsp

In his homily during the celebration of the Divine Mercy Sunday liturgy on April 8, 2018, Pope Francis points out that the verb "to see" is repeated over and over in the Gospel text (John 20:19-31). Although the disciples see the Lord, the Gospel "does not describe how they saw him," the Pope said. By mentioning the detail "he showed them his hands and his side" (v. 20), the Gospel seems "to tell us that that is how the disciples," and Thomas, "recognized Jesus: through his wounds."

"Seeing" for ourselves

Thomas wanted to "see inside," Pope Francis continued. He wanted to touch "with his hand in the Lord's wounds, the signs of his love." This is how Thomas is our twin, because so often we need to know for ourselves that God exists rather than taking others' word for it. "No, we too need to 'see God,' to touch him with our

hands and to know that he is risen for us," the Pope said.

A Love Story

Pope Francis tells us that it is by seeing Jesus' wounds that the disciples of all time know that we have been forgiven because we "contemplate the boundless love flowing from his heart"—a heart that beats for each person. When Thomas touched the Lord's wounds, Jesus became "My Lord and my God." Pope Francis describes the appropriation of God as mine as a "love story." The uncertain, wavering disciple then falls in love with the Lord telling him: "You became man for me, you died and rose for me and thus you are not only God; you are my God, you are my life. In you I have found the love that I was looking for, and much more than I could ever have imagined," Pope Francis said.

Savouring this love

The Pope says we can begin to savour this newfound love through the same gift Jesus

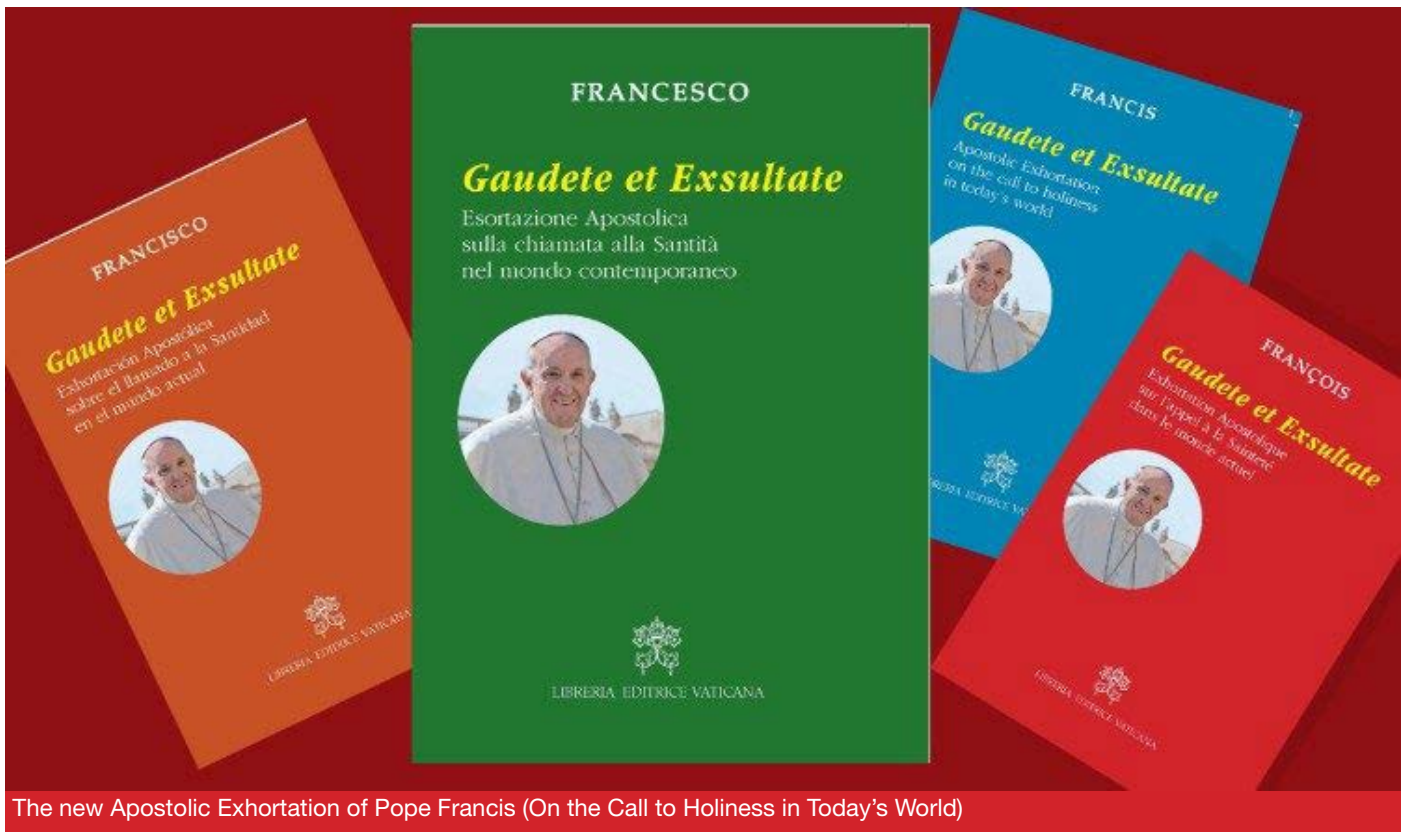
HE WANTED TO TOUCH "WITH HIS HAND IN THE LORD'S WOUNDS, THE SIGNS OF HIS LOVE."

