



NEW CONTACT

A publication of the Uganda Episcopal Conference

ISSUE 7

VOL 5

PRICE: USHS 2,000

SEPTEMBER — OCTOBER 2017

UGANDA HOSTS MISSIONARY CONGRESS



Delegates pose for a group photo with the Apostolic Nuncio to Uganda and other bishops
PHOTO BY JACINTA W. ODONGO

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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



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Editorial



This October, the Pontifical Mission Societies of Uganda Episcopal Conference held a missionary congress to mark the centenary of Pontifical Missionary Union and the golden jubilee of the Vatican II Decree, *Ad Gentes Divinitus* (Decree on the Church's Missionary Activity).

In Mark 16: 15, we read that before our Lord Jesus Christ ascended into heaven, he commanded his disciples to "Go into the whole world and proclaim the gospel to every creature". This command which entails communicating the Good News of Salvation has been and continues to be the mission of the Church as highlighted in *Ad Gentes Divinitus*. One of the means by which this mission can be effectively carried out is through the media. The Catholic Church in Uganda therefore needs to devise innovative media approaches for effective evangelization.

The use of the media for evangelization however should not substitute personal contact. Direct personal communication helps in developing a deeper understanding of people's lives and faith experiences. As pastoral agents we have to endeavour to reach out to people on a personal level.

Pope Francis in his Apostolic Exhortation, "*Evangelii Gaudium*" (The Joy of the Gospel) challenges evangelizers to take on the "smell of the sheep". This in a way is a call to be close to the people and identify with them in our evangelization, which can effectively be done through direct personal communication.

Fr. Philip Odii
Editor/Executive Secretary of Social
Communications
Uganda Episcopal Conference



The PMS National Director, Fr. Philip welcomes the delegates at the Congress

Uganda hosts Missionary Congress

By Jacinta W. Odongo

Media Officer, Uganda Episcopal Conference

The Catholic Church in Uganda has made another milestone after the country successfully hosted the Missionary Congress from October 10-14, at Pope Paul VI Memorial Hotel in Rubaga, Kampala.

The Congress, which was the first of its kind in Uganda, was held to commemorate the centenary of Pontifical Missionary Union (PMU) and the golden jubilee of Vatican II Decree known as *Ad Gentes Divinitus* (a Decree on the Church's Missionary Activity). It was held under the theme, 'Mission Concerns Us All: A call to Animation and Cooperation' (cfr Mk 16:15).

The main aim of the congress was to assess the implementation and impact of the Vatican II Decree, *Ad Gentes Divinitus* in instilling the missionary spirit in the local Church of Uganda today, conduct an in-depth analysis of the work of PMU and officially launch it as well as carrying out a study and evaluation of the history and work of PMS in Uganda since its inception. The Congress featured technical presentations and case studies (experience sharing) through interaction with the participants. Discussions revolved around the History and Theology of *Ad Gentes*, Leadership in Mission, Experience of a Missionary and the Missionary activity of the Church in the Digital Age among other topics.

Addressing the participants on October 11, during the opening ceremony of the

Missionary Congress, the Chairman of the Uganda Episcopal Conference (UEC), Most Rev. John Baptist Odama called on Catholics to develop a missionary culture that embraces Christian virtues, such as love, solidarity, peace, good governance, generosity and brotherhood.

"We as a Catholic Church exist for missionary work and we must live for it and do it. Here in Uganda the Catholic Church is only 139 years old but has the message of Christ reached to everybody? Are all Christians living by the values of the gospel? Therefore, we can't rejoice for the 100 years of PMU without realizing how much missionary work is left to be done in our country. The political systems that we have must be opened to Christ to avoid all appalling acts that we have been witnessing recently," said Archbishop Odama who is also the Archbishop of Gulu Archdiocese.

He added that, Catholics led by the Holy Spirit should eradicate tribalism by all means and learn to change this attitude to be a gift of God but not an enemy to one another.

"As Catholics we should open the doors of our cultural systems to Christ and open the doors of our hearts from tribalism. That face that you are seeing right next to you is consistently the image of God, and he termed it 'as love that person as I love you'. Thus we have an obligation to consistently recognize his presence. Missionary work means to love," he explained. ►

► The Archbishop also urged all Catholics to express their faith by helping the poor and the disadvantaged especially the refugees living in the country.

In his speech, the Apostolic Nuncio to Uganda, H.E Michael August Blume urged all Catholic priests and other religious leaders to become real missionary disciples by leaving their comfort zone and spreading the gospel of Jesus to the less privileged people.

“Let us not confine ourselves to our Churches. Let us reach out to all the people in our communities and spread the good news,” he said adding that Jesus’ message of peace, love and righteousness had not yet reached all the people, thus clerics have to strive and reach out to everyone.

The Chairman of the Social Communications Commission of the UEC, Rt. Rev Joseph Franzelli also the Bishop of Lira, in his presentation, emphasized the Nuncio’s message by calling on priests from Central and Western Uganda, which have relatively many

priests to go and work in other dioceses especially in Northern Uganda which is currently dealing with the refugee crisis from South Sudan.

The five-day congress attracted 171 delegates from the four ecclesiastical provinces in Uganda and these include: the Apostolic Nuncio to Uganda, eight Bishops, the Religious, Diocesan Pastoral Coordinators, Diocesan Education Secretaries, Diocesan Head Catechists, Diocesan Heads of the Laity, Diocesan Women Leaders, PMS Diocesan Directors and Animators. There was also a delegate from Rome. Delegates from five African countries Burundi, Kenya, Malawi, Rwanda and South Africa also participated. Botswana and Swaziland were represented by the delegates from South Africa.

The five-day event was organized by the PMS national office of the UEC. The National Director of Pontifical Missionary Societies (PMS), Rev. Fr. Philip Balikuddembe said the PMS General Assembly of 2015 sitting in Rome

encouraged the national conferences to celebrate the golden jubilee of the Second Vatican Council which was promulgated on December 7, 1965 by His Holiness Pope Paul VI. However, at its last Annual General Meeting in 2016, the PMS National Council resolved to combine the two events to honor the two institutions and reflect on their contributions towards missionary work in Uganda and elsewhere.

The PMS were founded in 1983 in Uganda, which include: the Society for the Propagation of the Faith (POF) - for adults, the Society of St. Peter the Apostle (SPA) - for the youth, the Society of Missionary Holy Childhood (MCH) – for children and the Society of Missionary Union (PMU) - for priests, religious and lay ministers. Each Society celebrates its spirituality annually. Since (1983) then they have been predominantly preoccupied with promoting missionary awareness, prayer and cooperation in the universal Catholic Church.

Pictorial of the Missionary Congress



Children from the Society of Missionary Holy Childhood sing for the delegates during the opening ceremony of the Congress



Archbishop Odama officially opens the Missionary Congress.



The Apostolic Nuncio addresses the delegates at the Congress



Delegates at the Congress



President of the Episcopal Commission for Missions, Rt. Rev. Damiano Giulio Guzzetti



The Apostolic Nuncio (centre) with other Bishops pose for a group photo with PMS National Directors from various countries

PHOTOS BY JACINTA W. ODONGO



Youths from Jinja Diocese hand over the NYD banner to Kabale Diocese

Thousands of youth to participate in the 2017 National Youth Day celebration

By Jacinta W. Odongo

Over 5000 Catholic youths will converge in the Diocese of Kabale to celebrate the 2017 National Youth Day (NYD) scheduled for December 12-17.

