

## KOTIDO DIOCESE EMBRACES THE HOLY THURSDAY VATICAN DECREE

By Fr. Philip Lokel



Bishop Filippi washes the feet of the faithful during the Holy Thursday Mass. (INSET) Bishop Filippi washing the feet of of a Religious Sister and other women.

**HOLY THURSDAY** in commemoration of the Lord's Supper was celebrated by the Rt. Rev. Giuseppe Filippi, Ordinary of Kotido Diocese, in a solemn Holy Mass attended by hundreds of Christians mostly from the cathedral parish.

During the celebration the Bishop washed the feet of 12 people drawn from a cross-section of the parish community. Among them were religious sisters, school children, couples and people with disabilities. This was a fundamental departure from former church practice which prescribed that only 12 men or boys may have their feet washed on that day.

The new practice is in accordance with the Holy Thursday Decree issued by His Holiness Pope Francis on January 21, 2016. The Decree indicates that the rite of the washing of the feet should include various members of God's people to reflect better the reality of the local church. This was welcomed with great joy by the faithful.

In his homily, the Bishop drew parallels

between the Jewish Passover and the Last Supper, pointing out the rich symbolism in both. Referring to the Jewish Passover, he pointed out the centrality of the symbolism of the lamb without blemish which was slaughtered and eaten. The Bishop however noted that the lamb was to be eaten by a family or several families coming together. It was not to be eaten individually but as a community. In this way he emphasized the importance of the communitarian aspect of salvation. Similarly the Last Supper was a communal meal. The Lord Jesus before he suffered decided to eat a common meal with his friends. The Eucharist is a community sacrament.

The second symbolism the Bishop dwelt on is that of the blood of the lamb which was poured on the lintels of the doors. All those who lived inside the houses whose doors were sprinkled with the blood of the lamb were spared from death. The Bishop pointed out that the text in fact does not specify whether only

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## THE EDITORIAL



**O**n April 11, 2015, His Holiness Pope Francis in the Bull of Indiction, *Misericordiae Vultus* (The Face of Mercy), officially proclaimed the Extraordinary

Jubilee of Mercy. This Jubilee Year which commenced on December 8, 2015 (the Solemnity of Immaculate Conception) and will close on November 20, 2016 (the Solemnity of Christ the King), challenges us to recommit ourselves to the Lord's instruction to his followers to be merciful just as our heavenly Father is merciful (Luke 6:36). It is a call to embrace the attitude of compassion which is clearly manifested in Jesus and which can be put into practice through the spiritual and corporal works of mercy among other ways.

The spiritual works of mercy are seven and they include: Instructing the ignorant, counselling the doubtful, admonishing sinners, bearing wrongs patiently, forgiving offences willingly, comforting the afflicted, and praying for the living and the dead. The corporal works of mercy are also seven and they include: Feeding the hungry, giving drink to the thirsty, clothing the naked, sheltering the homeless, visiting the sick, ransoming the captive, and burying the dead.

We commend the Catholic communicators of Kampala Ecclesiastical Province, who as we read on page seven of this issue of **New Contact**, visited the sick and elderly at the Bakateyamba Home in Nalukolongo, Kampala and donated various items. It is a small act but a powerful gesture of mercy.

As we observe this Jubilee Year of Mercy, **New Contact** will be sharing with you more of such stories that will hopefully inspire more people to practice the works of mercy. In case you would like to send us a news story or give feedback, please contact us on +256 782 746 812 or send an email to [newcontact2013@gmail.com](mailto:newcontact2013@gmail.com) or [podii2002@yahoo.com](mailto:podii2002@yahoo.com).

Let us keep in contact through **New Contact**.

Fr. Philip Odii

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## Kotido Diocese Embraces The Holy Thursday Vatican Decree

FROM PAGE 1



A Deacon assists Bishop Filippi in washing the feet of a Religious Sister.



Bishop Filippi washes the feet of a Religious Sister as other women await their turn.

Jews dwelt in those houses. The implication of the symbolism is that all those who lived in those houses whether Jews or not were spared from death by the destroying angel.

This implies that the blood of the lamb without blemish also preserved from death strangers who may have been living among the Jews at the time the angel of death struck the first born of the Egyptians.

**THE NEW PRACTICE IS IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE HOLY THURSDAY DECREE ISSUED BY HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS ON JANUARY 21, 2016. THE DECREE INDICATES THAT THE RITE OF THE WASHING OF THE FEET SHOULD INCLUDE VARIOUS MEMBERS OF GOD'S PEOPLE TO REFLECT BETTER THE REALITY OF THE LOCAL CHURCH. THIS WAS WELCOMED WITH GREAT JOY BY THE FAITHFUL.**

In this way the Bishop highlighted the universality of salvation wrought by Jesus Christ whose sacrifice, the lamb without blemish, prefigured. It is only those who willfully choose to stay 'outside' that could not benefit from the blood.

