

KABALE BISHOP EMERITUS **DIES AFTER BATTLE** WITH HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE

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



Internet Photos

Most Rev. Emmanuel Obbo of Tororo Archdiocese (center) leads the prayers in the Requiem Mass at Lubaga Cathedral. On his right, His Eminence Emmanuel Cardinal Wamala, the Secretary to the Apostolic Nuncio, Fr. Ferdinando Duarte Barros Reis, Most Rev. Dr. Cyprian Kizito Lwanga, the Archbishop of Kampala and Rt. Rev. Mathias Ssekamanya, Bishop Emeritus of Lugazi ((far left). On the far right is Rt. Rev. Paul Ssemogerere, Bishop of Kasana-Luwero diocese.

RT. REV. Barnabas Halem'Imana, the first native residential Bishop of Kabale Diocese, died on January 3, 2016, at St. Francis Nsambya Hospital after a long battle with high blood pressure and diabetes. He was 87.

Born in Kisoro District, in 1929, Bishop Halem'Imana started his primary education at Mutorere Primary School before joining Kitabi Seminary in Bushenyi District in 1943. He went to Katigondo Major Seminary in 1950 and was ordained priest on December 7, 1958 at Mutorere Parish where he served as a curate. He also served as Editor of Ageteraine Newspaper from October 1959 to July 1962. He later went for further studies in Canon Law at Pontifical Urban University in Rome where he attained a Doctorate in 1966.

"We are most grateful to Dr. R. Mwebaze and other Medical staff of Nsambya Hospital that cared for him," Rt. Rev. Callist Rubaramira, Bishop of Kabale Diocese said in his speech at the burial ceremony. "We shall remember him for his most appreciated contributions to the growth of the Church and economic developments in this Diocese of Kabale for the

25years he served," he added.

Upon his return from Rome in 1966, Bishop Halem'Imana served at the Uganda Catholic Secretariat and later became the Secretary General of the Uganda Episcopal Conference (UEC) in 1968. He also served as the Chairman of UEC from the year 1982 to 1986.

He was appointed Bishop and consecrated by His Holiness Pope Paul VI at Kololo Airstrip on August 1, 1969. He was consecrated alongside Rt. Rev. Albert Edward Baharagate, the Bishop Emeritus of Hoima Diocese, Rt. Rev. Serapio Bwemi Magambo (RIP), Bishop Emeritus of Fort Portal and Rt. Rev. John Baptist Kakubi, Bishop Emeritus of Mbarara. He was the first native Residential Bishop for Kabale Diocese to take over from Rt. Rev. Gervase Nkalanga, a Bishop from Tanzania on May 29, 1969. Bishop Nkalanga also died on December 18, 2015 in Tanzania.

According to Bishop Callist, despite Bishop Halem'Imana's academic accomplishments and his role in the diocese, he remained humble and engaged in developmental projects.

"He was known for his pastoral zeal, vision

CONT'D ON PAGE 2

Inside:

UEC NEWS

Kabale Bishop EMERITUS dies after battle with high blood pressure : 1-2

Archbishop Odama calls on the media to be proactive to ensure peaceful general elections : 3

UEC holds thanksgiving and get-together celebration for the successful visit of Pope Francis : 4

Pictorial: Thanksgiving and Get-together : 5

Catholic Communicators' Association in Uganda re-elects office bearers : 6

Ireland delegation visits UEC : 7

INSPIRATION

Wise Quotes for reflection : 6,8

DIOCESAN NEWS

Nebbi Catholic Diocese Hosts Provincial Prayer Peace Week 2016 : 8

AMECEA NEWS

President Bashir orders opening of border with South Sudan : 9

Church lauds President for rejecting religion regulations laws : 9

ANTICIPATED EVENTS FOR FEBRUARY 2016 : 9

VATICAN NEWS

Pope releases message for the 2016 Word Day of Social Communication : 10

ADVERT

ADVERT : 11

VATICAN NEWS

Live your faith during Lent, perform works of mercy : 12

**WISHING YOU A
BLESSED LENTEN
SEASON**

THE EDITORIAL



As we begin a new year, we raise our voices to God in thanksgiving for enabling us publish eight (8) issues of New Contact in 2015

and we pray for a successful 2016. I greatly appreciate all the people who have worked and continue to work tirelessly to ensure that the publication of **New Contact** continues, particularly our news contributors, editors, designers and not forgetting our readers.