This year's celebration will not only bring thousands of youth from Uganda but also youth from Burundi, Rwanda, Tanzania and Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). The NYD is a Church's Day event for young people, and is typically celebrated every year in different dioceses.

The National Youth Coordinator of the Uganda Episcopal Conference, Joyce Zako said that young people from the above mentioned countries have already confirmed their participation in this year's celebration.

"We invited a number of countries to celebrate with us but so far we have only received confirmation from the Youth department of the Episcopal Conferences of Burundi, Rwanda and Tanzania," she said adding that the youth from DRC will attend the celebration as a diocese but not as a conference.

The NYD is an opportunity for the youth to experience the universality of the church, to deepen their faith and grow closer to Christ in their daily lives, by means of prayer and the sac-

raments, together with other young people. This year's celebration will run under the theme, "The Mighty One has done great things for me, and Holy is His name" (Luke 1:49) as released by Pope Francis.

According to Zako the realities around the youth are so challenging. Thus, by coming together, young people are able to discuss their most intimate aspirations and experience the Church as a communion, and make a commitment to the urgent task of new evangelization.

"The celebration helps to strengthen and enkindle the apostolate in the host Arch/diocese. It also provides an opportunity for the youth to live and share the universality of the Church that in Christ we are indeed one. Besides, it creates awareness among the youth on topical issues within their community hence encourages them to become change agents," she explained.

Refugees living in Uganda will also be taking part in this year's NYD celebration as an association for the first in the NYD history.

Meanwhile, during the week of NYD, there will be a number of activities including a welcoming ceremony, way of the cross, catechesis, confessions,

devotions and reconciliation activities. There will also be other entertaining activities which include tourism, sports competitions, cultural exhibitions and cultural music performances. The youth will also be taken through discussion topics such as Youth and entrepreneurship, Youth and Politics as well as Youth and HIV/AIDS prevention and the Art of choosing a good partner.

Most Rev. Paul K. Bakyenga, the Archbishop of Mbarara Ecclesiastical Province will preside over the final Holy Mass of the NYD. Other bishops who will take part include the Bishop Chairman of the Lay Apostolate Commission (LAC) of the UEC and all the Bishops from Mbarara Ecclesiastical Province.

His Excellency President Yoweri Museveni of the Republic of Uganda will be the Chief Guest.

Kabale Diocese will animate the 2017 NYD celebration on behalf of Mbarara Ecclesiastical Province which comprises of Dioceses of Fort portal, Hoima, Kabale, Kasese and Mbarara. The Diocese of Jinja hosted the 2016 NYD celebration which attracted more than 3000 youth. The NYD celebration was inaugurated in 1993 in Tororo Archdiocese.

Parliament tables age limit bill amid chaos



Uganda MPs fight in parliament and throw chairs at one another ahead of a debate to scrap of Presidential age-limit. INTERNET PHOTOS



MP Raphael Magezi tables the age limit bill.

By Jacinta W. Odongo

After weeks of battling the controversial motion on the proposed removal of the Presidential age limit from the 1995 Constitution, the Uganda Parliament on September 26, passed a resolution to allow the scrapping of the presidential age limit.

The bill which mainly targets Article 102 (b) of the Constitution has been widely criticized by different segments of people including the religious leaders. Numerous scenes of chaos have also been witnessed in the Uganda parliament as a result of the bill. The debate was postponed from September 21 to September 26 amid heavy police deployment to parliament. Chaos erupted in Parliament on Tuesday September 26 just before Igara West Member of Parliament (MP) Raphael Magezi (the man behind the motion) was due to seek leave of Parliament to introduce a motion to scrap the presidential age limit.

Opposition MPs arrived in parliament for the day's proceedings with red head bands. Speaker Rebecca Kadaga ordered them to take them off before business started but instead it took a new twist when a number of MPs from both the ruling party National Resistance Movement (NRM) and the opposition party exchanged punches with the hurling of chairs.

Speaker Kadaga started Wednesday's (September 27) session of parliament by suspending 25 MPs for their unruly behaviour on Tuesday (Sep-

tember 26). However, things didn't go well for the MPs who had disobeyed the Speaker's orders to exit the parliament. Plain-clothed security operatives stormed parliament and forcibly evicted the lawmakers, a move that sparked another brawl similar to that on Tuesday. Parliament turned into a boxing ring as the MPs climbed over the green bench-like chairs, threw portable chairs all over the place and turned microphones into sticks.

When Parliament resumed, the leader of opposition tried to bring to the attention of the speaker to the events that had just transpired but she wasn't given a chance. The remaining opposition MPs then walked out of parliament and the opposition side was empty as the motion was being passed.

According to the speaker, the actions of the MPs on September 26 had brought the law making chamber into disrepute. The speaker also suspended State Minister for Water (Ronald Kibuule) for allegedly sneaking into the parliamentary chambers with a gun contrary to the rules.

The suspended MPs were mostly from the opposition and will be barred from parliamentary activities, including not accessing the area of parliament for three consecutive sittings from Tuesday to Thursday.

Now that the bill has been allowed, this could mean a first step to allowing incumbent Yoweri Museveni contesting in the next general elections due in 2021. President Museveni,

who is now 73, will have surpassed the 75-year mark by the next general election.

Article 102 (b) of the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda, bars individuals below the age of 35 and beyond 75 years from vying for presidency and other district top political positions. Hon. Magezi said he believes his motion would grant Ugandans the right to choose their leaders without locking anyone out. The Bill that he will be working on will be called 'The Constitutional Amendment Bill 2017'.

On September 18, Religious leaders in Uganda under the umbrella organization, the Inter-Religious Council of Uganda (IRCU) issued a press release that called for a referendum to allow citizens decide on the matter of scrapping of the presidential age limit from the Constitution.

They said "the current debate on the removal of the presidential age limit is not a partisan issue to be monopolized by politicians and/or Members of Parliament (MPs)."

Meanwhile, the Uganda communications Commission has banned live coverage of parliamentary events. The regulatory body, in a statement circulated to media houses on September 27 through its Executive Director ordered all broadcasters (Radios and TVs) to cease live coverage that he categorized "as inciting the public, discriminating and stirring up hatred and promoting violence amongst the viewers and are likely to create public insecurity and violence."

He warned those media houses who fail to adhere to the order to face suspension and revocation of their licenses under section 41 of the UCC Act 2013. The statement was released after media houses broadcasted live coverage from the parliament that showed MPs engaging in wrangles.

Stem Van Africa holds evaluation workshop on audience research



Group photo of the Workshop Participants. AMECEA PHOTOS

By Pamela Adinda,
AMECEA Online News

One of the objectives of Stem Van Afrika (SvA) is to help build sustainability in community-based media in Africa. In 2014, the foundation started a training measure on building local capacity for community-oriented radio stations on audience research. So far Uganda where the program was piloted and Malawi together with some non-Catholic Community Radio stations in Kenya have benefited.

It was on this pretext that the foundation in collaboration with CAMECO and Kenya Community Media Network (KCOMNET) organized a two-day evaluation workshop in Nairobi from October 5-6, on audience research which attracted participants from Uganda, Malawi and Kenya.

"It is important not to leave when a project is implemented but to look further into the results and find ways of disseminating the knowledge and experiences gained from that first part of the project. This ensures that the objectives are well executed and that progressive measures are taken into considerations," explained Mr. Pieter de Wit from Stem Van Afrika.



