

CHRISTIANS URGED TO PERFORM ACTS OF CHARITY AND DO PENANCE FOR A SUCCESSFUL PAPAL VISIT

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



The Apostolic Nuncio Archbishop Blume (C) addresses members of the press as Archbishop Lwanga (R) and the UEC Secretary General, Msgr John Baptist Kauta (L) listen. (IN SET) Archbishop Blume (R) with Archbishop Lwanga (L) share a conversation after addressing the media at the Catholic Secretariat.

WITH JUST four weeks to go for the arrival of His Holiness Pope Francis in Uganda, the Uganda Episcopal Conference (UEC) held its first Press Conference on the Papal visit on October 19, 2015 at the Uganda Catholic Secretariat, calling upon all the Christians to practice works of penance and undertake acts of charity for the poor.

The Holy Father, who will fly in from Kenya, is expected to arrive at Entebbe International Airport at exactly 4.50pm on November 27 and visit various places in Kampala for an Apostolic mission before his departure to the Central African Republic on November 29.

"The Pope's visit and presence during the celebrations requires everyone to prepare in a special way in order to worthily receive his blessings," said Most Rev. Dr. Cyprian Kizito Lwanga, the Archbishop of Kampala and Spokesperson of UEC.

He added, "We encourage all Catholics to do acts of charity towards the poor, practice works

of penance, seek reconciliation and love one another as Christ has loved us. Christians should also avoid and fight vices such as polygamy, adultery, domestic violence and drug abuse among others and care for the environment in line with the aspirations of the Pope contained in his encyclical (Laudato si)."

While addressing members of the press, Archbishop Lwanga reiterated several key points that were published in a Pastoral message that was released on October 8, 2015 by the Catholic Bishops of Uganda.

As a gesture to unite the faithful in prayer, the bishops also asked that before the final blessings at every Mass, as well as in personal, family or community prayer, people recite one Our Father, Hail Mary and Glory Be for the intention of the Pope and the success of his visit.

Meanwhile, the Apostolic Nuncio in Uganda, His Excellency Michael August Blume, said the Pope's visit to Africa was as a result of a process that started at The Second Special Assembly for

CONT'D ON PAGE 2

Inside:

UEC NEWS

Christians urged to perform acts of charity and do penance for a successful Papal visit : 1-2

Apostolic journey of His Holiness Pope Francis from Nairobi, Kenya to Entebbe-Kampala, Uganda : 2

A Brief history about the places the Pope will visit in Uganda : 5

Catholic bishops release pastoral letter for 2016 general elections : 2

UEC Interreligious and Ecumenism department holds workshop to promote peaceful coexistence : 5

DIOCESAN NEWS

Pilgrims throng Paimol for Blessed Martyrs Daudi and Jildo celebrations : 6

'Jesus Christ Instituted the Papacy,' says Archbishop Lwanga : 7

PAPAL QUOTES

"THE WORST ENEMY OF A FRAGILE FAITH IS FEAR. DO NOT BE AFRAID."
-POPE FRANCIS

VATICAN NEWS

Conclusion of the Synod of bishops on the family : 8

AMECEA NEWS

AMECEA secretaries deliberate on the theme of the 19th plenary assembly : 10

A year of opportunities in the region: A call for reflection : 10-11

INSPIRATION

Wise Quotes for reflection

INTERNATIONAL CHURCH NEWS

The eight most powerful moments of Pope Francis' visit to the United States (September 22-27) : 12

THE EDITORIAL



The Apostolic visit of Holiness Pope Francis to Uganda is just around the corner. The Holy Father arrives in the evening of

November 27, 2015 and departs in the morning of November 29, 2015. Preparations are in high gear and excitement is high. It is the third time a Pope visits the Pearl of Africa and we can truly say that we are a blessed country.

As we count our blessings and thank God for the honour of hosting the third Pope, we also pay homage to our beloved Martyrs of Uganda, whose ultimate sacrifice of their lives for Christ has occasioned this historic Apostolic visit of the Holy Father. Pope Francis comes to celebrate with us the 50th Anniversary of the Canonization of the 22 Uganda Martyrs, Saint Charles Lwanga and his companions.

In this issue of *New Contact*, we bring you exciting stories pertaining to the Holy Father's visit to Uganda and much more. We greatly appreciate all the people who have contributed various news stories and articles and we request for more, including adverts. For any inquiries and further information you can contact us on +256 782 746 812 or send an email to newcontact2013@gmail.com.

New Contact is circulated via email and can also be accessed on the website of UEC (www.uecon.org) and on Facebook.

Let us keep in contact through *New Contact*.

Wishing you God's abundant blessings,

Fr. Philip Odii,
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Christians urged to perform acts of charity and do penance

FROM PAGE 1

Africa of the Synod of bishops in October 2009.

"A document titled, The Church in Africa in service to Reconciliation, Justice and Peace was produced at that Assembly. In his visits to Africa, the Holy Father will emphasise and put into practice his own, and the Vatican's diplomacy of making peace," the Apostolic Nuncio stated.