This is the first issue of **New Contact** for the year 2016 and we dedicate it to our late Bishop, the Right Reverend Barnabas Halem'Imana of Kabale Diocese, who passed away on January 3, 2016. Barnabas was the first native residential Bishop of Kabale Diocese and he was once the Chairman of Uganda Episcopal Conference (UEC). As we continue to pray for the repose of his soul, we salute him for the services he rendered to our church and country. May the Lord grant him the Glory of Heaven.

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Let us keep in contact through New Contact.

WISHING YOU A BLESSED LENTEN SEASON,

Fr. Philip Odii

**Editor/Executive Secretary of
Social Communications
Uganda Episcopal Conference**

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Nsambya Hill, 672 Hanlon Road,
P.O. Box 2886 Kampala, Uganda

Tel: +256-414-510570

Mobile Tel: +256-782746812

Fax: +256 414 510 545

E-mail: ucsnewcontact@gmail.com

Website: www.uecon.org

Rt. Rev. Barnabas Halem'Imana dies after battle with high blood pressure

FROM PAGE 1



His Eminence Emmanuel Cardinal Wamala performs rite of commendation.



Most Rev. Emmanuel Oboo performs rite of commendation.



Most Rev. Cyprian Kizito Lwanga lays a wreath on the casket of Bishop Halem'Imana



President Museveni lays a wreath on Bishop Halem'Imana's casket, during the Requiem Mass in Kabale



Prime Minister Ruhakana Rugunda (extreme right), Chief Justice Bart Katureebe and the Inspector General of Police Kale Kayihura at the Requiem Mass in Kabale.



The Late Rt. Rev. Barnabas Halem'Imana

and generosity. His Love for education made him start a good number of schools especially in the 1980's. He initiated a number of development projects for the Diocese and because of his initiative Kabale got the first Branch of Centenary Bank upcountry," he explained.

Bishop Halem'Imana also opened 13 parishes in Kabale, built and opened the current St. Paul's Seminary and St. Adrian's Seminary. He built the current Bishop's House and Chancery.

He was known for spearheading the spread of the Catholic faith in Ankole sub-region and championing the fight against the HIV/AIDS plague in its early days in the country. He retired on July 15, 1994 and served as the chairman of the Uganda AIDS Commission from 1998 to 2011. He is credited for establishing a number of commercial buildings for the diocese,

HE WAS APPOINTED AND CONSECRATED BY HIS HOLINESS POPE PAUL VI AT KOLOLO AIRSTRIP ON AUGUST 1, 1969. HE WAS CONSECRATED ALONGSIDE RT. REV. ALBERT EDWARD BAHARAGATE, THE BISHOP EMERITUS OF HOIMA DIOCESE, RT. REV. SERAPIO BWEMI MAGAMBO (RIP), BISHOP EMERITUS OF FORT PORTAL AND RT. REV. JOHN BAPTIST KAKUBI, BISHOP EMERITUS OF MBARARA.

including the one housing Centenary Bank in Kabale, Kabale Diocese Motel in Kabale Town and Travellers Hotel in Kisoro District.

Bishop Halem'Imana was laid to rest at Kabale Cathedral on January 6, 2016. Prior to this, a Requiem Mass was held for him at Rubaga Cathedral in Kampala on January 5, 2016. He has lived and served as a priest for 57 years and as a Bishop for 46 years. May his soul rest in Eternal Peace ■

ARCHBISHOP ODAMA CALLS ON THE MEDIA TO BE PROACTIVE TO ENSURE PEACEFUL GENERAL ELECTIONS

By Jacinta W. Odongo



Archbishop Odama (left) addresses the ACCPU members as the ACCPU chairman, Simon Byakatonda (center) and the ACCPU Secretary, Valerian Kkonde take down notes.

WITH the 2016 Uganda General Elections around the corner, the Chairman of the Uganda Episcopal Conference (UEC) and the Archbishop of Gulu Archdiocese, Most Rev. John Baptist Odama has urged the media to be proactive in addressing the issue of violence and ensuring peaceful elections on February 18 this year.

"We are caught in a very important state now in this country and you are more aware than me, but I have my concerns so that we can work together. I have no idea how the election will be. Will it be free and fair? Will it be peaceful? Nobody knows, but I am concerned about the state of this country because I wouldn't like the country to be destabilized anymore and one of the causes is elections," Archbishop Odama said.

He made the remarks at the Uganda Catholic Secretariat premises in Kampala on January 27 2016, during the Second Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Association of Catholic Communication Practitioners in Uganda (ACCPU) that was attended by journalists from various media houses in Uganda.