Mr. Pieter de Wit from Stem Van Afrika and Ms. Petra Stammen

"IT IS IMPORTANT NOT TO LEAVE WHEN A PROJECT IS IMPLEMENTED BUT TO ALSO TO LOOK FURTHER INTO THE RESULTS AND FIND WAYS OF DISSEMINATING THE KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCES GAINED FROM THAT FIRST PART OF THE PROJECT. ..."
EXPLAINED MR. PIETER DE WIT

According to Ms. Petra Stammen from CAMECO, the training on audience research program piloted in Uganda in 2014 was necessitated when CAMECO and Stem Van Afrika

discovered that most of the community oriented radio stations in Africa don't know their audiences and have never done any research or whatever on the topic.

A total number of twelve radio stations, both Catholic and non-Catholic were identified and participated in the training workshop, which had a three-step training measure. The three steps included the On-site workshop which lasted for ten days and at the end of which the radio stations were expected to come up with some designs for the research to implement back home. The second step was a three-month implementation stage where the radio stations were supposed to do the actual audience research.

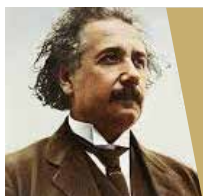
"Finally, after the three months we had a second workshop where we brought them again together to share their experiences, difficulties as well as their results," she said adding that after Uganda, the program was replicated in Malawi last year following the same structure.

"The intention has been that this could be a kind of pilot program which could be replicated among other AMECEA Countries. This workshop we are having now is somehow an assessment of what has been done but also to find out the needs still faced by the community radio stations. It could be at the level of the station or on national level or on regional level," Petra explained.

Any plan to incorporate more AMECEA Countries in the program is currently on hold though will be considered in the near future.

"As the board of Stem Van Afrika we decide to first concentrate on the stations we started to work with to ensure that the program is a success before going to other countries." She explained.

According to Pieter, audience research is not only about knowing your audience but also involving your audience, recognizing their importance and letting them know that you are interested in them, and care about what they think about your programs and what their wishes are; it is about involving people in the community media.



Try not to become a man of success, but rather a man of value. *Albert Einstein*

Embrace Dialogue for peaceful co-existence, Bishops urge President Kenyatta



The Chairman of the KCCB, Rt. Rev. Philip Anyolo, Bishop of Homa Bay (center) with other bishops during the Press Conference. AMECEA PHOTOS

By **Rose Achiego,**
Waumini Communications

The Kenya Conference of Catholic Bishops (KCCB), have called on Kenyan President, His Excellency Uhuru Kenyatta, to continue reaching out to the opposition leader Rt. Hon. Raila Odinga and other political leaders so as to create a forum for dialogue and discuss the best way forward for peaceful co-existence of Kenyans.

In his message during the national prayer day held on October 7, 2017, at the National Marian Shrine in Subukia, KCCB Chairman and the Bishop of Homabay Rt. Rev Philip Anyolo implored President Uhuru's wisdom as the Head of State to take the lead in healing the Nation and uniting the Country which has been split along political lines.

"As you may be aware, the aftermath of the General Elections has threatened and affected the peace and harmony of our Nation. In that breath, we appeal to Your Excellency to continue reaching out to the Opposition and other Political Leaders," he said

Bishop Anyolo however, expressed gratitude to President Kenyatta, for honouring their invitation to pray for peace and national integration during this year's National Pilgrimage with the theme: "Peace in the Family, Peace in



Most Rev. Zacchaeus Okoth the Metropolitan Archbishop of Kisumu.

our Country and hope for our Youth." He equally thanked the Bishops, the Clergy, the Religious Brothers and Sisters and all the Lay Faithful for coming together to pray for the Nation that Peace, Justice and harmony may continue to prevail at all times.

He said that, peace is the first gift that Jesus gave to His disciples after the Resurrection. "As believers, we are called upon to have the assurance that comes from Christ Himself as St. Paul reminds us: "For Christ Himself has brought us peace by making Jews and Gentiles one people" (Ephesians 2: 14)."

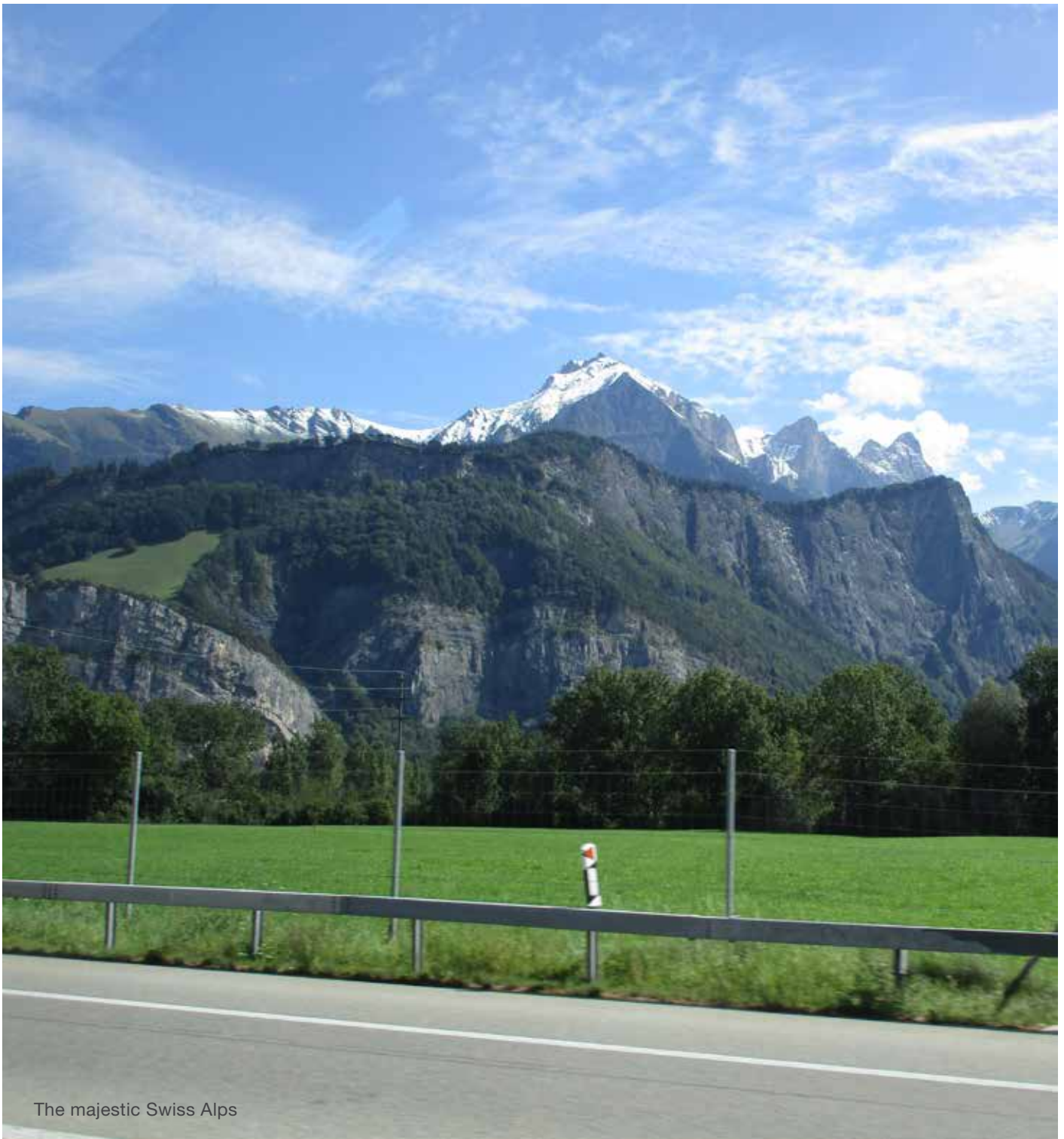
"WE ENTRUSTED THE COUNTRY INTO THE HANDS OF OUR LADY QUEEN OF PEACE, ESPECIALLY IN THESE MOMENTS THAT THE POLITICAL TEMPERATURES ARE RISING, PRAYING THAT, THE FORTHCOMING PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION MAY BE FREE, FAIR AND CREDIBLE FOR KENYANS TO GET A LEADER OF THEIR CHOICE."