In the gospel of John, Judas Iscariot was one such person who willfully decided to stay 'outside' because after tasting the bread he left the house and it was dark (John 13:29-30).

The Bishop further explained that those who cannot receive Holy Eucharist because of one reason or another need not to worry of being excluded because the washing of the feet includes them as well. If they follow the example of Jesus and wash the feet of their brothers and sisters (performing acts of mercy), they too will be saved. ■



# PICTORIAL: HOLY WEEK CELEBRATIONS AROUND THE WORLD



Archbishop Bakyenga of Mbarara Archdiocese, blesses the palms on March 20, 2016



Christians from Mbarara Archdiocese in a Palm Sunday Procession (March 20, 2016)



Priests of Mbarara Archdiocese in a procession during the Chrism Mass March 23, 2016.



Archbishop Bakyenga and his Priests during the Chrism Mass at Nyamitanga Cathedral, March 23 2016.

PHOTOS BY MBARARA ARCHDIOCESE



A Pakistani Christian woman raises her hands as she attends a Good Friday service at Saint Anthony Church in Lahore. (Mohsin Raza/Reuters)



Good Friday procession in Toronto, Canada



Christians of Pakistan observed GOOD FRIDAY in Quetta.



Fr. Sebastian Rossouw O.M.I. sprinkles holy water on congregants during Easter services at Regina Mundi Catholic Church in the Soweto area of Johannesburg, S. Africa on March 31.



Pope Francis walks past flowers as he arrives at St Peter's square to give the traditional Easter Mass.



The Pope kisses the foot of a faithful after washing



Roman Catholic clergymen hold candles during the Holy Thursday Mass at the Vatican.



Pope Francis prostrates during the Celebration of the Lord's Passion at St. Peter's Basilica on March 25 2016, at the Vatican

INTERNET PHOTOS



# RELIGIOUS LEADERS URGE UGANDANS TO EMBRACE NATIONAL SOLIDARITY TO SUSTAIN PEACE IN THE COUNTRY

By Jacinta W. Odongo



The Secretary General of UEC, Msgr John Baptist Kouta (far left in glasses) with other IRCU and TEFU leaders at a past press conference (INSET) Archbishop Odama addresses the journalists at a past press briefing.

**BARELY** a few weeks after the 2016 General Elections in Uganda, Members of the Inter-Religious Council of Uganda (IRCU) and the Elders Forum of Uganda (TEFU) have warned Ugandans against surrendering national solidarity for partisan interests.

In a joint press conference that was held in Kampala on March 17, 2016, led by the Chairman of the Uganda Episcopal Conference (UEC) and Archbishop of Gulu, Most Rev. John Baptist Odama, the leaders revealed that there is unease amongst some sections of the population since the general elections.

"There is fear and uncertainty within some sections of the population to express their grievances related to a number of issues," Archbishop Odama read a section of the press statement on behalf of IRCU. "Some of the concerns include: the role of the security forces in the electoral process, the challenges faced by the Electoral Commission and the voters," he added.

He further said that the above

mentioned issues have left some sections of the population dissatisfied and such an environment is not conducive to consolidating peace and justice in the country.

"As shepherds and senior citizens in the country, we are deeply troubled by these trends because they weaken our social fabric of harmony, social cohesion and responsive leadership. These provide us with an opportunity as citizens of Uganda to reflect deeply on our missed opportunities and lay a firm foundation for a meaningful democracy for our beloved nation," Archbishop Odama explained.

The leaders also urged Ugandans to embrace the pillars that guarantee sustainable peace and justice in the nation which includes fairness, openness, mutual respect, recognition of each other's contribution and commitment towards serving the common good.

Meanwhile, the leaders have vowed to provide guidance and leadership to address the current political impasse

and work with all the citizens to lay a solid foundation for the country. They committed to offer themselves as facilitators of constructive dialogue around the existing issues, engage relevant authorities to ensure Ugandans enjoy their freedoms of expression and movement and to work towards a national consultative conference to address obstacles that hinder Ugandans as a nation.

Archbishop Odama expressed his gratitude to Ugandan citizens for their active participation in the elections and the various political actors for exercising tolerance. ■

**THE LEADERS ALSO URGED UGANDANS TO EMBRACE THE PILLARS THAT GUARANTEE SUSTAINABLE PEACE AND JUSTICE IN THE NATION WHICH INCLUDES FAIRNESS, OPENNESS, MUTUAL RESPECT, RECOGNITION OF EACH OTHER'S CONTRIBUTION AND COMMITMENT TOWARDS SERVING THE COMMON GOOD.**

# UEC EDUCATION DEPARTMENT HOLDS NATIONAL WORKSHOP TO DISCUSS **KEY ISSUES IN EDUCATION** THAT IMPACT ON UGANDANS

By Jacinta W. Odongo



Cardinal Wamala ( in white Cassock), Fr. Luciano (standing on the left side of the Cardinal) pose for a group photo with some of the participants (INSET) Participants follow the proceedings at the workshop.

