

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN UGANDA LAUNCHES A NATIONAL CAMPAIGN AGAINST DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

By Fr. Philip Odii



The Chairman of Uganda Episcopal Conference, Archbishop John Baptist Odama (fourth-left) launches the National Campaign to end Domestic Violence with Carol Laker of Irish Aid (first-left), Tom Crowley (fifth-left) and Farrah Kelly of Trócaire (third-right) alongside the Catholic Bishops of Uganda and some of the Staff of Uganda Catholic Secretariat.

THE Catholic Church in Uganda in partnership with the Irish organisation Trócaire and Irish Aid launched its national campaign to prevent Domestic Violence and promote peace in families, homes and communities. The event took place on 6th November 2013, at Saint Augustine Institute in Nsambya, Kampala.

The launch was presided over by His Grace John Baptist Odama, the Chairman of Uganda Episcopal Conference and also the Archbishop of Gulu. In his remarks the Archbishop appreciated the Irish Government for the services it is rendering to the Catholic Church in Uganda through Trocaire and Irish Aid, especially in addressing the issue of domestic violence.

The ceremony which lasted about one hour was attended by bishops from each of the 19 Catholic dioceses in Uganda, Ms. Carol Laker of Irish Aid, Mr. Tom Crowley and Ms Farrah Kelly of Trócaire and some staff of Uganda Catholic Secretariat.

According to Farrah Kelly, the Trócaire Gender Programme Officer, the Domestic Violence Prevention Programme in Uganda runs all year round but the campaign is intensified during the four weeks of the Season of Advent. "Advent" in the Catholic Church is observed as a period of penance and intensive prayer in preparation for Christmas when Christ's first coming is commemorated. It is also a time to focus the mind and heart to await Christ's Second Coming

at the end of time. This year, the Advent Season runs from Sunday, 1st of December to 24th of December.

During the campaign, prayers for peace are recited at the Catholic parishes and sub-parishes in Uganda, and Church leaders are encouraged to preach against violence in all its forms. Families nationwide are urged on to pray for peace and an end to violence, and radio/television talk-shows on domestic violence are held. The theme for this year's campaign is, 'Lay aside the works of darkness and put on the armour of light' (Romans 13:12).

According to a study conducted by Trócaire in 2006, up to 70 per cent of Ugandan women over 15 years of age had experienced physical or sexual violence. Half of these women experienced violence at the hands of their husbands or partners.

In response to the study findings, Trócaire entered into partnership with the leadership of the Catholic Church in Uganda to address the problem of domestic violence. The programme started in 2010 when Archbishop Dr. Cyprian Kizito Lwanga of Kampala Archdiocese, with the support of Trócaire, launched a Church project to tackle domestic violence, spreading awareness of the problem through parishes. The campaign is now being carried out at each of the 25,000 Catholic churches in Uganda. ■

Inside:

UEC NEWS

Justice and Peace department of Uganda episcopal conference holds a workshop on reconciliation ... **2-3**

DIOCESAN NEWS

Masaka celebrates the centenary of the indigenous priesthood ... **5**

Kampala Archdiocese celebrates its day ... **5**

The Biography of Fr. Bazilio Lumu and Msgr. Victor Mukasa Womeraka ... **7**

Nagongera Parish in Tororo Archdiocese celebrates 100 years of existence ... **8**

Directors of the Pontifical Mission Societies hold their National Council Meeting ... **9**

INTERNATIONAL CHURCH NEWS

Pope issues first Apostolic Exhortation: Evangelii Gaudium ... **10**

FEATURE

Every day is a day of Thanksgiving ... **11**

The death of Dr. Abraham Gamba of Uganda Catholic Secretariat ... **11**

Key ideas and principal themes of Africae Munus (Africa's Commitment) ... **14**

THE EDITORIAL



I would like to begin this editorial message by expressing our sincere gratitude to you the readers and well-

wishers of **New Contact**. This is our third issue and we feel so much encouraged and energized by the many messages of appreciation that we have continued to receive from different parts of the world. This indeed is a clear testimony that as a Catholic Church we are one family walking in the same journey of faith.

We thank all the people who have contributed news stories and articles for our September, October and November issues. It is these contributions that make **New Contact** meaningful and useful. **New Contact** is indeed a good forum for us as Catholics to share news and faith stories. We invite you to share with us inspiring stories, reflections and commentaries on issues that promote evangelization and human development. You can write on matters of faith, morals, culture, health, education, business, governance, justice, peace, etc.

New Contact is a monthly electronic publication circulated via email, but can also be accessed on the website of Uganda Episcopal Conference (www.uecon.org) and on Facebook. Please share copies of **New Contact** with other people who may be interested in reading it.

Let us keep in contact through **New Contact**. I wish you **A GLORIOUS CELEBRATION OF CHRISTMAS** and **A BLESSED NEW YEAR!**

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

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JUSTICE AND PEACE DEPARTMENT OF UGANDA EPISCOPAL CONFERENCE HOLDS A WORKSHOP ON RECONCILIATION

(Source: Justice and Peace Department of UEC)



Participants demonstrating how to handle conflict by dialogue and consensus.