Rt. Rev. Anyolo reminded Kenyans that they have an obligation to live as one people regardless of ethnicity, colour, religion, region or background, for Jesus is our Peace. "That is to say, Peace with God, Peace with others and Peace with oneself, remembering that, Peace begins with you and me as Mahatma Ghandi said: "Be the change you want to see". As we pray for peace in our families and Country, let us be the authentic agents and messengers of peace following our Lord and Master," He said

He urged Kenyans to keep praying for peace and to preach peace as the Country move towards a fresh Presidential Election slated for 26th of October this year.

"Standing on this Holy Ground of our National Marian Shrine, we pray for our families and young people, so that, like the family of Nazareth where Jesus grew up, they too may be the cradle where peace is brewed and served to all the members. As you know, when there is peace and justice right from the family, then spontaneously our Country will enjoy peace, national co-existence and integration," he said

Meanwhile, the Metropolitan Archbishop of Kisumu Most Rev. Zacchaeus Okoth who was the main celebrant during the National Prayer Day at Subukia Shrine said, "We entrusted the Country into the hands of our Lady Queen of Peace, especially in these moments that the political temperatures are rising, praying that, the forthcoming Presidential Election may be free, fair and credible for Kenyans to get a Leader of their choice."



PHOTOS BY JACINTA W. ODONGO

The majestic Swiss Alps

Switzerland: ‘*the little paradise*’ in Europe

By Jacinta W. Odongo

About 12 years ago when I was in high school, Geography used to be one of my favorite subjects. I loved Geography because I learned a lot about the earth and its features, its inhabitants and their various cultures as well as nature. I remember one of the best topics that I studied in my high school was about the majestic Swiss Alps, the glaciers and the fresh crystal-clear

lakes found in Switzerland. I pictured Switzerland as a ‘little paradise’, thus from that time I had always wanted to visit this European country.

Last month I finally got an opportunity to visit Switzerland for about four weeks. I had an amazing experience and all I can say is “I was regaled with everything in Switzerland.” The spectacular mountain scenery of the alpine peaks, numerous crystal clear lakes, picturesque historic center, flower-lined

nature paths, the quaint (old-fashioned) villages, the diverse culture, the medieval and cosmopolitan cities as well as countless towering castles— that is just some of what Switzerland has to offer. The flora and fauna in this small mountainous country is really breathtaking. Everything is green and fresh from the vegetation, air, to water— you just can’t get enough. Besides, if you are a watch lover Switzerland is the ideal place for you as the world’s ►

►best designer watches are made in this 'little paradise'.

Placed at the very heart of Europe, Switzerland is surrounded by five countries: Austria and Liechtenstein to the east, France to the west, Italy to the south and Germany to the north. It is a vibrant destination made of stunning diversity: four national languages which include French, Swiss German, Italian and Romansh. Although English is not an official language, it's widely spoken and understood, especially in big cities. Banking and finance are key industries and the Swiss Franc is the main currency. Switzerland is also known for its exceptional ski resorts and hiking trails not forgetting the tasty Swiss chocolates, food, wine and cheeses. To get the true flavour of this beautiful country, here are some of the best places to visit in Switzerland.

Geneva

I spent the first two days of my vacation in this famous cosmopolitan city. I was mesmerized by the beauty of Geneva and for a moment I mistook it for the capital city. Unlike many big cities Geneva is very clean, peaceful and quiet and above all beautiful with both new and old-fashioned styles of buildings. It's beautiful location on the shores of Lake Geneva and the view of both the Jura Mountains and the French Alps- will make you stop here for a day-long sightseeing. The view of the snow covered Mt. Blanc at 4,810 metres; the highest peak in Europe is spectacular. The famous Jet d'Eau, an impressive 140-metre high fountain (water jet) that is set in Lake Geneva, is a symbol of the city. The fountain sprays water into the air at a rate of 200km/hr.

My next tour was at the Bastions Park to view the Reformation Wall. But, before viewing the wall at the Bastions I first played chess, one of my favorite games. The lovely tree-lined Bastions Park is a popular place for relaxation or to play a game of chess on the life-size boards. The Reformation Wall was built into the wall of the Old Town as a tribute to the founders of the reformation movement: John Calvin, John Knox, Guillaume Farel, and Théodore de Bèze (the large statues in the centre of the wall). The monument was carved in the early 20th century and stretches for approximately 100m. The wall also depicts other figures from the European Protestant movement (smaller statues) as well as important moments



Above: Jet d'eau in Geneva.

Below: The writer at the reformation wall

in Protestant history.

I also got a chance to see the Grand Théâtre and the Opera House where International artists perform. The Grand Théâtre and the Opera House is just opposite the Bastions Park so you can take a stroll. Geneva also has a diverse range of museums including the Musée International de L'horlogerie, a watch museum with a collection of jewelry watches and musical clocks.

After touring the city center I visited the city's old town also known as Vieille-Ville in French. The Old Town city offers an inviting place to stroll with its quays, lakeside promenades, elegant shops, parks and lively side streets. The streets of this old town are filled up with cobblestone which gives it a neat and classy look. St. Pierre Cathedral also known as St. Peter in English, a medieval cathedral dating back to the 4th century is the highlight of the Old Town. From outside the church is quite interesting for the variety of architectural styles it features but is best known for reformer John Calvin's sermons which took place here in mid-16th century and Calvin's Chair is on exhibit inside the building for visitors to see.

Geneva is a French-speaking city and it is the second largest city in Switzerland. With its humanitarian tradition and cosmopolitan flair, Geneva is the European seat of the United Nations and headquarters of the Red Cross,

adding to its reputation as the "Capital of Peace." It is also home to CERN, the largest scientific research centre in the world, where the "God Particle" was found.

Lucerne



Above: Medieval buildings in Lucerne

Below: Wooden Chapel bridge in Lucerne.

Lucerne is on the banks of Lake Lucerne in the German speaking part of Switzerland. This charming city has an old feel to it with landmarks like the wooden chapel bridge, beautiful painted frescos on its public buildings and churches. Lucerne is so small that you can get around the entire town on foot and stroll across the beautiful Chapel Bridge, which is bedecked with flowers on Lake Lucerne. The Loewendenkmal Lion Monument, a magnificent work of art and one of the most photographed monuments in the world is also found in this town.

Gruyères

Known for producing mouth-watering cheese, Gruyères is a beautiful medieval town located at the base of the Swiss Alps in the French-speaking canton (a small territorial district) of Fribourg. It is one of the best Swiss alpine medieval villages where the sound of cowbells is never far off. Gruyères also boasts of a castle called Château de Gruyères. This castle is one of the most prestigious in Switzerland and towers majestically above this town. A visit to the castle is a journey across eight centuries of architecture, history and culture. The castle was constructed in the 13th century and was the resi-

*Chateau de Gruyeres.**Aerial view of Gruyeres*

dence of the counts of Gruyères. The historic town of Gruyères has been unaffected by time and takes pride in their exceptional art and cultural exhibitions. You can also visit the famous Gruyeres cheese factory which is just next to the Château de Gruyères.