Pope Francis's visit in the three countries will be held under the theme, "You Will Be My Witnesses." While in Uganda he will pay a courtesy visit to State House in Entebbe for a meeting with the President, H.E. Yoweri Museveni before

proceeding to Munyonyo Catholic Martyrs Shrine where he will meet the Catechists and the teachers.

He will also visit the Anglican and Catholic Shrines to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the canonization of the Uganda Martyrs, who were burned to death for their faith between 1885 and 1887. The Pope is scheduled to also have a meeting with the youth at Kololo Airstrip before heading to Nalukolongo for a meeting with the sick, elderly, poor, and vulnerable people and finally hold a meeting with the priests, religious men and women and seminarians at Rubaga Cathedral. ■

Apostolic journey of His Holiness Pope Francis from Nairobi, Kenya to Entebbe-Kampala, Uganda

Friday, 27 November 2015

15:30	Departure by plane from Nairobi for Entebbe
16:50	Arrival at the International Airport of Entebbe in Uganda
	Welcoming ceremony
17:30	Courtesy visit to the President at the State House in Entebbe
18:00	Meeting with Public Authorities and Diplomatic Corps in the Conference Hall of the State House
19:15	Visit to Munyonyo and greeting to Catechists and Teachers

Saturday, 28 November 2015

08:30	Visit to the Anglican Shrine of the Martyrs of Namugongo
09:00	Visit to the Catholic Shrine of the Martyrs of Namugongo
09:30	Holy Mass for the Martyrs of Uganda in the area of the Catholic Shrine
15:15	Meeting with the young people at Kololo Air Strip in Kampala
17:00	Visit to the Charitable Centre of Nalukolongo
18:00	Meeting with the Bishops of Uganda at the Archbishop's House
19:00	Meeting with Priests, Men and Women Religious and Seminarians gathered in the Cathedral

Sunday, 29 November 2015

09:00	Farewell ceremony at the Airport of Entebbe
09:15	Departure by plane from Entebbe for Bangui in the Central African Republic

A BRIEF HISTORY ABOUT THE PLACES THE POPE WILL VISIT IN UGANDA

From Wikipedia: <https://en.wikipedia.org> and additional reporting from Juliet Lukwago

Munyonyo



Munyonyo Shrine is the place where the journey of the 22 Catholic Martyrs began before their martyrdom at Namugongo. It was at Munyonyo where King Mwanga took the fateful decision to begin putting Christians to death. The blood of Uganda's martyrs was shed on the soil around Munyonyo. The first three Christians to render their lives for Christ's sake after the King's decision did so on 26 May 1886 – they were: St. Denis Ssebugwawo, St. Andrew Kaggwa and St. Pontiano Ngondwe. Their shrine is currently being re-built in preparation for the Papal visit. It is also a place where in 1886 Saint Charles Lwanga - leader of Christian community in Uganda baptized St. Kizito, St. Mbagwa, St. Gyavira and St. Muggaga.

Namugongo



(ABOVE) The Catholic Martyrs' Shrine. (BELOW) The artistic impression of the multi-billion Martyrs museum to be erected at the Namugongo Anglican shrine. PHOTO BY JOSEPH KIGGUNDU.

All of the King's Christian pageboys were captured and they were sentenced from Munyonyo and put to death at Namugongo (the Kingdom's designated place for execution). On 3 June 1886, 32 young men (Anglican and Catholics), pages of the court of King Mwanga

II of Buganda, were burned to death at Namugongo for their refusal to renounce Christianity. Annually on 3 June, Christians from Uganda and other parts of the world congregate at Namugongo to commemorate the lives and religious beliefs of the Uganda Martyrs. Twenty two of the Catholic martyrs were canonized by Pope Paul VI on 18 October 1964 and are regarded as saints in the Catholic Church. A basilica has been built at the spot where the majority of them were burned to death. At Namugongo, the Holy Father will celebrate the 50th anniversary of the canonization of the Uganda Martyrs.

Nalukolongo



The Archbishop of Kampala Archdiocese His Grace Dr. Cyprian K. Lwanga greeting some of the elderly people who live at the Centre.

After the death of Kabaka Muteesa I in 1884, his successor, Mwanga, at the request of Joseph Balikuddembe and his companions, invited the missionaries back to Buganda. The team which came included Mapeera, Pierre Giraud and Bro. Delmas Amans. They arrived on July 13, 1885.

The following day, they were given Nalukolongo as their first preaching site. Mwanga wanted to give them a piece of land nearer to his palace at Mengo, but the missionaries preferred Nalukolongo because it was easier for ordinary people to access as opposed to the heavily guarded area close to the palace. However, during the time of persecution that followed, Nalukolongo became the crucible of faith a source of encouragement and spiritual strength for the Christians preparing them for the highest form of Christian witness and martyrdom.

Soon after, the missionaries at Nalukolongo were also imprisoned and eventually expelled from the country in 1888 by the Muslim supporters of King Kalemwa.

The idea of developing it into an

elderly and disabled people's home was conceived by the Late Emmanuel Cardinal Nsubuga after his residence at Rubaga was crammed with people seeking food, clothing and shelter.

In 1978 Cardinal Nsubuga decided to turn the place into a home for the needy (Bakateyamba). He constructed a hostel with a capacity of 300 people. This home began with 10 disabled people. Currently it houses many vulnerable people regardless of their faith and belief who are being looked after by eight sisters of the Good Samaritans Order.