**ON FRIDAY**, March 4 2016, the Education Department of the Uganda Episcopal Conference (UEC) held a National Workshop and Annual General Meeting (AGM) in the Archdiocese of Kampala, to discuss key issues in education that impact on the Ugandan society.

The workshop, which was graced by His Eminence Emmanuel Cardinal Wamala, who is a member of the UEC Education Commission, was organized for the Diocesan Education Secretaries and Religious Education Advisors from the 19 Dioceses in Uganda.

It was conducted under the theme: **“Renewing Our Commitment to Regrep Main Themes 2016/2017.”** The theme highlighted the five chapters of ‘Reflections and Guidelines on the Education of the Human Person – The Catholic Perspective (REGEP)’ and the leading Education issues including the Message of Mercy in *Misericordiae Vultus* and Bull of Indiction of the Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy by Pope Francis.

Cardinal Wamala called on all the participants to recognize this year as a unique gift with a special character as Year of Mercy and to promote Peace in all their Institutions.

*“The growth of society comes with new ways in technology, science and other related challenges but God’s Word should remain our Guide,”* he said. *“It is part of our mission to promote Catholic values, give direction and guidance as well as offer any possible inputs,”* he added.

**THE THEME HIGHLIGHTED THE FIVE CHAPTERS OF ‘REFLECTIONS AND GUIDELINES ON THE EDUCATION OF THE HUMAN PERSON – THE CATHOLIC PERSPECTIVE (REGEP)’ AND THE LEADING EDUCATION ISSUES INCLUDING THE MESSAGE OF MERCY IN MISERICORDIAE VULTU SAND BULL OF INDICTION OF THE EXTRAORDINARY JUBILEE OF MERCY BY POPE FRANCIS.**

The Education commission thanked in a special way the dioceses of Masaka, Mbarara, Kabale, Kotido and Moroto for their efforts, and their Diocesan Education Secretaries were presented with gifts.

The Cardinal also expressed his gratitude for the good work done by the Uganda Catholic Education Department (UCED) team especially in the mobilizing and networking efforts towards attaining a successful workshop.

In his message, the Chairman of UEC Education Commission, Rt. Rev. Sanctus Wanok, Bishop of Nebbi, who did not attend the event due to other commitments, emphasized the need for holistic quality Education and the urgent role to promote Catholic values in our Education institutions.

Meanwhile a detailed report (14 pages) on UCED recent Education activities, updates, challenges and future plans was presented by Fr. Dr. Lucian Arinaitwe, the National Executive Secretary for UCED.

“This workshop becomes indeed a historical and first seminar of its kind because of its stance, scope and unique focus whereby, it was serving as climax of prior analysis and discussions on identified leading 10 issues at the Diocesan Level,” Fr. Luciano explained.

The workshop was also attended by experts from the National Curriculum Development Centre (NCDC), who gave inputs on Education System Analysis: Reform and Assessment Challenges.

A discussion was later conducted by the participants who made a number of interventions and recommendations. ■



# CARITAS DIRECTORS AND DIOCESAN STAKEHOLDERS GATHER FOR CARITAS WEEK TO SHARE EXPERIENCES AND HARMONIZE STRATEGIES

By Jacinta W. Odongo



PHOTO BY HELLEN CHANIKARE

Bishop Muhiirwa (seated in a white Cassock) with some of the Caritas directors and participants at the Caritas week function.

**THE CARITAS DEPARTMENT** of the Uganda Episcopal Conference (UEC) organized their Sixth Annual Caritas Week from March 15 to March 20 to bring together the Caritas Governing Body in Uganda to share experiences and harmonize strategies for future engagement.

The annual event, which was held in the Diocese of Fort Portal, was conducted under the theme of, "Be Merciful as Your Father in Heaven is Merciful," extracted from Luke 6:36.

The Ordinary of Fort Portal Diocese, Rt. Rev. Robert Muhiirwa and Rt. Rev. Joseph Franzelli, the Bishop of Lira Diocese presided over the event. It also attracted other participants who included Caritas Directors, equal opportunity focal persons and selected stakeholders from different dioceses.

According to the Program Coordinator of the UEC Caritas Department, Hellen Chanikare, Caritas Week helps to develop more comprehensive strategies, wider public support and increase the influence



A participant demonstrates how a machine donated by Caritas department works.

that individuals and communities cannot do alone.

"The week strengthens a sense of belonging to the fraternity, since members are able to express concerns about the operative of the organization country-wide which enables planning for improvement," she said. "It also provides an avenue to share diocesan Caritas performance and strategy used, which fosters learning and knowledge generation for the organization as

well as the broader development of the community, and provision of information to promote transparency and accountability," she added.

She also noted that organizing a successful Caritas Week is an evidence of coordination of the Catholic Church development programmes throughout the country. "The outcome for this coordination is creation of harmony and adherence to Caritas Principles of partnership, stewardship, solidarity and subsidiary," she explained.