Saint-Maurice

Formerly known as Agaunus, St. Maurice is the city where the martyrdom of Saint Maurice took place at the end of the 3rd century. Saint-Maurice is located in the canton of Valais. It is situated between the shores of Lake Geneva and the alpine peaks. This little charming city beholds a cultural heritage and a religious prestige.

For centuries, St. Maurice Monastery has become an important place for pilgrimage. The old abbey treasury houses one of the most important collections of sacred gold work in the world, including several medieval masterpieces such as the great St. Maurice reliquary and the reliquary belonging to the children of St. Sigismund (this dates back to the 12th century). The treasury contains not only historical items, but also priceless local religious and cultural relics.

*St. Maurice Basilica Abbey Monastery Treasure.*

Lausanne

Famous for its beautiful lakeside promenades, Lausanne is located just 55 km from Geneva. The Old Town of Lausanne has impressive buildings dating back to the medieval period, such as the famous Cathedral of Notre-Dame. I was taken aback by the huge size of this stunning gothic Cathedral, which is arguably the finest cathedral in Switzerland. The gothic Cathedral has strong big doors and beautiful rose windows which includes various elements. Pope Gregory X, in the presence of Rudolph of Habsburg (the Holy Roman Emperor) and the European cardinals and bishops, consecrated and dedicated the church to Our Lady in 1275. You will be enchanted by the architectural charm of this Cathedral.

Lausanne also boasts of the ultra-modern Olympic Museum, home to the International Olympic Committee. This is one of the most visited museums in Switzerland though I didn't manage to take a tour inside due to lack of time. I just by-passed it and had a glance from a distant. The Olympic Museum presents the cornerstones of olympism which includes sport, art and education through its ultra-modern, interactive facilities. On three floors, the exhibition presents the origin of the games, the competitions

*Cathedral Notre-dame in Lausanne*

and the athletic spirit through over 150 screens and 1500 objects including the Olympic torches and medals of all Olympic Games, as well as the equipment of the most famous athletes.

After a long day tour in the old city, I got a chance to dine and wine at the famous Port of Ouchy. This delightful port area has access to Lake Geneva, first-class hotels, restaurants and promenades (walkway). Going for a walk at the promenade during daytime is very refreshing as it features tree-lined walks and abundant flowers.

Flums

*The writer standing on the Swiss Alps (behind are the glaciers)*

Located in the Swiss mountains, Flums is a German speaking town in the Canton of St. Gallen. Flums offers the best close-up view of the Swiss Alps. If you are a ski lover Flums is also the right place for you. It is the gateway to a large skiing resort called Flumserberg. Unfortunately, I didn't get a chance to ski at Flumserberg since I visited Switzerland during summer when the much of the snow had melted away. However, in winter Flumserberg is the biggest winter sports' region in eastern Switzerland. Its best ski slopes reach 2222 meters high.

Flums is also the entry point to Vaduz the capital city of Liechtenstein. It is located just 38 km from Liechtenstein so I used that opportunity to ►

►visit this beautiful country (story for another day).

Yverdon



Swiss delicacy in Yverdon

Yverdon is located in the heart of a natural setting formed by the Jura Mountains, the plains of the Orbe, the hills of the Broye and Lake Neuchâtel. It is in the Canton of Vaud. Yverdon is famous for its thermal springs called Yverdon-les-Bains and is an important regional centre for commerce and tourism. Thanks to its sulphur- and magnesium-rich sources Yverdon-les-Bains has a long tradition as a thermal health spa and centre for healing. In summer the town and the area surrounding it are a water sports and natural paradise.

Sion



Castle Tourbillon.

Sion is the capital city of Valais region since 580. This city has a quaint Old Town where you can recount the back in the day's memoir. Sion, which boasts a 7,000-year history, is today the economic center of Valais with its own international airport, an elegant town hall, an extensive array of museums and medieval churches and houses.

Its twin castles, the Castle of Valeria and Castle Tourbillon, rose on two rocky outcrops, created by the glaciers that carved the great Rhône valley. These landmarks guard the capital of Valais.

Sion is located in the middle of one of the most important wine-growing regions in Switzerland. Fendant, the region's white wine in particular is well known. This medieval city is known as the most sun-blessed town of Switzerland.

Sévery



Farm cows in Sévery.

Sévery is a small village in the canton of Vaud. I didn't explore much in Sévery apart from celebrating my birthday anniversary. However, if you want to have a feel of the natural Swiss forest, then Sévery is the right place for you. Much of the land in this town is heavily forested and covered by orchards or small clusters of trees. Sévery is also known as a farming region where a lot of land is used for agricultural activities such as growing crops and pasture. Most home owners in Sévery have backyard gardens in their homes specifically for growing crops and fruits like tomatoes, apples, strawberry and cherries.

From my own experience, Switzerland is truly a 'little paradise' and you can experience it for yourself and discover there is much more. If it is on your bucket list, these are some must-see's to get you headed in the right direction.

PHOTOS BY JACINTA W. ODONGO

WISE QUOTES FOR REFLECTION

'Change is the law of life. And those who look only to the past or present are certain to miss the future' - *John F. Kennedy*

'In order to love who you are, you cannot hate the experiences that shaped you' - *Andrea Dykstra*

'Always find a reason to laugh. It may not add years to your life but will surely add life to your years' - *Anonymous*

'Patience is not the ability to wait, but the ability to keep a good attitude while waiting' - *Joyce Meyer*

'You will never change your life until you change something you do daily. The secret of your success is found in your daily routine' - *John C. Maxwell*

'The greatest prison people live in is the fear of what other people think' - *Unknown*

'Don't ever be impressed with goal setting; be impressed with goal getting. Reaching new goals and moving to a higher level of performance always requires change, and change feels awkward. But take comfort in the knowledge that if a change doesn't feel uncomfortable, then it's probably not really a change.' - *John C. Maxwell*

'We begin doing things because of a motive; we continue doing them because of both motive and habit; but there may come a time when motive is forgotten and we continue on because of established habit' - *Andrew Carnegie*

'When we take on the attitude of "arriving", we surrender our growth, productivity and meaningfulness along with the opportunity to joyfully thrive' - *Lee M. Brower*

'There is more hunger for love and appreciation in this world than for bread' - *Mother Teresa*

Sexualization of girl-child causing violence



By Fr. Lazar Arasu SDB
Priest and School Administrator

The sight of beautifully (rather seductively) decorated flower girls who are children below eight years and girls in pre-teens who are hyper sexualized in clothing and cosmetics are common sights in Ugandan weddings and Kwanjula (betrothal-introduction ceremonies). Are we aware that it is a form of violence against girls and young women? It is a clear sign of objectification of girls with a strong sexual undertone. It is consciously and unconsciously promoted by the media and advertising industry. Unfortunately it is fast becoming a social norm in Uganda today. Often we forget that objectification of girls in media is always linked to violence against girls and women.

Sexualization and objectification of girls in the media and further enacted in our cultural and social scene has exposed girls and young women as sexual objects. They create a belief in our unconscious minds that girls are sexual objects. Examining various media and our social behaviour, the findings prove that girls are often portrayed in a sexual manner more often than boys; dressed in revealing clothing, and with bodily postures or facial expressions that imply sexual readiness. Pushing minor girls into adult life and behaviour is a clear for of child abuse and violence.