He said that the Catholic Bishops of Uganda will collaborate with the media in the endeavor to promote democracy and peace-building, and will make use of their Pastoral Letter on the guiding principles for the 2016 general elections, which was released in August last year. The Pastoral Letter is entitled, *"Free and Fair Elections: Our Common Mission to Consolidate Democratic Gains in*

"I HAVE NO IDEA HOW THE ELECTION WILL BE. WILL IT BE FREE AND FAIR? WILL IT BE PEACEFUL? NOBODY KNOWS, BUT I AM CONCERNED ABOUT THE STATE OF THIS COUNTRY BECAUSE I WOULDN'T LIKE THE COUNTRY TO BE DESTABILIZED ANYMORE AND ONE OF THE CAUSES IS ELECTIONS,"- ARCHBISHOP ODAMA

Uganda".

Through the watchdog role, he said the local media should protect the public interest and encourage free, fair and peaceful conduct of the elections to achieve the long-term goal of democratic consolidation and human development.

"We had a terrible situation in the northern region for over 20 years and on that part I am so sensitive about the future of this country. If there is anybody who is a great patriot, I would be number two. Unless we are firm on what we want Uganda to be before, during and after the elections, we are likely to see some violence," Archbishop Odama explained. *"I think we should be proactive on this important matter because many people listen to the media. We love our country so let us be proactive in addressing the issue of violence,"* he added.

The Archbishop further stated that he has begun holding talks in his Archdiocese about the consequences of instigating violence before, during and after elections, and he encouraged the journalists to do the same.

"I have been talking to the people in

my Archdiocese from the urban areas to the villages and I have told them to go to their communities and pass the same message of peace. Whoever causes violence from the national level to the grassroots should be held accountable for any loss of lives, for any injuries and for any destruction. I am very hot on this issue and I am going to continue doing so to avoid violence," he emphasized.

He quoted a line from Chinua Achebe's book, *'Things Fall Apart,'* about the mosquito which always disturbed the ear with noise to remind it that it was still alive, following the ear's mockery of the mosquito that it was too weak to live long enough for marriage. He urged the journalists to emulate the mosquito's style to be proactive and persistent in advocating for peace during this period.

Archbishop Odama applauded the ACCPU members for forming the association and for their active participation in making the visit of the Pope to Uganda a great success.

"It is our hope that the members of this association, who have met at the very important juncture, will contribute towards a free, fair and peaceful elections," he concluded.

The AGM also attracted the Secretary General of the UEC, Msgr. John Baptist Kauta and the UEC Executive Secretary of the Social Communications Department, Rev. Fr. Philip Odii who was re-elected as an ex-officio member. ■

UEC HOLDS THANKSGIVING AND GET-TOGETHER CELEBRATION FOR THE SUCCESSFUL VISIT OF POPE FRANCIS

By Jacinta W. Odongo



(LEFT) Archbishop Odama, hands over a gift to Hon. Ruhakana Rugunda as the Secretary General of UEC, Msgr. John B. Kauta looks on. (RIGHT) Hon. Ruhakana Rugunda offers his speech.

FOLLOWING the successful historic visit of His Holiness Pope Francis to Uganda in November last year, the Uganda Episcopal Conference (UEC) hosted a colorful appreciation celebration to acknowledge the contribution made by the various organizing committee members, government officials and sponsors towards making the event an unprecedented success.

The thanksgiving and get-together event, which was held on Tuesday January 19, 2016 at the Uganda Catholic Secretariat premises, attracted over 400 invited guests who included members of various organizing committees, top government officials and sponsors among other people. The event kicked-off at exactly 5.45pm amid jubilant songs, traditional and folk dances upon the arrival of the Chief Guest, Prime Minister. Hon. Ruhakana Rugunda.

Hon. Ruhakana was ushered in at the venue by the Chairman of the UEC and the Archbishop of Gulu, Most Rev. John Baptist Odama, the Bishop of Lira, Rt. Rev. Joseph Franzelli, the Bishop of Masaka, Rt. Rev. John Baptist Kaggwa, the Secretary General of UEC, Msgr. John Baptist Kauta, Minister in Charge of General Duties/Office of the Prime Minister. Hon. Kabwegyere Tarsis, the Executive Director of the Kampala Capital City Authority, Jennifer Musisi and other government officials.

Archbishop Odama told the guests that the Holy Father wrote to him a letter

"THE HOLY FATHER IGNITED NATIONAL COHESION IN PRACTICE. WE WERE USED TO THE PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES HITTING AT EACH OTHER BUT IT WAS NOT A COMMON SIGHT TO SEE THE WARMTH OF THE HANDSHAKING AT NAMUGONGO THUS WE SHOULD FOLLOW THE POPE'S EXAMPLE OF UNITY,"

expressing his gratitude to all Ugandans for their warm welcome during his visit. "The whole event was a success which gave the Pope a great joy. The crowd that accompanied him was a sign that people are yearning for Christ. It would not have been possible without the fervent hard work put in by everyone involved thus we are gathered here to celebrate that," said Archbishop Odama adding, "The visit left us with a very important lesson that the Church and the state can be partners in promoting the common good."