Meanwhile, the annual event has built the image of Caritas in two ways. First, when the participants engage the local communities especially during field visits, the strength of Caritas is exhibited. Secondly, the government is engaged through the invited representatives who usually attend the national Caritas celebrations on Palm Sunday.

This is the first Caritas Week to be held in Fort Portal Diocese, last year's event was held in the Dioceses of Lira. ■

# COMMUNICATORS OF KAMPALA ECCLESIASTICAL PROVINCE **DONATE TO** BAKATEYAMBA HOME

By Jjunju Francis

**ON MARCH 17, 2016** Members of the Kampala Ecclesiastical Province Communicators Organization (KEPCO) donated a number of food and personal items to the Good Samaritan Sisters who take care for the vulnerable at Bakateyamba Home in Nalukolongo.

The donation was part of the KEPCO initiative to support the poor, needy and underprivileged in the society. The items donated included sugar, soap, bread, and blue band among other things.

The team, led by the chairman of the organization Leonard Ntambi, said that the visit was done in the spirit required from any believer in this Year of Mercy, adding that the choice to Bakateyamba, a home to over 150 elderly and people with disabilities was in the best interest to reach out to the most vulnerable.

Ntambi applauded the Catholic communicators and journalists at large for their contribution to a better and informed society but urged them to be responsible and preach the gospel of peace.

The Bakateyamba Home Administrator, Sr. Lawrence Nakiwu Nakyeyune acknowledged the contribution of KEPCO towards the wellbeing of the vulnerable people in the home. She however, said that they are usually constrained by the



PHOTO BY ANNET NANTALE

KEPCO members, the religious and some of Bakateyamba home residents pose for a group photo after the donation

high number of those who cannot fend for themselves calling for more support to cater for the home.

Kampala Archdiocese Communications officer Fr. Joseph Mpagi said the contribution of Good Samaritan sisters is enormous. "Caring for such a number of helpless people is a spirit that could be claimed by many but theirs is guided by God," he said.

Fr. Mpagi urged them not to compromise

their charism and continue to shine as daughters of God in their deeds and actions.

KEPCO members comprise of communications secretaries from dioceses of Kampala, Lugazi, Kiyinda-Mityana, Masaka, Kasana-Luweero, and institutions like; Radio Sapientia, Radio Maria, Marianum Press-Kisubi, St. Paul's Book Center and Leadership Magazine. ■

## WISE QUOTES FOR REFLECTION

*'Life is not measured by the number of breaths we take, but by the moments that take our breath away,'*

**- Maya Angelou**

*'Do not pray for an easy life, pray for the strength to endure a difficult one,'*

**- Bruce Lee**

*'Surround yourself with the dreamers and doers, the believers and thinkers, but most of all, surround yourself with those who see greatness within you, even when you don't see it yourself,'*

**- Anonymous**

*'Life has a way of testing a person's will, either by having nothing happen at all or by having everything happen at once,'*

**- Paulo Coelho**

*'Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter,'*

**- Martin Luther King**

*'When you change the way you look at things, the things you look at change,'*

**- Wayne Dyer**

*'Anyone who has never made a mistake has never tried anything new,'*

**- Albert Einstein**

*'Love begins at home and it is not how much we do but how much love we put in that action,'*

**- Mother Teresa**

*'Don't judge me by my success, judge me by how many times I fell down and got back up again,'*

**- Nelson Mandela**

*'Great minds discuss ideas, average minds discuss events, small minds discuss people,'*

**- Eleanor Roosevelt**



# THE RISEN CHRIST ASSURES US OF VICTORY - FR. LUGOBE

By Valerian Kkonde, PEARL NEWS SERVICE

**THE PARISH PRIEST** of St. Agnes Parish, Kibuye-Makindye, Fr. Joseph Lugobe, has urged Christians to remain steadfast amid all challenges as the Christ they follow will help them overcome all their tribulations just as He overcame suffering and death.

Fr. Lugobe made this appeal on Easter Sunday during his homily in the 10 a.m. Mass at the Parish. He pointed out that the mystery of the suffering, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ is an inspiration for all those who unconditionally look up to Him.

He noted that celebrating the resurrection emphasizes that our Lord Jesus Christ is alive and has power over everything, including death.

Putting emphasis on the prevailing conditions in Uganda, Fr. Lugobe encouraged the congregation to remain steadfast by drawing strength from

the forty days of the Lenten period which were characterised by almsgiving, fasting and prayer, which are no mean achievements. He said that the Lenten period is followed by the Passion of our Lord and then His resurrection.

"Because we belong to Christ, His life energizes us in our mission, work and prayer. That way Christ's victory changes our lives and situations," he explained.

For the families in turbulence, Fr. Lugobe urged them to always look at the cross to draw inspiration. He encouraged those who have failed to secure employment to take up their cross and follow Christ the victorious one.