granted on the evening of his Resurrection: the forgiveness of sins. Before forgiveness we may hide behind the doors of shame, resignation and sin.

Grace helps us understand shame as the "first step towards an encounter" and as a "secret invitation of the soul that needs the Lord to overcome evil," Pope Francis said.

Resignation tempts us to believe that nothing changes when we find ourselves lapsing, like the disheartened disciples after the "'Jesus chapter' of their lives seemed finished." At a certain point, Pope Francis says that "we discover that the power of life is to receive God's forgiveness and to go forward from forgiveness to forgiveness."

The last closed door to open is sin. Pope Francis reminds us that Jesus "loves to enter precisely 'through closed doors,' when every entrance seems barred." When we go to confession, we will learn that the very thing we believe separates us from God — sin — instead "becomes the place where we encounter him. There the God who is wounded by love comes to meet our wounds."



The new Apostolic Exhortation of Pope Francis (On the Call to Holiness in Today's World)

A guide to Christianity for the 21st Century: the new Apostolic Exhortation of Pope Francis

On April 9, which this year marked the transferred Solemnity of the Annunciation, the Vatican released the latest Apostolic Exhortation from Pope Francis: *Gaudete et exsultate: On the call to holiness in today's world*.

By Christopher Wells
Vatican Radio

"The Lord asks everything of us and in return offers us true life, the happiness for which we were created."

In his third Apostolic Exhortation (following *Evangelii gaudium* and *Amoris laetitia*) Pope Francis reflects on the call to holiness, and how we can respond to that call in the modern world. "My modest goal" in the Exhortation, Pope Francis says, "is to repropose the call to holiness in a practical way for our own time."

The five chapters of *Gaudete et exsultate* follow a logical progression, beginning with a consideration of the call to holiness as it is in itself. The Holy Father then examines two "subtle enemies of holiness," namely, contemporary gnosticism and contemporary pelagianism.

Holiness in living the Beatitudes

The heart of *Gaudete et exsultate* is dedicated to the idea that holiness means following Jesus. In this third chapter, Pope Francis considers each of the Beatitudes as embodying what it means to be holy. But if the Beatitudes show us what holiness means, the Gospel also shows us the criterion by which we will be judged: "I was hungry and you gave me food... thirsty and you gave me drink... a stranger and you welcomed me... naked and you clothed me... sick and you took care of me... in prison and you visited me."

Pope Francis devotes the fourth chapter of *Gaudete et exsultate* to "certain aspects of the call to holiness" that he feels "will prove especially meaningful" in today's world: perseverance, patience and meek-

ness; joy and a sense of humour; boldness and passion; the communal dimension of holiness; constant prayer.

Spiritual combat and discernment

Finally, the Exhortation makes practical suggestions for living out the call to holiness. "The Christian life is a constant battle," the Pope says. "We need strength and courage to withstand the temptations of the devil and to proclaim the Gospel." In the fifth chapter, he speaks about the need for "combat" and vigilance, and calls us to exercise the gift of discernment, "which is all the more necessary today," in a world with so many distractions that keep us from hearing the Lord's voice.

"It is my hope," Pope Francis concludes, "that these pages will prove helpful by enabling the whole Church to devote herself anew to promoting the desire for holiness."

The full text of the Apostolic Exhortation *Gaudete et exsultate* can be found on the Holy See website.

Divine Mercy Sunday - God's love encounters our misery

By Christopher Wells

Each year on the Octave Day of Easter, the Church observes Divine Mercy Sunday. The title "of Divine Mercy" to the Second Sunday of Easter in the year 2000, is when Pope St John Paul II canonized St Faustina Kowalska, the most notable advocate of the devotion. On Divine Mercy Sunday, the Church calls us to celebrate the mercy of God, to trust in the divine mercy, and to renew our commitment to showing mercy to others.