It was Pope Francis' request that a home for the destitute be included on his itinerary in Uganda. And thus, Mapeera Bakateyamba's home at Nalukolongo will host the pope at 5:00pm on Saturday November 29, 2015.

Rubaga



Saint Mary's Cathedral Rubaga, commonly referred to as Rubaga Cathedral, is the parent cathedral of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Kampala, the oldest Roman Catholic diocese in Uganda. It is the home church of Archbishop of Kampala. Kabaka Mutesa I Mukaabya Walugembe, the 30th Kabaka of Buganda, who reigned from 1856 until 1884, once maintained a palace on Lubaga Hill. When fire destroyed the palace, he abandoned the hill and relocated to Mengo Hill. In 1889, his son Mwanga II of Buganda, donated that land to the French Catholic missionaries (White Fathers) who were setting up the nascent Catholic church in the country, at that time. In 1914 the missionaries began constructing a modern cathedral at Lubaga (Rubaga). Construction was completed in 1925 and St. Mary's Cathedral Rubaga was consecrated on 31 December 1925.

At Rubaga, Pope Francis will meet with the Bishops at Archbishop Lwanga's residence before holding a meeting with the priests, religious men and women and seminarians. ■

CATHOLIC BISHOPS **RELEASE PASTORAL LETTER FOR 2016 GENERAL ELECTIONS**

By Jacinta W. Odongo

THE Uganda Episcopal Conference (UEC) has issued a guide inviting the clergy, religious men and women, lay faithful and all Ugandan citizens to vote with discernment in the 2016 general elections.

Calling on all citizens ***“To build a world in which respect, dignity, equality, justice and peace are our primary concerns”***, the Bishops listed basic principles from Catholic moral and social teachings to help voters analyze and evaluate public policies and programs.

The Pastoral letter which was signed by the UEC Chairman, Most Rev John Baptist Odama who is also the Archbishop of Gulu states, “In our previous letters a call for Sustainable Constitutionalism and Rule of Law in Uganda (November, 2009) and Consolidating Electoral Democracy in Uganda (June, 2010), we highlighted the critical challenges regarding multiparty

democracy in our country. In this one, we pay more attention to the critical issues in the journey towards the 2016 elections; in particular, how citizens and various institutions concerned with this process should conduct themselves during this period.”

The bishops further asked all citizens to think and reflect on the issues and to recognize the good intentions of politicians. The letter sets out four core principles from which a politics geared to the common good should spring including reverence and humility, active citizenship, unity in diversity as well as love and respect.

“These principles have strong basis in our own conscience, the scriptures, our cultures, and the national constitution and other laws governing the conduct of elections in Uganda. We encourage you to look at them objectively and prayerfully,” the letter explains.

According to the bishops elections are an important aspect of democracy and a way of ensuring active participation of all citizens in affairs that directly affect their temporal well-being and happiness. Therefore they called for comprehensive electoral reforms electoral reforms to make the elections more credible, free and fair.

The letter emphasized that a general election is not just about expressing an opinion but about contributing to an action towards an objective.

“We reiterate the fact that elections come with great opportunities and challenges for our country,” the bishops wrote, adding that “We, therefore encourage all actors to work for peace and ensure the process widens the options for democratic choices for our young nation. On our part we promise to journey with you in prayer.” ■

UEC INTERRELIGIOUS AND ECUMENISM DEPARTMENT HOLDS WORKSHOP TO **PROMOTE PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE**

By Jacinta Wangalwa Odongo

AS PART of the plan for promoting the Catholic Church teachings on peaceful coexistence in religion, cultural and political diversity, the Uganda Episcopal Conference (UEC) through its department of Interreligious Dialogue and Ecumenism held a workshop on October 8, 2015 in Jinja Diocese, Uganda.

The workshop, which was conducted under the theme of ***“Human Nature, Unity in Diversity, Religion and Culture in Social Development of our Mother Uganda,”*** tackled the definition, necessity and roles of human beings in the process of peaceful and harmonious coexistence.

“We want to help people understand that God created us differently,” said the UEC Executive Secretary of the Interreligious and Ecumenism Department, Rev. Fr. Vincent Karatunga adding, *“Being different from one another doesn’t mean we are enemies. Every person is entitled to his or her own view and his own way of life. Therefore there is need to engage in dialogue to help us understand and appreciate each*



Some of the participants take a group photo with Fr. Karatunga (far left)

other’s as well as live in peace and grow together in a human family.”

The event also highlighted the importance of tolerance and democracy as well as the negative impacts of

extremism, fundamentalism and fanaticism in the global world of today where people are interconnected to one another as a result of modern technology.

Fr Karatunga, who was the main

UEC Interreligious and Ecumenism department holds workshop

FROM PAGE 4



(LEFT) A section of the participants at the workshop. (RIGHT) Mrs Kantono (right) displays to the participants some of the tools used in terrorism and armament.

facilitator, pointed out the importance of their work in such a diverse society where *"the role of church is to reinforce the concepts of coexistence, equity, justice and acceptance."*

"We need to strive to invest in our religio-cultural diversity in order to make Uganda a peaceful and secure country for everyone," he noted.