"Many times we tend to run away from Christ when faced with challenges; it is human. Even Peter did that. We deceive ourselves that we can run away from Christ yet the truth is that we have no where else to go. The most important

thing to know is that Christ always welcomes us back when return to Him. I want to assure those who are hungry, those who lost in the elections, those who are looking for partners and even those confused by the weight of their family responsibilities that the risen Christ will make you victorious. If you stick to Christ, you will get your heart's desire and the consolation you are looking for. There is no doubt about that," Fr. Lugobe intimated.

On the political conflicts in the country, Fr. Lugobe urged the Christians to always recite the holy rosary and ask the Mother of Our Saviour to journey with them just as she did with her son up to Calvary. ■

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# SECRETARIES GENERAL OF REGIONAL AND NATIONAL CONFERENCES IN AFRICA **CHALLENGED TO ADHERE TO CHURCH'S TEACHING**

By AMECEA Online News Reporter



Archbishops Speich and Palmer-Buckle (in white cassocks) with the Secretaries General and some staff members of SECAM Secretariat.

**THE** Apostolic Nuncio to Ghana, Most Rev. Jean-Marie Speich, has emphasized on the need for priests and other Pastoral Agents in the Church to adhere to the teaching of the Church in all spheres of their endeavors.

This was contained in a welcome speech he delivered at the opening ceremony of a meeting of Secretaries General of Regional and National Episcopal Conferences in Africa that took place in Accra, Ghana from February 29 to March 4, 2016.

Rev. Fr. Chrisantus Ndaga, Deputy Secretary General of AMECEA represented AMECEA Secretary General at the meeting which was also attended by the Secretary

General from Malawi (ECM) Rev. Fr. Henry Saindi, Secretary General from Zambia (ZEC) Rev. Fr. Cleophas Lungu and Secretary General from Ethiopia (ECS) Rev. Abba Hagos Hayish.

The Nuncio further asked the Secretaries General to be attentive to the message of Christ and to remain close to the Church. "Share with each other your experiences in the spirit of love and in the interest of the good of the Church without concentrating only on your national interests," he said.

In his keynote address, the Archbishop of Accra, Most Rev. Charles G. Palmer-Buckle, reminded the participants of their roles as Secretaries General of Episcopal

Conferences and likened them to that of 'co-pilots' who are to assist their bishops in managing the affairs of the Church at the national, regional and continental levels in Africa.

"You have challenging tasks but the Good Lord will give you the grace and strength to be of greater service in bringing the Church in Africa to the point where God wants it to be in union with the Universal Church," Archbishop Palmer said.

Archbishop Palmer-Buckle who is also the Treasurer of SECAM appealed to the Secretaries General to conscientise their bishops to pay their levies to SECAM to enable it provide efficient and effective service to the Church in Africa. ■

## KEY EVENTS FOR APRIL 2016

### April 4- SOLEMNITY OF THE ANNUNCIATION OF THE LORD

The feast of the Annunciation of the Lord celebrates the angel Gabriel's appearance to the Virgin Mary (Luke 1:26-38), announcing that the Blessed Virgin had been chosen to be the Mother of Our Lord, and Mary's acceptance of God's plan of salvation.

### April 7- WORLD HEALTH DAY

The campaign will focus on the rising tide of diabetes worldwide. More and more people are getting diabetes around the world. The increase is in great part driven by rising levels of obesity and physical inactivity, including among children.

### April 17- WORLD DAY OF PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS

The 53rd World Day of Prayer for Vocations

### April 19 - 25 SOCIAL COMMUNICATIONS WEEK AND NATIONAL CELEBRATIONS OF THE WORLD COMMUNICATIONS DAY

Will be hosted by Moroto Diocese.



## EWTN'S FOUNDER DIES AT THE AGE OF 92

Vatican Radio



INTERNET PHOTOS

**MOTHER ANGELICA**, the founder of the EWTN Catholic Television Network, died on Easter Sunday, March 27, 2016 at the age of 92 years after suffering a debilitating stroke.

The Poor Clare nun started the Eternal Word Television Network in 1981, and since then it has grown into one of the largest religious media enterprises in the world, comprising television and radio stations, websites, and publishing entities. Mother Angelica was born Rita Rizzo on April 20, 1923, in Canton, Ohio. She joined the Poor Clares of Perpetual Adoration in Cleveland in 1944.

In 1961, she founded Our Lady of the Angels Monastery in Alabama, and began a taped series a few years later, which led to her first radio program in 1971. This led her to work in television, and later to the founding of EWTN. The television network succeeded where other ventures, often better-funded failed.

Mother Angelica retired from her leadership role in 2000, and suffered her stroke the following year.