He also conveyed his thanks and sincere appreciation to the office of the president, cabinet ministers, police, other religious faiths and local authorities for providing tight security and amenities such as water in all the locations.

The Archbishop told the guests that the visit made all Ugandans proud and urged them to keep that pride all the time to maintain unity, hard work and consultation.

"The presence of the various leaders from different political parties and religions, the shaking of the hands of the

two presidential candidates in 15 years was proof that the visit knew no religion or political background but it was a demonstration that Uganda only shared oneness," he stated.

Addressing the guests, Hon. Ruhakana said that many memorable things took place in the nation because of the Papal visit.

"The Holy Father ignited national cohesion in practice. We were used to the presidential candidates hitting at each other but it was not a common sight to see the warmth of the handshaking at Namugongo thus we should follow the Pope's example of unity," said Hon. Ruhakana adding *"Unity, solidarity and ecumenism was another example from the Holy Father. He first visited the Anglican Shrine, prayed and meditated there. It showed that we have no choice but to follow his example in spite of variation in religion."*

Archbishop Odama later handed over a gift to the Prime Minister, other government officials and dignitaries present. The event concluded at 10pm with the cutting of the cake.

Various dishes and refreshments were served to the guests who couldn't hide their joy, excitement and gratitude throughout the evening. ■

PICTORIAL: THANKSGIVING AND GET-TOGETHER CELEBRATION



Archbishop Odama (left) welcomes Hon. Rugunda upon his arrival.



Hon. Rugunda (second-right) being ushered into the venue by the Bishops.



Bishop Kaggwa welcomes Prof. Kabwegyere (second-left).



The ED of KCCA, Jennifer Musisi (right) at the dinner.



Hon. Rugunda (left) signing the Visitors' Book.



Religious Sisters and other guests at the ceremony.



Staff of Catholic Secretariat.



Some of the invited guests.



The UEC Chairman, Archbishop Odama, gives his speech.



Dancers entertain the guests with their sensational cultural dances.



Guests serving dinner.



LEFT: The THANK YOU cake on display. **CENTRE:** The Guest of honour and the UEC Chairman are joined in the cake-cutting ceremony by Msgr. Kauta (from left), the ED of KCCA, Jennifer Musisi, the Secretary in the Office of the President, Prof. Tarsis Kabwegyere and (right) Rt. Rev. Joseph Franzelli.



Hon. Rugunda bids farewell to the guests present with a warm handshake.

CATHOLIC COMMUNICATORS' ASSOCIATION IN UGANDA **RE-ELECTS** OFFICE BEARERS

By Jacinta W. Odongo



LEFT: Archbishop Odama (left) reads the Pastoral Letter to the communicators. On his left is Simon Peter Byakatonda (ACCPU Chairman), Valerian Kkonde (ACCPU Secretary) and Msgr. John Baptist Kauta (UEC Secretary General). **RIGHT:** Members of ACCPU vote during their first General Assembly in 2015.

THE Association of Catholic Communication Practitioners in Uganda (ACCPU) on Wednesday January 27, 2015 held its Annual General Meeting (AGM) at the Uganda Catholic Secretariat premises in Kampala, during which members elected office-bearers to steer the association to the next level.

Simon Peter Byakatonda was re-elected for another term as chairman while Caroline Cecilia Akulo retained her position as the vice chairperson. Valerian Kkonde was also re-elected as the Secretary and Joel Ssenabulya was reinstated as the treasurer, each to serve a two year term.

Mr. Byakatonda following his re-election as the ACCPU chairman, said, "I am very honoured that the members have decided to re-elect me and my team to serve once again. We shall do everything we can to achieve our goals and we are going to accept all your advice openly since we are not masters but learners."

He added, "I hope to gain all the support and assistance of my Council to consolidate some of the works we have initiated in the last Council to achieve the desired results. I must say that ACCPU remains very strongly committed towards

developing."

Sr. Mary Lilly Driciru, Mr. Gerald Businge and Mr. Charles Ndawula were reinstated as board members, while the Uganda Episcopal Conference (UEC) Executive Secretary of Social Communications Department Rev. Fr Philip Odii was re-elected as an ex-officio member.