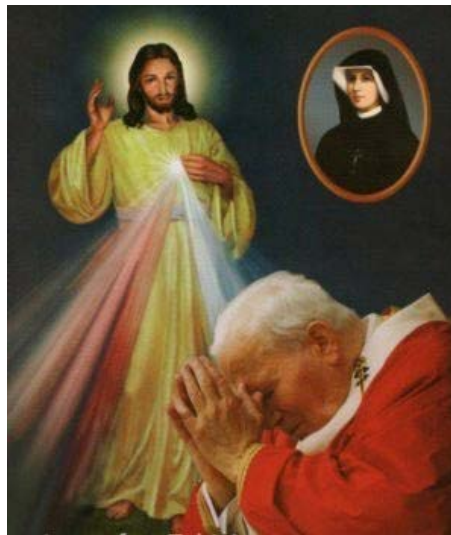
Divine Mercy Sunday is enriched by a plenary indulgence (see below) so that experiencing the gift of the Father's mercy, the faithful might partake to a greater degree in the gift of the consolation of the Holy Spirit.

Father Paul MacDonald, a pastor in the Diocese of St Catharine's in Ontario, Canada spoke with Vatican News about the importance of seeking forgiveness and trusting in the Lord on this Feast dedicated to the Divine Mercy.

The fact that Divine Mercy Sunday is celebrated on the Octave of Easter is no coincidence, Fr McDonald said. He noted that although the texts of the liturgy did not change with the addition of the new title, they nonetheless speak to the theme of Divine Mercy. The opening prayer, for instance, addresses the Lord as "God of everlasting mercy," and there are numerous references to the blood and water that came forth from the side of Christ on the Cross.

Father McDonald also spoke of the roots of the Latin word for mercy, "misericordia" which include the idea of the heart of God, the love of God, "the infinite love of the Lord encountering our misery." God, he said, "reacts to our misery by compassion, and grace, and healing, and enlightening, and strength, and all the superabundant graces that He gives.

The devotion to the Divine Mercy, Fr McDonald said, can be found in divine public revelation, that is, in the Tradition of the Church (especially the liturgy), and throughout the Sacred Scriptures. But, he explained, the Church also recognizes, per the Catechism, that "throughout the ages, there have been so-called 'private' revelations, some of which have been recognized by the authority of the Church... Guided by the Magisterium of the Church, the sensus fidelium knows how to discern and welcome in these revelations whatever constitutes an authentic call of Christ or his saints to the Church" (CCC, 67). In the revelations



of St Faustina, Fr McDonald said, the Church has discerned an authentic call in our day that the Divine Mercy might be honoured and called upon more and more; and that we might ourselves renew our commitment to showing mercy to our brothers and sisters.

Citing Pope Francis, Fr McDonald emphasized, "It is not that our Lord ever gets tired of forgiving us, it is that we get tired of asking for forgiveness." It is true, he said, that God is just and holy, and one who rejects mercy will face "sorrowful," and even eternal consequences. "But we must never distrust our Lord and His mercy," Fr McDonald said. "We must have unlimited confidence in His mercy."

He said that confidence is not a presumption that would allow us to continue sinning. Rather, it is a confidence that we can always "throw ourselves" on God's mercy, no matter what we have done, "and He is always ready to receive us, during this life, this time of mercy."

Returning once again to the Catechism, citing what he called "one of the more chilling passages," Fr McDonald recalled that with death, the time of mercy is over (cf. CCC, 1013). "So therefore, 'Now is the acceptable time... today is the day of salvation,' as Saint Paul says. Be reconciled to God – and don't you ever doubt that He is ready to take you back!"

Indulgences for Divine Mercy Sunday

As noted above, the Church offers a number of indulgences to the faithful on Divine Mercy Sunday. The degree granting those indulgences explains that Pope St John Paul established that the feast should be enriched with a plenary indulgence, "so that the faithful might receive in great abundance the gift of the consolation of the Holy Spirit." In this way, it continues, "they can foster a growing

love for God and for their neighbour, and after they have obtained God's pardon, they in turn might be persuaded to show a prompt pardon to their brothers and sisters."

The same decree, from the Apostolic Penitentiary, fully explains the indulgences granted to the faithful on this day:

"And so the Supreme Pontiff, motivated by an ardent desire to foster in Christians this devotion to Divine Mercy as much as possible in the hope of offering great spiritual fruit to the faithful, in the Audience granted on 13 June 2002, to those Responsible for the Apostolic Penitentiary, granted the following Indulgences:

- a plenary indulgence, granted under the usual conditions (sacramental confession, Eucharistic communion and prayer for the intentions of Supreme Pontiff) to the faithful who, on the Second Sunday of Easter or Divine Mercy Sunday, in any church or chapel, in a spirit that is completely detached from the affection for a sin, even a venial sin, take part in the prayers and devotions held in honour of Divine Mercy, or who, in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament exposed or reserved in the tabernacle, recite the Our Father and the Creed, adding a devout prayer to the merciful Lord Jesus (e.g. Merciful Jesus, I trust in you!);
- A partial indulgence, granted to the faithful who, at least with a contrite heart, pray to the merciful Lord Jesus a legitimately approved invocation.