*"In passing to eternal life, Mother Angelica leaves behind a legacy of holiness and commitment to the New Evangelization that should inspire us all,"* Carl Anderson, Supreme Knight of the Knights of Columbus told the EWTN-owned Catholic News Agency. *"I was honored to know and be able to assist Mother Angelica during the early days of EWTN. Over the years, that relationship grew, and today the Knights of Columbus and EWTN partner regularly on important projects."* ■

## POPE FRANCIS CONDEMNS TERRORIST ATTACK AGAINST PAKISTANI CHRISTIANS

Vatican Radio



INTERNET PHOTOS

Christians in Pakistan mourn the victim of the Lahore terrorist attack who was buried on Monday

**POPE FRANCIS** on Easter Monday called for pilgrims in St. Peter's Square to pause for a moment of prayer for the victims of the terrorist attack in Lahore, Pakistan, which killed more than 70 people, mostly Christian families celebrating Easter Sunday in a public park.

During his *Regina Coeli* address, Pope Francis called the attack "*reprehensible*" and said it "*bloodied*" Easter.

*"I wish to express my closeness to all those affected by this cowardly and senseless crime, and ask you to pray to the Lord for the numerous victims and their loved ones,"* Pope Francis said.

*"I appeal to the civil authorities and to all the social components of [Pakistan] to do everything possible to restore security*

*and peace to the population and, in particular, to the most vulnerable religious minorities,"* the Pope continued.

*"I repeat, once again, that violence and murderous hatred lead only to pain and destruction; respect and fraternity are the only way to achieve peace,"* – the Holy Father said – "The Passover of the Lord inspires in us, in an even more powerful way, prayers to God so that he stops the hands of the violent, who spread terror and death; and makes it possible for love, justice and reconciliation to reign in the world."

After his remarks, Pope Francis led those gathered in St. Peter's Square in a "Hail Mary Prayer" for the victims and their families. ■



## US SECRETARY OF STATE CONGRATULATES POPE FRANCIS ON HIS 3RD ANNIVERSARY

Vatican Radio

**ON MARCH 13, 2016** the US Secretary of State John Kerry extended his official congratulations to Pope Francis on the occasion of the third anniversary of the Holy Father's election to the See of Peter.

In a press statement released through the Department of State, Secretary Kerry thanked Pope Francis for his role in renewing his country's diplomatic relations with Cuba, and praised the Holy Father's efforts to facilitate dialogue between the Colombian government and FARC rebels.

Kerry also praised the Pope's moral leadership on a host of issues including responsible care for creation, our duty to care for refugees, and the need to protect religious freedom.

Kerry said, *"On this special day, I join men and women across the globe in congratulating the Holy Father and in wishing him continued success in leading the Catholic Church and appealing to the better angels within us all."* ■



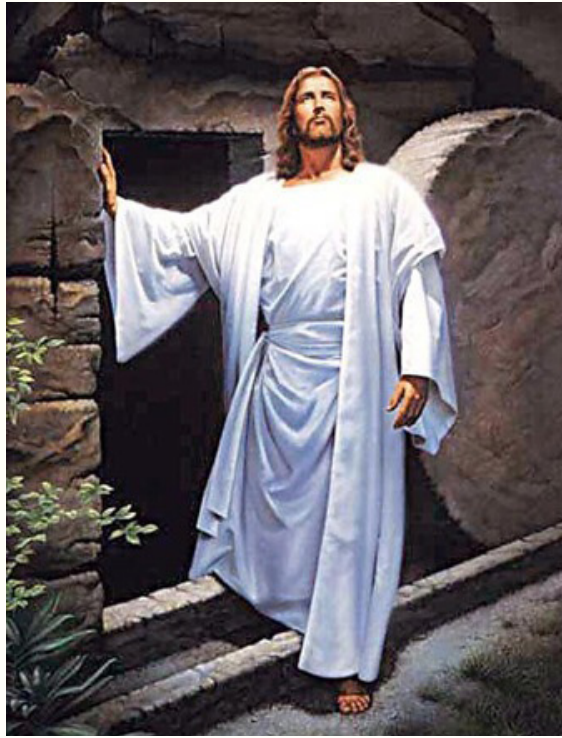
# DID JESUS REALLY **RISE FROM THE DEAD?**

Fr. Paulino Mondo, Mbuya Parish, Kampala

**THE MESSAGE** proclaimed since the beginning of Christianity is essentially the news of Christ's Resurrection. This good news is that a man who claimed to be the Son of God and the Savior of the world has indeed risen from the dead. For if Jesus really rose from the dead then that validates everything he said and did, including his claim to be divine and not merely human, because rising from the dead is beyond human power. Given the centrality of the Resurrection in Christian belief, how can we know the Resurrection really happened? The best way to discover the truth about Jesus' Resurrection is to rationally examine the alternatives. There are five possible alternatives: swoon, hallucination, myth, conspiracy and the good news of Christianity.