The General Assembly mandated the team to review the association's constitution to create more scholarship and other opportunities for its members. They were also empowered to organize more training for the ACCPU members, to open an office for the association, ensure the association is legally registered and open a reliable bank account. ACCPU's current constitution was adopted at the last General Assembly in February, 2015.

Addressing the General Assembly, Fr. Philip told the members that they have full support from UEC. "I would like to inform you that the Catholic Bishops are aware of this association and you have their support. You do not need to feel abandoned or like orphans. UEC is going to work hand-in-hand to see that the association becomes stronger and achieves its goals and interests," he said

The AGM was attended by 15 ordinary members out of its total membership base of 40. The UEC chairman and the Archbishop of Gulu, Most Rev. John Baptist Odama and the Secretary General of the UEC, Msgr. John Baptist Kauta were also in attendance.

ACCPU was officially launched on November 27, 2014 by the Chairman of the Social Communications Commission of Uganda Episcopal Conference, Rt. Rev. Joseph Franzelli, in the presence of the commission members and several journalists.

The association was established to promote unity and cooperation among Catholic communication practitioners to further the values of the Catholic Church, to provide members the opportunity to deepen their knowledge on church teaching and values, to advance professionalism, expertise and talents of its members, to inform with regard to building and sustaining communities in the economic, political, cultural, educational and religious spheres as well as to defend and protect members from forms of hardships met in the diligent course of their due practice among others. ■

WISE QUOTES FOR REFLECTION

Education begins the gentleman, but reading, good company and reflection must finish him. - John Locke

You are never too old to set another goal or to dream a new dream. - C.S Lewis

You need to associate with people that inspire you, people that challenge you to raise higher, people that make you better. Don't waste your valuable time with people that are not adding to your growth. Your destiny is important. - Joel Osteen

Make your anger so expensive that no one can afford it and make your happiness so cheap that people can almost get it free. - Malcom X

Leadership is the wise use of power. Power is the capacity to translate intention into reality and sustain it. - Warren Bennis

Never be afraid to fall apart because it is an opportunity to rebuild yourself the way you wish you had been all along. - Rae Smith

IRELAND DELEGATION VISITS UEC

By Jacinta W. Odongo



PHOTOS BY JACINTA ODONGO

The delegation from the Archdiocese of Dublin and Trocaire office in Ireland pose for a group photo with the Secretary General of the Uganda Episcopal Conference (UEC) Msgr. John Baptist Kauta (centre, back row) and some of the staff of the Domestic Violence Prevention Desk at the UEC. **(INSET)** The delegation in a meeting with the representatives from the Domestic Violence Prevention Desk at the UEC.

A DELEGATION from the Archdiocese of Dublin and Trocaire office in Ireland visited the Uganda Episcopal Conference (UEC) on January 18, 2016 to learn, share and enhance cooperation between the two partners.

The delegation, which was led by the Country Director at Trocaire Uganda, Ian Dolan, comprised of 11 priests from the Archdiocese of Dublin and two heads of department from Trocaire Ireland.

The group paid a courtesy visit to the office of the Secretary General of UEC,

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE IS TYPICALLY HIDDEN IN THE PRIVATE DOMAIN WHERE IT IS KEPT AS A SHAMEFUL SECRET, FORCING VICTIMS TO SUFFER IN SILENCE. THE CAMPAIGN AIMS AT CREATING AWARENESS ABOUT THE PROBLEM BRINGING ABOUT BEHAVIOUR CHANGE. A NATIONAL CAMPAIGN TO PREVENT DOMESTIC VIOLENCE USUALLY RUNS ANNUALLY THROUGH THE SEASON OF ADVENT.

Msgr. John Baptist Kauta and held a fact-finding discussion on Domestic Violence Prevention program with representatives from the Domestic Violence Prevention Desk at the UEC.

Msgr. Kauta said that the cooperation between UEC and Ireland has been enhanced since November 2010 when UEC launched an initiative in collaboration with the Irish Organizations Trocaire and Irish Aid to fight domestic violence in the country.

"This visit is very important to us because these visitors are the ambassadors of the Christians back in Ireland," said Msgr. Kauta adding, *"Trocaire and Irish Aid are our major sponsor in the campaign against domestic violence thus this visit will help them to know how we organize ourselves, how we conduct the domestic violence campaign program and connect with the community."*

The delegation also visited different parishes in the Archdiocese of Gulu

where, they witnessed some of the projects conducted at the grassroots level to help communities in the fight against domestic violence and improve their livelihood through education and good health.

"We are thankful to UEC for providing us with such an amazing opportunity to know how the domestic violence campaign program is usually conducted. It's a big opportunity for the Irish priests and Trocaire officers to get a first hand exposure and information," said Mr. Dolan.