The Detective Senior Superintendent

of Police in Uganda, Lydia Kantono, also presided as a guest speaker at the workshop. She called upon the participants to strive to be global citizens and think beyond their personal views to be able to survive in today's global world.

"Human diversity should not only be looked at as a liberality for human growth and development but on the contrary, they are assets in which we

should all invest because through them we are all enriched and transformed to become better persons," she explained.

Uganda's Assistant Commissioner of Police, David Wasswa was also in attendance at the workshop which attracted over 200 participants from the Eastern region of Uganda. ■

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PILGRIMS THROG PAIMOL FOR BLESSED MARTYRS DAUDI AND JILDO CELEBRATIONS

(Fr. Samuel Mwaka Okidi and Alphonse Makmot Akera)



Photos by Fr. Samuel Mwaka Okidi

ABOVE: (LEFT) Concelebrating four Bishops with the Main Celebrant Archbishop Emmanuel Obbo. (RIGHT) Catechists Of the Archdiocese of Gulu. BELOW: A Cross Section of the Offertory Procession.

THOUSANDS of pilgrims thronged Paimol Martyrs Shrine in Agago District on October 20, 2015 to mark the 13th anniversary of the beatification of the Paimol Catechists' Martyrs, Blessed Daudi Okello and Jildo Irwa. The two Martyrs were killed in 1918 for refusing to denounce their faith.

The Archbishop of Tororo, Most Rev. Emmanuel Obbo who was the main celebrant at the Mass gave a deep reflection on the theme of this year's celebration, **"Bear Witness to the Truth"**. In his homily, the Archbishop said that the theme summarized the Church teaching on living a true Christian life.

"Living a true Christian life means following the footsteps of Jesus Christ and bearing witness to Jesus Christ." said Archbishop Obbo adding, *"The Young Martyrs David Okello and Jildo Irwa set for us a good example. Despite the fact that they were young, their faith was not young. They understood the truth, stood by the truth and later bore witness to the truth."*

The Mass was also concelebrated by Rt. Rev Sabino Odoki, Bishop of

Arua Diocese, Rt. Rev. Santos Lino Wanok, Bishop of Nebbi Diocese, Rt. Rev. Giuseppe Philippi, Bishop of Kotido Diocese and Rt. Rev. Damiano Giulio Guzzetti, Bishop of Moroto diocese as well as over seventy Priests.

Archbishop Obbo further said that the celebration should be a moment to revive the memories of the saints. *"If we want to be true witnesses of Christ we must follow their examples of living and bear witness to Christ until the last moment like they did,"* he explained.

Meanwhile, the Archbishop of Gulu, Most Rev. John Baptist Odama who at that time was in Rome for the 14th General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops through a message said that, *"David and Jildo stood as the light to show the truth of Jesus' death and resurrection for the salvation of all. They never wavered, they stood on the side of Jesus Christ despite the physical threat and psychological intimidation. They remained with Christ till death together with Mary the one through whom they prayed especially the Rosary which was*

THE YOUNG MARTYRS DAVID OKELLO AND JILDO IRWA SET FOR US A GOOD EXAMPLE. DESPITE THE FACT THAT THEY WERE YOUNG, THEIR FAITH WAS NOT YOUNG. THEY UNDERSTOOD THE TRUTH, STOOD BY THE TRUTH AND LATER BORE WITNESS TO THE TRUTH.

their main prayer."

Archbishop Odama further urged Christians to consider the celebrations as a way of showing gratitude to the Martyrs, a moment of paying tribute for their achievement and a moment to praise God whose will succeeded in their life hence making them our intercessors.

"It is therefore important to seek their intercession to make us live like them for God and for Christ and, His mission of saving Humanity through the Cross and resurrection to give eternal life," he explained.

The Mass was animated by St. Joseph Catholic Community of Gulu University. ■

‘JESUS CHRIST INSTITUTED THE PAPACY,’ SAYS ARCHBISHOP LWANGA

By Valerian Kkonde-PEARL NEWS SERVICE

THE ARCHBISHOP of Kampala Archdiocese His Grace Dr. Cyprian Kizito Lwanga has castigated those who write and say wrong things about the Pope. He noted that the Papacy was instituted by Jesus Christ Himself.

“When Jesus asked His disciples who the people thought he was, they told Him different answers. He then asked the disciples themselves who they thought He was,” said Archbishop Lwanga adding. “It was Simon Peter who said that you are the Christ, the son of the living God. Jesus then told Simon Peter that you are the rock on which I shall build my Church. Peter succeeded Christ and became the first Pope. The Pope is the successor of Peter.”