First, the '**swoon theory**' is that Jesus did not die on the cross, but that he revived while in the tomb. However, it is highly unlikely that Jesus could have survived the crucifixion. Roman execution procedures could not allow that to happen. Roman law even prescribed death to any soldier who jumbled with a crucifixion and allowed a capital prisoner to escape. By piercing his side with a spear and not breaking Jesus' legs, which was done to hasten death by asphyxiation, the soldiers established that Jesus was dead. Even if Jesus did survive his crucifixion, how could he have moved the stone at the entrance of the tomb, especially considering he had nail holes in his hands? It is also very unlikely that he would have been able to walk very far with pierced feet. However, even if Jesus did revive and get past the Roman guards, he would have been a battered, bleeding pulp of a man who would have been pitied by his followers, not worshiped. It is impossible for Jesus' disciples to have been so transformed if he had merely struggled out of a swoon, badly in need of medical treatment. A half-dead, staggering man who had narrowly escaped death is not fearlessly worshipped as divine and the conqueror of death!

Second, the Resurrection could not have been a '**hallucination**' because hallucinations happen privately and only to individuals. Numerous people do not simultaneously experience the same hallucination, especially over a period of forty days. Hallucinations usually last only a few seconds if not minutes. Furthermore,



if the Resurrection was a hallucination of the Apostles, why didn't the Jewish leaders just produce the corpse of Jesus to refute their claim that he had risen?

Third, the Resurrection could not be a '**myth**' because there was not enough time after the actual event for a myth to have developed. There is not a single example in recorded history of where a great myth or legend based on a historical figure has been written so soon after that person's death. Several generations need to pass before added mythological elements can be mistakenly taken as fact. Furthermore, many of the recorded details of Jesus' life and Resurrection distinguish the Gospels from myth. A prime example is the claim that the first witnesses to the Resurrection were women. Given that women at the time had low social status and were not even permitted to serve as legal witnesses, why would a legend say that women were the first witnesses to the Resurrection? If the empty tomb was an invented legend, its inventors would not have had it discovered by women, whose testimony was considered unreliable.

Fourth, the Apostles' proclamation of Jesus' Resurrection could not have been a deliberate '**lie/conspiracy**' based on stealing his body from the tomb because what would the Apostles have to gain by promoting such a lie? What could possibly have been their motive? By

claiming that Jesus rose from the dead, they all faced persecution and death. However, not one of them ever denied their claim of Jesus' Resurrection, even when faced with death. People simply do not give their lives for what they know is a lie. By far, the most compelling evidence of the truth of the Resurrection is the **radically transformed lives of Jesus' followers** afterwards. After Jesus was crucified, his followers were discouraged and disheartened. So they dispersed. Then, after a short time they abandoned their occupations, gathered back together and fully committed themselves to spread the '**good news**' that Jesus Christ is the Son of God who after dying on a cross, returned to life and was seen alive by all of them. They spent the rest of their lives proclaiming this, without anything to gain from a human perspective. They faced a life of hardship. They often

went without food and slept exposed to dangerous elements. They were ridiculed, beaten and imprisoned most of them ended up being executed by the cruelest ways known at that time like decapitation, burning in fire and suffocation through crucifixion. They knew that torture and death would be their fate if they did not stop preaching about Jesus Christ. But they could not stop. They all kept talking about Jesus' life, death and resurrection to anyone who would listen. Eventually, most of them were executed in torturous ways.

However, all of them maintained to the very end that Jesus had risen from the dead. Why didn't they recant? The only plausible explanation is they were absolutely certain they had seen Jesus Christ alive from the dead. Their bold courage and steadfast witness prove their story is the truth. And that makes it, even for us today, a truth worth living for. This makes the words of Jesus come handy in the indifferent world of today that, **"You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free"** (John 8:32).

During this year of mercy, this is the message that we are encouraged to share far and wide even if it means to put it on WhatsApp, Facebook, newsblogs, radio waves and television desks and talk shows. The risen Jesus still makes sense in our straight talk today. ■



# EASTER 'URBI ET ORBI' A MESSAGE OF HOPE FROM POPE FRANCIS

Vatican Radio

**POPE FRANCIS** delivered the traditional *Urbi et Orbi* blessing on Easter Sunday, at St. Peter's Square. Speaking to pilgrims and tourists gathered in the Square for the occasion, Pope Francis especially remembered the suffering peoples of Syria, Iraq, Libya and Yemen.

Below, please find the full text of the Holy Father's prepared remarks.

## MESSAGE OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS URBI ET ORBI Easter Sunday-March 27, 2016

*"O give thanks to the Lord, for he is good, for his mercy endures for ever" (Ps 135:1)*

### Dear Brothers and Sisters, Happy Easter!

Jesus Christ, the incarnation of God's mercy, out of love for us, died on the cross, and out of love he rose again from the dead. That is why we proclaim today: Jesus is Lord! His resurrection fulfils the prophecy of the Psalm: God's mercy endures for ever; it never dies. We can trust him completely, and we thank him because for our sake he descended into the depths of the abyss.