The prevalence of Sexualization and Objectification of girls is evident when: a person's value comes only from his or her sexual appeal or behaviour, to the exclusion of other basic human values; a person is held to a standard that equates physical attractiveness (in a narrow sense) with being "sexy"; a person is made into a thing for others' sexual use; and when sexuality is inappropriately imposed upon the person. Unfortunately many forms of Beauty Contests and other modeling

SEXUALIZATION AND OBJECTIFICATION OF GIRLS IN THE MEDIA AND FURTHER ENACTED IN OUR CULTURAL AND SOCIAL SCENE HAS EXPOSED GIRLS AND YOUNG WOMEN AS SEXUAL OBJECTS. THEY CREATE A BELIEF IN OUR UNCONSCIOUS MINDS THAT GIRLS ARE SEXUAL OBJECTS.

activities directly and indirectly promote this way of thinking and acting.

This pushes girls to chronic attention to physical appearance, restricts their physical movements, negative attitude to their body, creates anxiety, addicted to fashion, and affects healthy relationships with others and an obstacle towards a healthy intimacy.

Organization such as Violence Against Children Survey (VACS) and UNICEF approximately estimate that at least 60,000 adolescent girls die each year in the world as a result of violence and about 120 million girls in the world become victims of rape or forced sexual acts. Various statistics prove that several African countries lead in abuse and disrespect of young women in the world. This is heightened by certain unevaluated cultural ethos and behaviour.

We all agree that there is a lot of exaggeration in salon industry in a country like Uganda. In a poorer economy and poor households is it right to spend colossal amount of resources on artificial hair products and chemicals, not forgetting some of these products which are so called cosmetics are very harmful to health? For economic gains, media and advertisement industry create lot of false myth on beauty and appearance. Aspects of human sexuality are often exploited for economic gains and it affects the wellbeing of women starting from very young age.

The hypersexualized models of femininity as portrayed in the media and accepted in social settings cause negative influence in women affecting mental, emotional and physical wellbeing of girls in immeasurable

ways. Girls and young women suffer the consequences immensely; they include anxiety about appearance, feelings of shame, eating disorders, lower self-esteem and depression.

Psychological surveys reveal that as few as only 11% of young girls agree that they are beautiful. These feelings of low self-esteem make girls avoid participation in activities that are important for their education and personal growth. For example, in Japan one in three 6-year-olds experience low body confidence. In Australia girls consider body image as one of their top three concerns in life. In the USA 81% of girls are worried that they are fat and in Brazil over 100,000 girls and young women go for cosmetic surgery. It would be interesting to take such surveys in Uganda and East Africa to diagnose the social problems affecting our young women.

Violence against women such as defilement, rape, trafficking of women, and rampant killing of young women and not forgetting child marriage, teenage pregnancy and abortion are directly or indirectly related to sexual objectification of girls. It contributes to harmful gender stereotypes that normalize violence against the fairer sex. We should also remember that these stereotypes are not only harmful for girls, but for boys as well. Boys are made to see how their bodies are portrayed in relation to girls and learn to believe success or attractiveness is tied to dominance, power, and aggression.

Solutions need to be sought before it is late. Educational institutions, families and other social institutions need to educate young people the value of self-pride, self-identity, self-esteem and right attitude to human body and sexuality towards the integral formation of young people. This education can be given through community mobilization, informed use of media, awareness campaigns, well thought-out guidance and counselling and other initiatives to reduce violence and gender inequality will make the society a safer place for youth, especially girls.

Let us remember that only when the youth are emancipated they will be able to build a society that is ethical, safe, healthy and productive.

7 Ways to Maintain Your Independence in a Marriage



By Barbara Nabukenya

When we take the “great plunge,” when we commit to “for better or worse,” it is with the understanding that we are becoming one. And, some of us mistake that for spending every waking moment together when that’s not the case at all.

Successful marriages are comprised of two whole individuals who complement one another. Rather than attempting to make each other complete, one enriches the other’s life and vice versa. For that reason, it is important that we put forth the energy to maintain ourselves individually. The intent of marriage is not to entirely expunge independence. After all, he married you as an independent woman. Therefore, it is important to preserve a certain sense of self. These are a few ways to do so:

Make night out a priority

Hanging with your girls/ boys not only allows you to take a mental break away from marriage and family life, but it also helps you maintain a sense of individuality. It’s a good time 100 percent on your terms and, every once in a while, it’s refreshing to function as a “me” instead of “us.” However, Girls/ boys Night Out shouldn’t come before tending to your home and woman/ man, but it should be something reg-

ularly scheduled—once or twice a month, perhaps. We have to nurture the worthwhile friendships that keep us sane.

Keep a separate bank account

I’m a firm believer that all married couples should work out of three personal checking accounts, one joint and two separate, where the joint account serves as the money hub and “play” monies are distributed into the separate accounts. It’s the best way to maintain a bit of financial freedom within a united household, as well as to help each party stash a little for a rainy day. You have the option to save or spend your “play” money as you please and not at the cost of a missed mortgage payment.

Spend time alone

The same way men need man-caves, women also need a space to call their own—where you can read or write or reflect in simple silence. Time spent alone is healthy as we should take a little time for ourselves to enjoy the essence of who we are, as well as rest, watch a movie, listen to some music and just have a moment to self. Besides, silence IS golden.

Treat your husband by footing the bill

Treat your husband the next time you go out to dinner. Plan an affordable -expensive date and foot the bill. Not only will you feel great spoiling him, you will also feel empowered. Plus, men find (balanced) independent-minded women Hot. While you’re feeling liberated, you will also be reminding your husband of the self-sufficient, confi-

dent woman he courted.

Engage into your favorite hobby

Have you always dreamed of becoming a pastry chef? Do you design T-shirts people would die for? Do you just have a craft you want to get better at in general? If so, go for it. Spend some of your free time honing your skills—experimenting with new recipes, sketching, whatever. Dive head-first into your “thing.” You never know where it could take you.

Join a health club

Get it right, keep it tight! Nothing makes a woman feel more independent than knowing she looks good. And, one of the best ways to keep your mind and body fit is regular exercise. You’re less likely to start feeling the insecurities that emerge when women begin seeing a decline in their physical appearance. Don’t get too comfortable and let yourself go, because we never know what the future holds—so if you can, hold it together. Furthermore, women who feel like they look good and can get another man tend to accept less nonsense.

Keep your mind active

In the event that you’ve decided to leave the workforce, keep yourself educated, sharp and abreast of what’s going on in the world and your industry. You should be as prepared as possible to re-enter the corporate world at any given time, especially in this economy. Also, it’s always good to be well-informed and equipped for conversation. You will feel more confident knowing that your body may be removed from the daily grind but your mind isn’t.

KEY EVENTS FOR NOVEMBER 2017

Wednesday, November 1- All Saints Day

All Saints’ Day is a solemn holy day of the Catholic Church celebrated annually on November 1. The day is dedicated to the saints of the Church, that is, all those who have attained heaven. All Saints’ Day is also commemorated by members of the Eastern Orthodox Church as well as some protestant churches, such as Anglican, Lutheran and Anglican churches.

Generally, All Saints’ Day is a Catholic Holy Day of Obligation, meaning all Catholics are required to attend Mass on that day, unless they have an excellent excuse, such as serious illness.