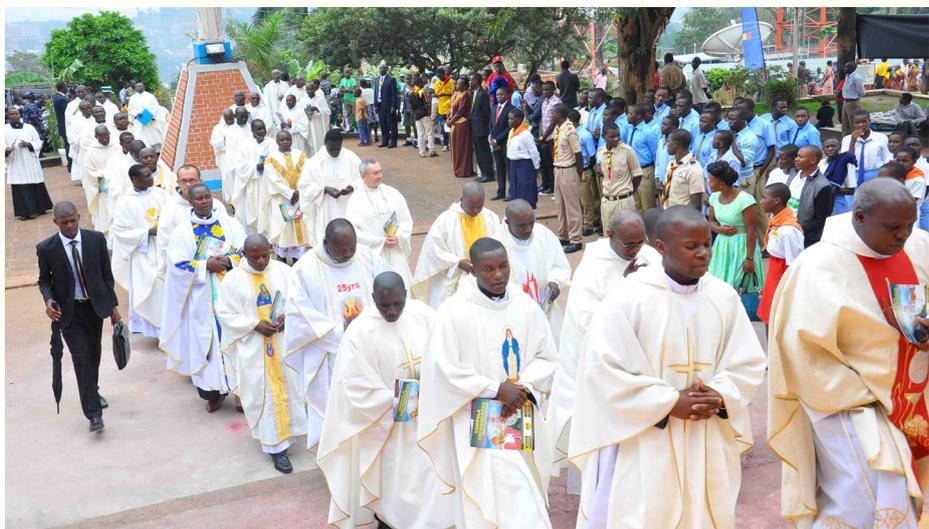
Dr. Lwanga said this at Lubaga Cathedral on Sunday, October 25, 2015 during celebrations for the Archdiocesan day. Kampala Archdiocese celebrated 49 years of existence. Preparations for the Golden Jubilee were also launched.

On the association of the Papacy with the figure 666 found in the Bible, Archbishop Lwanga said that the figure was meant to refer to the Emperor Nero Caesar who was terrorising Christians.

“That figure in the Book of Revelations is about Emperor Nero Caesar but people were so scared to even mention his name. They assigned figures to the letters that make up his name. And when you add up those figures they come to 666.

“At that time, Peter had just been killed.”

Meanwhile, as preparations for the Papal visit near the climax, the Chancellor Fr. Ssebunnya revealed that so far three dinners have been organised in Hotel



Some of the priests at the entrance procession

PHOTOS BY JULIET LUKWAGO

Africana, Sheraton and Serena.

“2.7 billion shillings have so far been collected, while 1.9 billion shillings is yet to be paid. I call upon all those who shared our sumptuous meals to fulfill their pledges. The redevelopment of Namugongo costs 44 billion shillings.”

The Chancellor told the excited congregation that “the new” Namugongo will have eight state of the art toilets, terraces for sitting and a police station. The lake has also been cleaned and a point for drawing water put in place.

On his part, the head of the Laity Anthony Mateega requested President Museveni to extend amnesty to some prisoners as a good gesture and a way to welcome the Pope to Uganda.

“Some are very old while others are left with a few months to complete their punishment yet they have behaved well.”

Thanking the priests and the

IT WAS SIMON PETER WHO SAID THAT YOU ARE THE CHRIST, THE SON OF THE LIVING GOD. JESUS THEN TOLD SIMON PETER THAT YOU ARE THE ROCK ON WHICH I SHALL BUILD MY CHURCH. PETER SUCCEEDED CHRIST AND BECAME THE FIRST POPE. THE POPE IS THE SUCCESSOR OF PETER.

Religious, Mateega said that there are a lot of challenges in the Parishes but that “service with love and faith is visible.”

Archbishop Lwanga told the congregation that the Archdiocese was founded on August 8, 1966 although the Cathedral was consecrated on October 30, 1925 and stands where Kabaka Muteesa I’s palace was. He added that politics is not meant for violence but electing leaders, but that its commercialization had forced many to avoid participating. ■



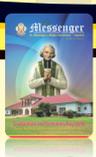
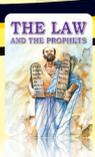
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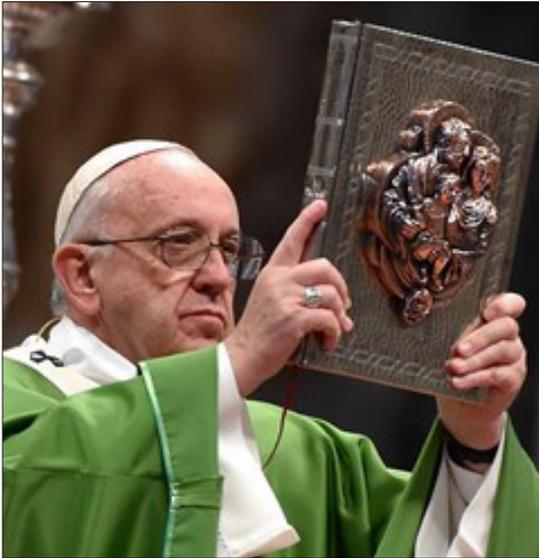






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CONCLUSION OF THE SYNOD OF BISHOPS ON THE FAMILY

From Vatican Radio



(L) Pope Francis raises the book of the gospels during a mass for the 14th Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops at St Peter's basilica on Oct. 25, 2015 at the Vatican. (R) The Bishops participate in prayer.

THE 14th Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops dedicated to, *"The Vocation and Mission of the Family in the Church and the Contemporary World,"* was held in Vatican City from October 5-24.

On Saturday October 24 the Synod came to a close and Pope Francis delivered his closing remarks. The Pope posed this question: *"What will it mean for the Church to conclude this Synod devoted to the family?"* He said that the Synod was not about settling issues but attempting to see them in the light of the Gospel and the Church's tradition and two thousand-year history.