Before the spiritual and moral abysses of mankind, before the chasms that open up in hearts and provoke hatred and death, only an infinite mercy can bring us salvation. Only God can fill those chasms with his love, prevent us from falling into them and help us to continue our journey together towards the land of freedom and life.

The glorious Easter message, that Jesus, who was crucified is not here but risen (cf. Mt 28:5-6), offers us the comforting assurance that the abyss of death has been bridged and, with it, all mourning, lamentation and pain (cf. Rev 21:4). The Lord, who suffered abandonment by his disciples, the burden of an unjust condemnation and shame of an ignominious death, now makes us sharers of his immortal life and enables us to see with his eyes of love and compassion those who hunger and thirst, strangers and prisoners, the marginalized and the outcast, the victims of oppression and violence. Our world is full of persons suffering in body and spirit, even as the daily news is full of stories of brutal crimes which often take place within homes, and large-scale armed conflicts which cause indescribable suffering to entire peoples.

The risen Christ points out paths of hope to beloved Syria, a country torn by a lengthy conflict, with its sad wake of destruction, death, contempt for humanitarian law and the breakdown of civil concord. To the power of the risen Lord we entrust the talks now in course, that good will and the cooperation of

*all will bear fruit in peace and initiate the building of a fraternal society respectful of the dignity and rights of each citizen. May the message of life, proclaimed by the Angel beside the overturned stone of the tomb, overcome hardened hearts and promote a fruitful encounter of peoples and cultures in other areas of the Mediterranean and the Middle East, particularly in Iraq, Yemen and Libya. May the image of the new man, shining on the face of Christ, favour concord between Israelis and Palestinians in the Holy Land, as well as patience, openness and daily commitment to laying the foundations of a just and lasting peace through direct and sincere negotiations. May the Lord of life also accompany efforts to attain a definitive solution to the war in Ukraine, inspiring and sustaining initiatives of humanitarian aid, including the liberation of those who are detained.*

The Lord Jesus, our peace (Eph 2:14), by his resurrection triumphed over evil and sin. May he draw us closer on this Easter feast to the victims of terrorism, that blind and brutal form of violence which continues to shed blood in different parts of the world, as in the recent attacks in Belgium, Turkey, Nigeria, Chad, Cameroon, and Côte d'Ivoire. May he water the seeds of hope and prospects for peace in Africa; I think in particular of Burundi, Mozambique, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and South Sudan, marked by political and social tensions.

With the weapons of love, God has defeated selfishness and death. His son Jesus is the door of mercy wide open to all. May his Easter message be felt ever more powerfully by the beloved people of Venezuela in the difficult conditions which they are experiencing, and by those responsible for the country's future, that everyone may work for the common good, seeking spaces of dialogue and cooperation with all. May efforts be made everywhere to promote the culture of counter, justice and reciprocal respect, which alone can guarantee the spiritual and material welfare of all people.

The Easter message of the risen Christ, a message of life for all humanity, echoes down the ages and invites us not to forget those men and women seeking a better future, an ever more numerous throng of migrants and refugees – including many children – fleeing from war, hunger, poverty and social injustice. All too often, these



Pope Francis delivers the Urbi et Orbi (to the city and to the world) message at end of the Easter mass, in St. Peter's Square. Sunday, March 27

brothers and sisters of ours meet along the way with death or, in any event, rejection by those who could offer them welcome and assistance. May the forthcoming World Humanitarian Summit not fail to be centred on the human person and his or her dignity, and to come up with policies capable of assisting and protecting the victims of conflicts and other emergencies, especially those who are most vulnerable and all those persecuted for ethnic and religious reasons.

On this glorious day, "let the earth rejoice, in shining splendour" (cf. Easter Proclamation), even though it is so often mistreated and greedily exploited, resulting in an alteration of natural equilibria. I think especially of those areas affected by climate change, which not infrequently causes drought or violent flooding, which then lead to food crises in different parts of the world. Along with our brothers and sisters persecuted for their faith and their fidelity to the name of Christ, and before the evil that seems to have the upper hand in the life of so many people, let us hear once again the comforting words of the Lord: "Take courage; I have conquered the world! (Jn 16:33). Today is the radiant day of this victory, for Christ has trampled death and destruction underfoot. By his resurrection he has brought life and immortality to light (cf. 2 Tim 1:10). "He has made us pass from enslavement to freedom, from sadness to joy, from mourning to jubilation, from darkness to light, from slavery to redemption. Therefore let us acclaim in his presence: Alleluia!" (Melito of Sardis, Easter Homily).

To those in our society who have lost all hope and joy in life, to the elderly who struggle alone and feel their strength waning, to young people who seem to have no future, to all I once more address the words of the Risen One: "See, I am making all things new to the thirsty I will give water as a gift from the spring of the water of life" (Rev 21:5-6). **May this comforting message of Jesus help each of us to set out anew with greater courage to blaze trails of reconciliation with God and with all our brothers and sisters. ■**