All Saints’ Day was formally started by Pope Boniface IV, who consecrated the Pantheon at Rome to the Virgin Mary and all the

Martyrs on May 13 in 609 AD. Boniface IV also established All Souls’ Day, which follows All Saints.

Thursday, November 2- All Souls Day

All Souls Day is a holy day set aside for honoring the dead. It is dedicated to those who have died and not yet reached heaven.

The day is primarily celebrated in the Catholic Church, but it is also celebrated in the Eastern Orthodox Church and a few other denominations of Christianity. The Anglican Church is the largest protestant church to celebrate the holy day. Most protestant denominations do not recognize the holiday and disagree with the theology behind it.

LITURGICAL READINGS FOR NOVEMBER



November 1- Solemnity of All Saints

Lectionary: 667

First Reading RV 7:2-4, 9-14

Responsorial Psalm PS 24:1BC-2, 3-4AB, 5-6

Second Reading 1 JN 3:1-3

Gospel MT 5:1-12A

November 2- The Commemoration of All the Faithful Departed (All Souls)

Lectionary: 668

The following are a selection of the readings that may be chosen for this day.

First Reading WIS 3:1-9

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

Second Reading ROM 5:5-11 or ROM 6:3-9

Gospel JN 6:37-40

November 5- Thirty-first Sunday in Ordinary Time

Lectionary: 151

First Reading MAL 1:14B-2:2B, 8-10

Responsorial Psalm PS 131:1, 2, 3

Second Reading 1 THES 2:7B-9, 13

Gospel MT 23:1-12

November 12- Thirty-second Sunday in Ordinary Time

Lectionary: 154

First Reading WIS 6:12-16

Responsorial Psalm PS 63:2, 3-4, 5-6, 7-8

Second Reading 1 THES 4:13-18 or 1 THES 4:13-1

Gospel MT 25:1-13

November 19- Thirty-third Sunday in Ordinary Time

Lectionary: 157

First Reading PRV 31:10-13, 19-20, 30-31

Responsorial Psalm PS 128:1-2, 3, 4-5

First Reading 1 THES 5:1-6

Gospel MT 25:14-30 or MT 25:14-15, 19-21

November 26- The Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe

Lectionary: 160

First Reading EZ 34:11-12, 15-17

Responsorial Psalm PS 23:1-2, 2-3, 5-6

Second Reading 1 COR 15:20-26, 28

Gospel MT 25:31-46



Youth carry a cross during the Way of the Cross

Synod confirms next March international youth meeting

Vatican Radio

Following on from Pope Francis' announcement at the end of his general audience on Wednesday, a note from the Secretariat of the Synod of Bishops confirmed that a special meeting of young people will take place from March 19-24 in preparation for next October's Synod.

The meeting will be organised by the Synod Secretariat, together with the office for Laity, Family and Life. The aim is to encourage young people from around the world, from different Churches and religious traditions, to share their hopes, doubts and worries ahead of the Synod, which will be dedicated to the theme 'Youth, Faith and Vocational Discernment'.

Preparatory stages of Synod

The note goes on to say that this encounter continues a tradition of pre-Synod meetings, such as the ones which took place in 1987 on the mission of laity in the Church and the world and the Special Assembly for Europe in 1991.

Representatives of Churches, religions, vocations

Among those invited to the meeting will be young representatives of bishops' conferences, Oriental Churches, seminarians, consecrated men and women, ecclesial movements and associations, schools and universities, the world of work, sports and the arts, volunteers and those on the margins of society. They will be accompanied by experts, teachers and others involved in helping young people make important life decisions.

The note says that this meeting will further enrich the consultative phase of the Synod, which was begun by the Preparatory Document, the on-line questionnaire and the international seminar which took place here in Rome in September.

Conclude with Palm Sunday celebration

The date of this pre-Synod meeting has been timed to take place in the week leading up to Palm Sunday, so that all participants, at the end of the sessions, can take part in the Eucharist celebrated by Pope Francis in St Peter's Square. The Palm Sunday Mass also marks the Church's XXXIII World Youth Day, focused on the theme from Luke's Gospel: "Do not be afraid Mary, for you have found favour with God".

Pope at Mass: 'Pray for leaders despite their mistakes'

Vatican Radio

As Christians we must pray for our elected leaders, even if we don't agree with their politics. That was Pope Francis' message during Mass in the Casa Santa Marta on September 18, as he reflected on the readings for the day.

Pope Francis took as his starting point the First Reading from St Paul's Letter to Timothy, where he asks that "supplications, prayers, petitions, and thanksgivings" be offered "for kings and for all in authority". In the day's Gospel, a Roman leader, the centurion, prays that his servant be healed.

Recognize one's subordinate position

"This man felt the need to pray," the Pope noted, because "he was aware that he did not have everything under his control". He knew that above him was another who was really in charge. The centurion had soldiers as subordinates but he was also aware of being a subordinate. This awareness led him to pray.

"If leaders do not pray, they close themselves off in a self-referential circle or in that of their party, a circle from which they cannot escape", said Pope Francis. It is important to be aware that we are all subordinate to someone more powerful. And those who are more powerful than political leaders, he suggested, are both the people who gave those leaders their power, "and God from whom their power comes through the people". Political leaders pray, said the Pope, when they are aware of being a subordinate.

Leaders must pray

Pope Francis went on to talk about the importance of prayer for a leader. "It is the prayer for the common good of the people with whom they have been entrusted."

He then recalled a conversation with a political leader who spent two hours before God every day, despite being tremendously busy. A leader must ask God, said the Pope, for the grace to govern well like Solomon, who asked not for riches and gold but for the wisdom to govern.

The Holy Father said political leaders must ask the Lord for the same wis-



Pope Francis addresses Clergymen and the laity

"IF LEADERS DO NOT PRAY, THEY CLOSE THEMSELVES OFF IN A SELF-REFERENTIAL CIRCLE OR IN THAT OF THEIR PARTY, A CIRCLE FROM WHICH THEY CANNOT ESCAPE", SAID POPE FRANCIS.

dom. "It is very important for leaders to pray, asking the Lord not to take away the awareness of being subordinate and not to find strength in a little group or in myself."

To those who would object on grounds of agnosticism or atheism, Pope Francis said: "If you cannot pray, confront yourself with your conscience, with the wisdom of your people, but do not remain isolated with the small group of your political party." This is what leads to becoming self-referential.

Prayer for leaders

In the First Reading, St Paul invites us to pray for kings, "so that we can live a calm and peaceful life," the Pope said. He pointed out that when political leaders do something we don't approve of, they are either criticized or praised, but often we simply claim we didn't vote

for them and pretend we don't really care what they do. But Pope Francis said we must not leave abandon our leaders.

"We need to accompany them with our prayer", he said. "Christians must pray for their leaders", even if they do "bad things". In this case, the Pope continued, they need prayer even more: "Pray, and do penance for leaders. Intercessory prayer is such a wonderful thing, as Paul says. It is to be done for all kings, for all persons in positions of power. Why? 'So that we can live a calm and peaceful life.' When a leader is free and can govern in peace, the whole population benefits."

Examination of conscience

Pope Francis concluded by asking those present to make an examination of conscience regarding their prayer for leaders.