"Surely it was not about finding exhaustive solutions for all the difficulties and uncertainties which challenge and threaten the family, but rather about seeing these difficulties and uncertainties in the light of the Faith, carefully studying them and confronting them fearlessly, without burying our heads in the sand," said Pope Francis.

The Holy Father further noted that the Synod was about urging everyone to appreciate the importance of the institution of the family and of marriage between a man and a woman, based on unity and indissolubility, and valuing it as the fundamental basis of society and human life.

"It was about showing the vitality of the Catholic Church, which is not afraid to stir dulled consciences or to soil her hands with lively and frank discussions

about the family," he added.

He explained that the Church is a Church of the poor in spirit and of sinners seeking forgiveness not simply of the righteous and the holy, but rather of those who are righteous and holy precisely when they feel themselves poor sinners. He said that it was about trying to "broaden horizons, rising above conspiracy theories and blinkered viewpoints." He went on to say that "in the course of this Synod, the different opinions which were freely expressed and at times, unfortunately, not in entirely well-meaning ways certainly led to a rich and lively dialogue; they offered a vivid image of a Church which does not simply "rubberstamp", but draws from the sources of her faith living waters to refresh parched hearts.

He said the Synod had heard that what is normal for one bishop is not for another; what is considered a violation of a right in one society is an evident and inviolable rule in another," depending on the social context. He pointed out at the conclusion of Vatican II the Church spoke about inculturation as the "intimate transformation of authentic cultural values through their integration in Christianity, and the taking root of Christianity in the various human cultures." He also explained that inculturation does not weaken true values, but demonstrates their true strength and authenticity "since they adapt without changing; indeed they quietly and gradually transform the

different cultures."

The Holy Father said that, without falling into relativism or demonising others, the Synod sought to embrace, fully and courageously, the goodness and mercy of God who transcends our every human reckoning and desire.

"The Synod experience also made us better realize that the true defenders of doctrine are not those who uphold its letter, but its spirit; not ideas but people; not formulae but the gratuitousness of God's love and forgiveness. This is in no way to detract from the importance of formulae they are necessary or from the importance of laws and divine commandments, but rather to exalt the greatness of the true God, who does not treat us according to our merits or even according to our works but solely according to the boundless generosity of his Mercy (cf. Rom 3:21-30; Ps 129; Lk 11:47-54)."

Quoting Benedict XVI, Pope Francis said "Mercy is indeed the central nucleus of the Gospel message". The Holy Father said that many of the delegates felt the working of the Holy Spirit who is "the real protagonist and guide of the Synod."

To conclude the Synod, he said, "To return to our true 'journeying together' in bringing to every part of the world, every diocese, to every community and every situation, the light of the Gospel, the embrace of the Church and the support of God's mercy!" ■

POPE FRANCIS' BEST QUOTES ABOUT THE FAMILY DURING HIS TRIP THE U.S. AND CUBA

His final destination was the World Meeting of Families in Philadelphia. But before he got there, and before he even arrived in the United States, **Pope Francis made family life one of the central messages of his latest papal trip.**

During a meeting with Cuban families, he explained that the family is where people learn to be selfless.

SOLIDARITY

"When one doesn't live as a family, one will strengthen the part that always says: I, me, my, with me, for me. One totally centers around these things and doesn't know solidarity or fraternity."

While in Cuba, he also blessed pregnant women and their babies.

TENDERNESS

"All, touch your stomach and I give you a blessing in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. I wish for all the babies to be born in good health, for them to all grow up well. Women, raise them well and caress your stomach, as you are carrying hope."

These lines were just the beginning of what would come. Thousands of families from throughout the world gathered in Philadelphia for the 8th World Meeting of

Families.

The Pope presided over this vigil, in which he improvised his speech to remind families they are "factories of hope."

HOPE

"The family is, forgive me, it is a factory of hope, of life, of resurrection. God was the one who opened that path."

He joked that sometimes family life is bittersweet. But with difficult moments also comes great happiness.

CROSS AND RESURRECTION

"In families, children bring headaches. I won't speak about mother in laws. But in families, there is always a Cross. Always. Because of the love of God, the Son of God opened up that way. But also in families, after the Cross there is Resurrection."

To conclude the World Meeting of Families, Pope Francis celebrated a Mass with nearly one million attendees. He recounted to families the importance of everyday gestures.

GESTURES

"Like the warm supper we look forward to at night, the early lunch awaiting someone who gets up early to go to work. Homely gestures. Like a blessing before we go to bed, or a hug after we return from a hard

day's work."

He also praised the infinite generosity that parents have for their children. He asked families and every individual person to open themselves up to authentic love.

OPENNESS

"We renew our faith in the word of the Lord which invites faithful families to this openness. It invites all those who want to share the prophecy of the covenant of man and woman, which generates life and reveals God!"

And he gave them this advice: think critically about how they speak to one another when they're at home.

PATIENCE

"I leave you with this question, for each one of you to respond to. In my home, do we yell, or do we speak with love and tenderness? This is a good way to recognize our love."