Domestic violence is typically hidden in the private domain where it is kept as a shameful secret, forcing victims to suffer in silence. The campaign aims at creating awareness about the problem bringing about behaviour change. A national campaign to prevent domestic violence runs throughout the year, but it is intensified during the season of Advent. ■

NEBBI CATHOLIC DIOCESE HOSTS **PROVINCIAL PRAYER PEACE WEEK 2016**

Fr. John Hercules Odokodit, Nebbi Diocesan Communications Coordinator

EVERY YEAR people of all walks of life from Gulu Ecclesiastical Province and its neighboring Dioceses gather for the Provincial Prayer Peace Week. It is an annual post war event that was initiated in January 2005 by Most. Rev John Baptist Odama, the Archbishop of Gulu, aimed at restoring, maintaining and promoting peace in the entire region and beyond.

This year, Nebbi Diocese hosted the event which was conducted under the theme of: **'Overcome Indifference and Win Peace.'** The peace week kicked-off in the afternoon of January 11, 2016 with a procession peace march through the town of Paidha where the event was hosted. The function attracted Bishops, politicians, religious leaders from different denominations and delegates from the entire ecclesiastical province of Gulu Archdiocese and the neighbouring Dioceses including Mahagi-Nioka in the Democratic Republic of Congo and Soroti Catholic Diocese in Eastern Uganda.

On January 12, 2016, which was the second day of the event, the function started with the celebration of Holy Mass at Paidha Primary Teachers' College with the main celebrant being Rt. Rev. Sanctus Lino Wanok, Bishop of Nebbi Diocese.

Margret Angucia, an Associate Professor at the Uganda Martyrs' University, was the Chief Guest. In her speech she said that she studied "Peace" as a subject in class but the communities to which she was invited practiced, worked for and lived peace which she classified as positive and negative peace.

"Positive peace looks at the social-economic wellbeing or development of the society, that is, children going to schools, housing, clothing, generating incomes to the households, status of women, youths and the elderly recognized at all levels," she said.

She also recognizes the international



Rt. Rev. Sabino Ocan Odoki, Bishop of Arua (left), Most Rev. John Baptist Odama, Archbishop of Gulu and Rt. Rev. Joseph Franzelli, Bishop of Lira at the Holy Mass



(LEFT) Dancers entertain guests at the Peace Week event. (RIGHT) Rt. Rev. Sanctus Lino Wanok, Bishop of Nebbi introduces the Chief Guest, Mrs Margaret Angucia, an Associate Professor at Ugamda Martyrs University



peace day which is usually celebrated every year on September 21. She quoted King Junior of the United Kingdom (UK) having said 'If we do have peace on earth, our loyalty should conceal our nation to a world perspective ethnic, social, political, cultural etc'.

Angucia called on all communities to overcome indifference to win peace in social-economic and political life in Northern Uganda.

Meanwhile, the third day of the event began with Mass that was presided over by Rt. Rev. Sabino Ocan Odoki of

Arua Diocese. Participants were guided by the theme: **The role of Religion and Culture in promoting peace.** The theme was aimed at Religious men and women and cultural leaders to overcome their indifferences in matters pertaining to peace promotion and development.

The final day of the event started with a celebration of Holy Mass which was animated by Lira Diocese and the main celebrant was Rt. Rev. Joseph Franzelli, Bishop of Lira Diocese. The peace week concluded with a prayer that was recited by all the participants. ■

WISE QUOTES FOR REFLECTION

There is no more noble occupation in the world than to assist another human being- to help someone to succeed.

- Alan Loy Mc Ginnus

Prosperity is a life experience in health, wealth and love. You are prosperous when you have the resources to do what you truly want to do at the time you want to do it.

- Scott Sherman

The Lord never tires of forgiving, it is we who tire of asking for forgiveness.

- Pope Francis

Never mistake knowledge for wisdom. One helps you make a living, the other helps you make a life.

- Sandra Carey

PRESIDENT BASHIR ORDERS OPENING OF BORDER WITH SOUTH SUDAN

By Catholic Radio Network



H.E Omar Al-Bashir, President of Sudan (right) greets his counterpart Salva Kiir, President of South Sudan (left).

SUDANESE PRESIDENT, His Excellency Omar Al-Bashir, on January 27, 2016, issued a decree ordering the opening of the borders with South Sudan.

Sudan News Agency reported that President Omar Al-Bashir directed the concerned authorities to take all the necessary measures for the implementation of this decision on the ground. President Bashir also directed his authorities to reduce the transit fees for the oil produced in South Sudan.