For those who cannot go to church or the seriously ill

"In addition, sailors working on the vast expanse of the sea; the countless brothers and sisters, whom the disasters of war, political events, local violence and other such causes have been driven out of their homeland; the sick and those who nurse them, and all who for a just cause cannot leave their homes or who carry out an activity for the community which cannot be postponed, may obtain a plenary indulgence on Divine Mercy Sunday, if totally detesting any sin, as has been said before, and with the intention of fulfilling as soon as possible the three usual conditions, will recite the Our Father and the Creed before a devout image of Our Merciful Lord Jesus and, in addition, pray a devout invocation to the Merciful Lord Jesus (e.g. Merciful Jesus, I trust in you).



Pope Francis at Mass in the Casa Santa Marta (ANSA).

Pope Francis appeals for peace in Syria

By Vatican Radio

After praying the Regina Coeli with the faithful gathered in St Peter's Square on Divine Mercy Sunday, Pope Francis made a special appeal on behalf of Syria.

The Holy Father told those present that terrible news was arriving from Syria. Bombardments in Syria have claimed dozens of victims, many of them women and children, he said. In addition, there is news that the bombs contained chemical substances.

"Let us pray for all the deceased, for the wounded, for the families who suffer," Pope Francis said.

And he added, "There is no good war or bad war. There is nothing, nothing that can justify the use of such instruments of extermination against unarmed people and populations."

Pope at Mass: 'Prayer requires courage and patience'

In his homily at Mass on March 15, 2018 in the Casa Santa Marta, Pope Francis reflected on the power of prayer, starting with the dialogue between God and Moses.

"Courage and patience", according to Pope Francis, are the two linchpins of prayer, which must be raised up to God "in freedom, like children". The Holy Father made the comments in his homily at Mass in the Casa Santa Marta on Thursday. He took as his starting point the first reading

from the Book of Exodus, which tells of the conversation between the Lord and Moses regarding the apostasy of God's people.

Moses refuses to be deviated

The prophet tries to dissuade the Lord from acting on his "blazing wrath" against His people, who "had forsaken the glory of the living God to worship a golden calf." In Moses' bold dialogue, he reminds God of all He had done for his people, bringing them out of slavery in Egypt, and of the faithfulness of Abraham and Isaac.

In this "face-to-face" encounter, the Pope said, Moses' preoccupation and love for God's people is evident. He is not afraid to tell the truth and does not enter into the "deviation game".

"God appreciates this", said Pope Francis. "When God sees a person who continually prays for something, He is moved."

"No tangents. I am with the people, and I am with You. This is intercessory prayer: a prayer that argues and has the courage to speak directly to the face of the Lord, who is patient. Patience is needed in intercessory prayer. We cannot promise someone we will pray for them, pray only an Our Father and a Hail Mary, and then leave it at that. No. If you agree to pray for someone else, you must take this [other] path. And patience is needed."

Patience and constancy in prayer

In daily life, the Holy Father said, unfortunately there are many cases of managers ready to sacrifice an organization in order to save their own interests and to make a profit. But Moses refused to go off on a "tangent"; he is with the people and fights for them. Scripture, Pope Francis said, is full of good examples of constancy and the capacity to be patient, such as the Canaanite woman and the blind Bartimaeus of Jericho.

"Two things are needed for intercessory prayer: courage, or parrhesia, and patience. If I want the Lord to listen to my requests, I must return, and return again, to knock at the door of God's heart, since my own heart is committed to [this petition]! But if my heart is not concerned for this need, or the person for whom I am praying, neither will it be capable of courage and patience."

To have a concerned heart

Finally, Pope Francis pointed out the "path of intercessory prayer". He said it means being concerned for others and willing to fight, strive, and fast for them.

"May the Lord give us this grace: The grace to pray before God in freedom, like children; to pray with insistence; to pray with patience; but, above all, to pray in the knowledge that I am speaking with my Father, who will listen to me. May the Lord help us to advance in this form of intercessory prayer."

Banking is this easy with a **CenteAgent**



Regulated by Bank of Uganda AI.005

Bank in your neighbourhood with our trusted Agents.
Now you can:

- Make cash deposits and withdrawals
- Make bill payments
- Make loan payments / applications
- Open bank accounts



**Centenary
Bank**

...our bank



For more information, call toll free line

0800 200555

or visit your nearest Centenary Bank branch.

www.centenarybank.co.ug



New Contact is a publication of the Uganda Episcopal Conference

Nsambya Hill, 672 Hanlon Road, P.O. Box 2886 Kampala, Uganda, **Tel:** +256-414-510570/0414-10544/ 0414-510571/0414-510398,
Mobile Tel: +256-782746812, **Fax:** +256 414 510 545, **E-mail:** ucsnewcontact@gmail.com, **Website:** www.uecon.org