At the end of the event, it was announced that the next World Meeting of Families would take place in Dublin, Ireland in 2018.

It will be the ninth time it has been celebrated since 1994, when Pope John Paul II launched the first event in Rome.

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AMECEA SECRETARIES **DELIBERATE ON THE THEME OF THE 19TH PLENARY ASSEMBLY**

By Pamela Adinda

AMECEA Secretaries General (SG) extensively deliberated on the theme of the next AMECEA Plenary Assembly, which is scheduled to take place in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia in 2018.

The 2018 theme was premeditated during the Second Ordinary Meeting for the AMECEA SGs that was held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia from October 8-9, 2015.

"Based on the inputs from member conferences which were then discussed by the AMECEA Executive Board members, during their meeting in September this year, it was unanimously agreed that the next AMECEA plenary should address the challenges of ethnicity and violence in the region that call for joint effort to work for sustainable peace and development," said Rev. Fr Ferdinand Lugonzo, the AMECEA Secretary General.

The Secretaries General discussed the impending visit by the Holy Father, Pope Francis to two AMECEA Countries, Kenya and Uganda in November.

They expressed their appreciation to the Holy Father for choosing two AMECEA Countries for his maiden visit to the



AMECEA SGs and other participants during the Assembly meeting at Addis Ababa

continent and they saw the need for full participation by all AMECEA Member Conferences by sending representatives.

The Roman Pontiff will visit Kenya from November 25 to 27; and proceed to Uganda where he will spend two days to commemorate the Golden Jubilee of the

canonization of the first African Saints, the Uganda Martyrs, by Pope Paul VI in 1964. From Uganda, Pope Francis is going to the Central African Republic (CAR), where he will wind up the trip on November 30. ■

A YEAR OF OPPORTUNITIES IN THE REGION: A CALL FOR REFLECTION

By Anthony Mbandi, AMECEA Justice Peace and Caritas Department Coordinator



World Bank Group and IMF leaders address the Assembly. (R) World Bank Group President Jim Yong Kim 2015 speaks during the Annual Meetings Press Briefing.

THIS YEAR has seen a flurry of activities globally and also in the AMECEA region, of which AMECEA Justice Peace and Caritas office has been involved with the aim of bringing forth the voice of the Bishops within the region. The most significant activity has not taken place yet, but it

is worth mentioning, "The Papal visit to Kenya and Uganda".

Yes, the AMECEA region is humbled to host Pope Francis in two member countries and we pray and hope that during this visit, a potential return visit to other AMECEA countries may be announced. We

leave this to God's providence.

Now, I am coming back to the other activities that have taken place and in which AMECEA Secretariat, through the Justice, Peace and Caritas Department, has been deeply involved.

First, there was a meeting on Climate

A YEAR OF OPPORTUNITIES IN THE REGION

FROM PAGE 10

Change that took place in Rome from May 5-15, 2015 and was organized by the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace. This was just before Pope Francis released the timely Encyclical on the Care of our Common Home, *Laudato Si* in July 2015. At this meeting, the AMECEA Justice Peace and Caritas Department was privileged to provide input on how best to popularize the Pope's Encyclical. During this meeting an input was provided on *COP2*, which refers to negotiations on climate change that will take place in Paris and especially looking at what would be the key take home.

The second major event of global importance was the Financing for Development Conference that took place in Addis Ababa where AMECEA Justice Peace and Caritas Department presented issues that are of great importance for the Church in the AMECEA Region. The main issues are climate change, options for the poor and peace building. Issues around ensuring that the developing countries are heard especially on how to better undertake local resource mobilization and good stewardship, were key thematic areas for discussion. This Conference also gave foundation to the impact indicators for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that were passed later in September 2015 and also gave the Church perspective before the address of the Holy Father to the United Nations.

The third engagement that AMECEA has been involved in at a global level is the World Bank Group (WBG) and International Monetary Fund (IMF) Annual General Meeting which took place in Lima, Peru, from October 5-12, 2015. This is what I would wish to discuss a little bit.

Unlike the previous meeting in Addis Ababa and the New York meeting on Sustainable Development, the WBG & IMF meeting is led by the Governors of Central Banks around the world. These are the elusive technocrats that define how the citizens can engage and are affected by the socio-economic environment of a country.

They are the persons charged with;

1. Creating environments for job creation;
2. Stabilizing economies ensuring growth;
3. Ensuring the social sectors in an economy is well catered for to ensure the first two objectives are attainable. It is therefore imperative that we find the space in such meetings to raise the concerns of our people and especially making sure that the AMECEA position is well articulated in the regional conversations.

What were the critical take homes and what would we advise the AMECEA Conferences.

1. Illicit financial flow is an issue that has to be dealt with comprehensively and we as the Church have to keep our countries

engaged in the agenda of stemming this vice.

2. It is important for the Episcopal Conferences to push for policies within the countries that create opportunities for job creation especially for the youth. This means projects such as the big infrastructure projects have to be up-scaled to ensure that the youth have opportunities and to access markets.

3. So as to ensure socio-economic engagement of our youth and rural communities we have to ensure that we are growing in technology. This includes farming technologies, communication, health, education and virtually in every sector. This will bring about transformation of our societies.