Meanwhile, President Salva Kiir of

South Sudan ordered SPLA to withdraw from the borders with Sudan to five miles or eight kilometers.

The President disclosed that he dispatched a special envoy to Khartoum to convey to President Al-Bashir his desire to normalize ties with Sudan.

Last year in November the two countries agreed to reactivate the safe border demilitarized zone agreed on September 27, 2012 and to deploy a joint monitoring force. ■

CHURCH LAUDS PRESIDENT FOR REJECTING RELIGION REGULATIONS LAWS

By Rose Achiego



H.E. Uhuru Kenyatta, Kenya's President

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH has applauded Kenya's President Uhuru Kenyatta's decision to reject proposed religious societies rules 2015 that were intended to

regulate churches.

The rules attracted widespread condemnation for infringing on Kenya's constitution, with the Catholic Church leading calls for self-regulation.

In a statement sent to media houses on 28th, January, 2016, President Uhuru Kenyatta rejected the proposals and

directed that a new process driven by religious stakeholders with the participation of the government and the general public takes place.

In an interview with Waumini News Today, Kenya Conference of Catholic Bishops (KCCB) General Secretary Very Rev. Fr. Daniel Rono said President Kenyatta's decision to withdraw the proposed rules was reached after a successful consultative deliberation between religious leaders and the government.

While acknowledging the government's concern about misuse of the freedom to worship by fraudulent religious leaders who extort money from worshipers and radicalize the youth, Father Rono said religious leaders were keen to adopt self-regulation.

The religious leaders drawn from Muslim, Hindu, National Council of Churches of Kenya (NCCCK), KCCB and evangelical Churches resolved to convene a series of meetings to discuss the matter further and give the way forward to the government.

President Kenyatta said he expects the outcome to be a development of firm and fair regulations that uphold the sacrosanct principles of religious freedom that underpin the democratic ideals as guaranteed by the Kenyan constitution.

"The government remains committed to an open, transparent and accessible government where public participation and consideration of a broad range of views is paramount," He added ■

ANTICIPATED EVENTS FOR FEBRUARY 2016

1. **GENERAL ELECTIONS** will be held in Uganda on 18 February 2016. The last presidential elections were held on 18 February 2011. President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni won re-election with 68.38% of the cast votes.

Main candidates in the 2016 election:

- o Yoweri Kaguta Museveni
Party: National Resistance Movement
- o Abed Bwanika
Party: People's Development Party
- o Maureen Kyalya
Independent
- o Warren Kizza Besigye
Party: Forum for Democratic Change

- o Venansius Baryamureeba
Independent
- o Amama Mbabazi
Party: Go Forward
- o Joseph Mbirizi
Independent
- o Benon Biraro
Party: Uganda Farmers' Party

2. Kiyinda-Mityana Diocese will be leading the **2016 UGANDA MARTYRS' DAY CELEBRATION**. Kiyinda-Mityana was chosen to lead this year's celebration during the plenary meeting of the Catholic Bishops in Uganda that

was held in Kampala from June 4 to 11, 2015.

3. Bishop-elect of Hoima Diocese, Rev. Fr. Vincent Kirabo, to be **ORDAINED AND INSTALLED** on February 28, 2016

4. **POPE FRANCIS TO VISIT** Mexico City from February 12-18, 2016.

5. **LENT BEGINS** on Ash Wednesday. Ash Wednesday 2016 falls on February 10, 2016, 46 days before Easter Sunday. Lent is the season of penance and prayer in preparation for Easter.

POPE RELEASES MESSAGE FOR THE 2016 WORLD DAY OF SOCIAL COMMUNICATIONS

Vatican Radio

POPE FRANCIS' message for the 50th World Day of Social Communications, to be held on May 8, was released at a press conference in the Vatican on Friday January 22, 2016. The message, entitled **'Communication and Mercy: A Fruitful Encounter'** is focused on the responsibility of all communicators to promote caring and healthy relationships in our fragmented and polarized world.

Quoting from Shakespeare, the Gospels and the Old Testament, the Pope reminds us that, *"As Christians, our every word and gesture, ought to express God's compassion, tenderness and forgiveness for all"*. If our hearts and actions are inspired by charity and divine love, he says, then our communication will be touched by God's power too.

As sons and daughters of God, the message stresses, we are called to communicate with everyone, without exception. Communication, the Pope insists, has the power to build bridges, to enable encounter and inclusion, to heal wounded memories and thus to enrich society. In both the material and the digital world, he says, our words and actions should help us all *"escape the vicious circles of condemnation and vengeance which continue to ensnare individuals and nations, encouraging expressions of hatred"*.