"I ask you this favor: every one of you take five minutes, no more. If you are a leader, ask yourself: 'Do I pray to the One who gave me power through the people?' If you are not a leader, 'Do I pray for my leaders? Yes, for this one and that one, yes, because I like them; but for that one, no.' They need it so much more for this reason! 'Do I pray for all leaders?' And if you find in your examination of conscience before Confession that you have not prayed for your leaders, bring it to Confession. Because not to pray for leaders is a sin."

Archbishop Odama apologises to the people of Central Africa

Vatican Radio

Uganda's Archbishop of Gulu and President of the Uganda Episcopal Conference, John-Baptist Odama has apologised to the people of Central African Republic and those of the Democratic Republic of Congo for the suffering and atrocities caused by fugitive warlord Joseph Kony, leader of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA).

Archbishop Odama's apology was proffered on October 1 at a recent continental conference of African Bishops who attended a Caritas Africa meeting in Dakar, Senegal. Archbishop Odama explained reasons for the apology to



Archbishop Odama at a past press conference.

Vatican Radio's Africa Service.

"The people in the Central African Republic (CAR) are suffering from (the

atrocities of) the LRA. Where did the LRA come from? I think Uganda has something to apologise for and we need to reconcile with the people of CAR and with the people of the Democratic Republic of Congo as well as with those in South Sudan. For that reason it is important to accept -yes the fault has been made, and we have to say sorry for this," Archbishop Odama said.

He said the activities of the LRA rebels in CAR and the Democratic Republic of Congo had fractured human relationships of neighbouring communities that once lived as brothers and sisters. He referred to Pope Francis' visit to CAR in 2015 as a reminder to the people of Africa to "feel together" in solidarity with those suffering the ravages of war.

The Archbishop has called on the government of Uganda to join efforts with countries where LRA rebels are now operating.

The crises and instability facing countries of Central Africa are political, but they are also the result of poverty, exploitation, governance challenges intertwined with ethnic and cultural challenges, Archbishop Odama said. He believes that the current impasse is the result of politicians only looking for a political solution. He has called for a comprehensive approach that is composed of a synergy of political, cultural and even spiritual solutions.

"Let me give you an example of why this is complicated and why it needs a comprehensive approach. There is a man at the ICC (International Criminal Court), Dominic Ongwen. Depending on how you look at it, he is both a victim because he was abducted and a perpetrator having committed crimes against humanity," Archbishop Odama said.

Archbishop John Baptist Odama, a recipient of several peace awards, is a long-term advocate for peace in northern Uganda.

(Fr. Paul Samasumo/ additional reporting; Maria Dulce Araujo; Vatican Radio)



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Pope Francis' Prayer Intention for October: for Workers and the Unemployed



Pope Francis greets workers

Vatican Radio

On October 3, 2017 Pope Francis released a video message accompanying his monthly prayer intention for October.

This month's intention is for Workers and the Unemployed: That all workers may receive respect and protection of their rights, and that the unemployed may receive the opportunity to contribute to the common good"

The text of the video message reads:

We should always remember the dignity and rights of those who work, condemn situations in which that dignity and those rights are violated, and help to ensure authentic progress by man and society.

Let us pray that all workers may receive respect and protection of their rights, and that the unemployed may receive the opportunity to contribute to the common good.

The Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network of the Apostleship of Prayer developed the "Pope Video" initiative to assist in the worldwide dissemination of monthly intentions of the Holy Father in relation to the challenges facing humanity.



Pope Francis arrives at the International Conference promoted by the Congregation for Clergy

Pope Francis: Well-trained priests vital for mission of the Church

Vatican Radio

Pope Francis on September 7 received participants of an International Conference promoted by the Congregation for Clergy, telling them that "renewal of faith and the future of vocations is only possible if there are well-trained priests."

Ratio Fundamentalis is the document on the best practices for the formation of seminarians in the Church and was the subject this week of an International Conference promoted by the Congregation for Clergy.

Importance of well-trained priests

Greeting the conference participants on Saturday in the Vatican, Pope Francis got straight to the heart of the matter by telling them that "the theme of priestly formation is decisive for the mission of the Church: renewal of faith and the future of vocations is only possible if we have well-trained priests."

Drawing inspiration from the bible passage in which the Lord says to the prophet Jeremiah: "Get up and go down into the potter's shop", the Pope explained that "priestly formation depends first of all on God's action in our lives and not our activities, adding, it is a work that requires the courage to let oneself be molded by the Lord, for it transforms our heart and our lives."

During his address the Pope stressed that if one does not let oneself be molded like clay by the Lord every day, he becomes a priest who is out of the office with inertia, without enthusiasm for the Gospel or passion for the People of God. Instead, Pope Francis said, the seminarian needs to be guided by the Lord, as the craftsman, being led to become more and more his daily disciples.

Protagonists

The Holy Father pointed out that formation of priests requires protagonists; there are the seminarians, who abandon themselves to the craftsman's providential creativity, rather than follow the "noise of human ambitions", he said.

The second protagonists, the Pope continued are the trainers and bishops and he noted that, "if a trainer or bishop does not "go down in the potter's shop" and does not work with God's work, we cannot have well-formed priests.

The Church, Pope Francis said, "needs priests capable of proclaiming the Gospel with enthusiasm and wisdom."

Finally, the Holy Father left the group with a question, "What do I want to be? A "priest in the lounge", quiet and well-arranged, or a missionary disciple whose heart is burning for the Master and the People of God?"

Somalia blast death toll increases

By Vatican radio

The death toll after the explosion in Somalia on Saturday 14th October has now risen to over 270 people.

Police in the capital city of Mogadishu confirmed the number of fatalities, as well as stating that 300 more people have been wounded. The Police also report that no group has yet claimed responsibility for the attack, in which a lorry loaded full of explosives, was detonated near a hotel. Local residents are still searching amongst the ruins for their loved ones.

A further two people were killed in a second blast in a different part of the city.



Men carry dead bodies after the blast.

Meanwhile, the Turkish government has announced that it is sending planes carrying medical supplies to the region. The planes would then be used to transport the wounded back to Turkey for treatment. A number of countries, including the United States of America, the United Kingdom and France, have sent messages of support and condolence to the Somali government, which has declared three days of mourning for those who were killed.

Catalan political crisis continues



Catalan President Carles Puigdemont.

By Vatican Radio

The political crisis in the Spanish region of Catalonia continues after the President of the autonomous region of Catalonia failed to clarify to the government in Madrid whether or not he will declare independence.

Following the Catalanian referendum on independence on 1st October, which was declared illegal by Spain's constitutional court, Catalan President Carles Puigdemont wrote a letter to the central government in Madrid, asking for dialogue with the Spanish political authorities. He had originally been asked for a clear statement on whether or not he intended to formally declare independence from Spain.

The Spanish government has threatened to suspend the Catalan constitution, which allows some political autonomy, and instead impose direct rule from Madrid.

The leaders of the European Union have also declared that an independent Catalonia will automatically lose membership of the EU.

Commentators expect Madrid to extend its deadline for a declaration of independence until Thursday 19th October.

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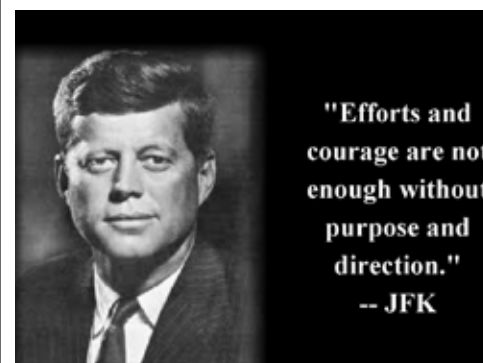
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