4. We, as Church, have a critical role to play especially in health, education and social protection. We have an obligation to invest in these sectors that ensure the poor are not left behind.

5. Lastly and most importantly, we, as the Church, have to ensure that there is good stewardship of the resources managed by the governments on behalf of the people.

These steps will help in creating a stronger engagement with the governments both nationally and regionally. ■

WISE QUOTES FOR REFLECTION

'Holiness doesn't mean doing extraordinary things, but doing ordinary things with love and faith,'

- Pope Francis

'A Christian is never bored or sad, rather the one who loves Christ is full of joy and radiates joy,'

-Pope Francis

'You will get all you want in life, if you help enough people get what they want,' - Zig Ziglar

Success is knowing your purpose in life, growing to reach your maximum potential and sowing seeds that benefit others,' -John C. Maxwell

'Fear can keep us awake all night long but faith makes one fine pillow,' - Zig Ziglar

'To accomplish great things, we must not only act, but also dream. Not only plan, but also believe,'

- Anatole France

'Kindness is a language that the deaf can hear and the blind can see,' - Tom Ziglar

Our prime purpose in this life is to help others. And if you can't help them, at least don't hurt them,' - Dalai Lama

'The only way to do great work is to love what you do,'

- Steve Jobs

'There are moments when troubles enter our lives and we can't do anything to avoid them. But they are there for a reason. Only when we have overcome them will we understand why they were there,'

-Paulo Coelho

A sacrifice to be real must cost, must hurt and must empty ourselves. The fruit of silence is prayer, the fruit of prayer is faith, the fruit of faith is love, the fruit of love is service and the fruit of service is peace,'

- Blessed Mother Teresa of Calcutta

There is no passion to be found in playing small for a life that is less than the one you are capable of living,'

- Nelson Mandela

THE EIGHT MOST POWERFUL MOMENTS OF POPE FRANCIS' VISIT TO THE UNITED STATES (SEPTEMBER 22-27)

www.romereports.com

FOR the first time in his papacy and his life, Pope Francis visited the U.S. at the end of September. He attended the World Meeting of the Families in Philadelphia but also made stops in Cuba, D.C., and New York.

From the moment he stepped foot in the United States, Pope Francis captured the nation's attention. Whether it was his bold statements about family life or the car he traveled in, the Pope's first trip to the U.S. was filled with meaning. Here are the eight most powerful moments from www.romereports.com

1. THE FIAT



Internet Photo

When Pope Francis landed in Washington, he surprised many by stepping into a black Fiat 500L. It was a small gesture, but in a city where leaders typically travel inside limousines or big SUVs, it made a big impression on the American public.

2. REMINDING CONGRESS OF THE "GOLDEN RULE"



Pope Francis covered lots of ground in his speech to Congress. But the central theme of his address was elegant in its simplicity. When he spoke of the Golden Rule, it received more applause than almost any other moment in his speech. *"We need to avoid a common temptation nowadays: to discard whatever proves troublesome. Let us remember the Golden Rule: 'Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.'"*

3. A TOUCHING MOMENT WITH A CHILD

While in Washington, a 5-year-old girl

whose parents face deportation broke through security to meet Pope Francis. She handed him a t-shirt and a letter expressing hope that people like her parents can remain in the United States.



4. LINKING THE ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL ISSUES

Like his speech to Congress, the Pope covered a wide range of issues when he addressed the UN General Assembly. He explained how his view of environmental care is linked to his position on social issues.

"The defense of the environment and the fight against exclusion demand that we recognize a moral law written into human nature itself, one which includes the natural difference between man and woman, and absolute respect for life in all its stages and dimensions."

5. VISITING GROUND ZERO



Toward the end of the trip, the Pope noted that he was incredibly moved by his visit to the 9/11 Memorial. While there, he explained how goodness eventually overcame evil.

"This place of death became a place of life too, a place of saved lives, a hymn to the triumph of life over the prophets of destruction and death, to goodness over evil, to reconciliation and unity over hatred and division."

6. UNSCRIPTED REMARKS ON FAMILIES

Speaking at the World Meeting of Families, Pope Francis set down his speech and gave off-the-cuff remarks

about family life. He said that families quarrel, but they're filled with love.

"God plans so that our hearts are open. He likes to open hearts. It comes from Him. But you know what He likes most. To knock on the doors of families and to find families who love each other. Families who bring up their children to grow and help them move forward."



7. "GOD WEEPS"

Before addressing American bishops in Philadelphia, Pope Francis met with five survivors of sexual abuse. Some suffered at the hands of priests, others family members or teachers. He told the bishops about his experience.

"It continues to make me feel overwhelming ashamed that people who were in charge of the tender care of those small children violated them and caused them serious harm. I deeply regret it. God weeps."

8. GREETING PRISONERS ONE BY ONE



When the Pope went to a large prison inside Philadelphia, he took the time to greet every prisoner one by one. In his speech, he said it was a lie that people cannot change.

"Let us look to Jesus, who washes our feet. He is 'the way, and the truth, and the life.' He comes to save us from the lie that says no one can change... He wants us to keep walking along the paths of life, to realize that we have a mission, and that confinement is not the same thing as exclusion." ■