Pope Francis invites all people of good will to rediscover the power of mercy to heal wounded relationships and to restore peace and harmony to families and communities. Even when ancient wounds and lingering resentments stand in the way of communication and reconciliation, he says, mercy is able to create a new kind of speech and dialogue.



Pope Francis stressing a point. (INSET) The Pope tweeting.

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Our political and diplomatic language in particular, the Pope says, would do well to be inspired by mercy, which never loses hope. He appeals to political and institutional leaders, as well as the media and opinion makers to remain especially attentive to the way they speak of those who think or act differently. Even when condemning sins such as violence, corruption and exploitation, the Pope says,

we must speak with meekness and mercy that can touch hearts, rather than with harsh, moralistic words that can further alienate those we wish to convert.

True communication, the Pope says, means listening, valuing, respecting and being able to share questions and doubts. Online or in social networks, he stresses, we must remember that it's not technology which guarantees authentic communication, but rather the human heart and our capacity to use wisely the means at our disposal.

The Pope concludes by encouraging everyone *"to see society not as a forum where strangers compete and try to come out on top, but above all as a home or a family, where the door is always open and where everyone feels welcome"*. ■



Fort-Portal Catholic Diocese,
Plot 6A, Mugurusi Road.
P.O. Box 214, Fort-Portal.
Telephone Numbers:
Reception: 0483-427961/2
Studio: 0483-422144,
0483-422150



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LIVE YOUR FAITH DURING LENT, PERFORM **WORKS OF MERCY**

Catholic New Service



Pope Francis prays, Vatican.

AS PART of the Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy, the theme of the Message of Pope Francis for Lent 2016 is ***"I desire mercy, and not sacrifice"*** (Mt 9:13) - The works of mercy on the road of the Jubilee".

In his message for Lent, which was released at the Vatican on January 26th, the Holy Father stated that the season of Lent in the Jubilee Year is a favourable time to overcome the existential alienation by listening to God's word and by practising the works of mercy.

"Lent is a time of conversion and a time to deepen one's faith, demonstrating and sharing it through the corporal and spiritual works of mercy," Pope Francis said.

He added, "In the corporal works of mercy we touch the flesh of Christ in our brothers and sisters who need to be fed, clothed, sheltered, visited; in the spiritual works of mercy - counsel, instruction, forgiveness, admonishment and prayer - we touch more directly our own sinfulness. The corporal and spiritual works of mercy must never be separated in the Christian life."

Particularly during the Year of Mercy, he said, Catholics are called to

IN THE CORPORAL WORKS OF MERCY WE TOUCH THE FLESH OF CHRIST IN OUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS WHO NEED TO BE FED, CLOTHED, SHELTERED, VISITED; IN THE SPIRITUAL WORKS OF MERCY - COUNSEL, INSTRUCTION, FORGIVENESS, ADMONISHMENT AND PRAYER - WE TOUCH MORE DIRECTLY OUR OWN SINFULNESS. THE CORPORAL AND SPIRITUAL WORKS OF MERCY MUST NEVER BE SEPARATED IN THE CHRISTIAN LIFE.

recognize their own need for God's mercy, the greatness of God's love seen in the death and resurrection of Christ and the obligation to assist others by communicating God's love and mercy through words and deeds.

"The root of all sin" is thinking that one is god, something often expressed in a total preoccupation for accumulating money and power," the Pope wrote. *"And just as individuals can be tempted to think they have no need of God, social and political systems can run the same risk, ignoring both God and the real needs of human beings."*

Pope Francis stated that love alone is the answer to the yearning for infinite happiness. He said that danger always

remains when one shows constant refusal to open the doors of his/her heart to Christ who knocks on them in the poor.

But through acts of mercy and charity, *"by touching the flesh of the crucified Jesus in the suffering,"* he wrote, *"sinners can receive the gift of realizing that they too are poor and in need."*

Cardinal Francesco Montenegro, President of Caritas Italy and Head of the Archdiocese that includes the Italian island of Lampedusa, told reporters at a Vatican news conference that the pope's message, like the Bible, *"does not stop simply at reaffirming that God is merciful, but clearly indicates that his children must be merciful, too, by living a greater love, especially by taking care of the little ones, the poor and defenseless."*

The Cardinal said that from his own experience as Archbishop of Agrigento, he has seen how people's faith and joy have grown and become contagious when they not only go to Mass, but also volunteer to assist the thousands of migrants who land on Lampedusa's shore seeking safety and a better life for their families. ■