ON the 8th and 9th of November 2013, the Justice and Peace Department of Uganda Episcopal Conference held a workshop on reconciliation in light of *Africae Munus*. *Africae Munus* translated in English as "Africa's Commitment" is the Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation of Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI on the Church in Africa in service to reconciliation, justice and peace. The workshop was conducted under the theme, "Towards a National Reconciliation Agenda for Uganda", took place at Pope Paul VI Memorial Hotel in Ndeeba, Kampala. The participants included His Excellency, Most Rev. Michael August Blume, SVD, the Apostolic Nuncio to Uganda, Most Rev. John Baptist Odama, the Chairman of Uganda Episcopal Conference and Archbishop of Gulu, Bishops from the 19 Catholic dioceses in Uganda. There were also staff from Uganda Catholic Secretariat, Diocesan Pastoral Coordinators, Heads of Diocesan Justice and Peace Departments, Heads of Diocesan Women Desks, and other key pastoral agents.

In his address to the participants, the Apostolic Nuncio noted that Uganda was the first country in Africa to formally invite him to participate in a workshop geared towards the implementation of *Africae Munus*. He was grateful to the Catholic Bishops of Uganda for this initiative.

The Nuncio revealed that the French version of his copy of *Africae Munus* was 'wounded' due to reading it over and over again. He called on each and every participant at the workshop to read and

understand the document.

Later on in his homily during the opening Mass, the Nuncio stated that it was now time for the current evangelisation in Uganda to take the form of reconciliation. "It is not enough for people to be good, but we must all constantly work for perfection till death", he said. "We must be bold stewards both in word and deed", he added.

His Grace John Baptist Odama in his remarks observed that a reconciled society in Uganda has not yet been realised. "There is still negative peace and so we are all sinners. We need humility and honesty both individually and as a community, before God and among our neighbours", he said.

The Archbishop officially presented *Africae Munus* to the Bishops and the other pastoral agents present. He informed the congregation that he had read the document over and over again and has presented the whole of it personally on Radio Maria in Gulu.

The Bishop Chairman for Justice and Peace in the Uganda Episcopal Conference, Rt. Rev. Giuseppe Filippi, who is also the Bishop of Kotido Diocese reminded the participants that all Ugandans are wounded in one way or another. He emphasised the need to turn these wounds into glorious scars, a sign of victory.

Msgr. John Baptist Kauta, the Secretary General of Uganda Episcopal Conference gave a brief background on the workshop, noting that it stems from the visit of

CONT'D ON PAGE 3

JUSTICE AND PEACE DEPARTMENT OF UGANDA EPISCOPAL CONFERENCE HOLDS A WORKSHOP ON RECONCILIATION

FROM PAGE 2

Professor Daniel Philpott of the University of Notre Dame in Indiana, USA to Uganda Catholic Secretariat in March 2013. He appreciated Catholic Relief Services (CRS) and Krock Institute for the funding.

CRS was represented at the workshop by its Country Manager, Ms Elizabeth Pfifer, who expressed her joy in joining the Ugandan community. She is from USA and has been in the country since July 2013. The main presenters at the workshop included Professor Daniel Philpott and Mr. John Katunga. Philpott is a Professor of Political Science and Peace Studies at the University of Notre Dame. He is a member of the faculty of the Kroc Institute for Peace Studies and also a member of the Catholic Peace building Network, a global network of peace builders in the Church. Meanwhile Katunga is an employee of CRS and he is based in Nairobi, Kenya.

In his presentation Philpott pointed out that the church is the most powerful agent in the promotion of the moral vision of reconciliation. He admitted that there was something very extraordinary in the Catholic Bishops of Uganda for having a vision and starting the process of developing a national plan for reconciliation. He challenged the Bishops to further develop a moral vision of reconciliation that will define, direct and shape their vision, purpose, practices and action so that their intervention fits into the God's plan of Salvation. The Catholic Church, he said, is the best reconciler of society given its nature, essence, vision, mission and foundation.

The professor further noted that for true reconciliation to be realised, there ought to be acknowledgment, apology, accountability, reparations, strong just institutions, mediation of conflict and forgiveness.

The second presenter, Mr. John Katunga, took the participants through the process of identification, location and types of wounds that human beings experience.



Most Rev. Michael A. Blume (Right) and Most Rev. John B. Odama (Left) at the workshop

Violence, he said, inflicts physical harm (to body and property), psychological pain (to the mind), and ultimately it violates people's dignity (trauma). This leads to the need for healing in order to recover the lost dignity and consequently the obligation for justice.

According to Katunga, wounds cause trauma that calls for healing which is a pathway to reconciliation. He also observed that unhealed trauma is detrimental to the self and to the other. Hence, people need to recover from trauma, and in each case, they need strength, wisdom, skills and fraternal support.

Katunga challenged the participants to reflect on Uganda's historical wounds by using the metaphor of a river. He noted thus, "Think of Uganda's life as a river, beginning with the source of the river at the independence and moving through the different periods of its life to the present. Draw in the calm, peaceful times as well as the difficult, challenging times –collective (perhaps crashing waterfalls or crashing waves). Important influences that contributed to the river may be drawn in as tributaries or feeder streams. Important people, events and experiences can be drawn along the river".

He highlighted the fact that in the search for reconciliation, it is imperative that both psychological and physical wounds are addressed. The past will always haunt us and will continue to impose on us an internal order that dictates how we relate to one another in present time. By so doing the past conditions our future! The fear of the past will therefore be transferred to present and to the future. Hence we have the obligation to respond to the past wounds so that the society can move with dignity into the future.

He made reference to Africae Munus which states thus, "Men and women are shaped by their past, but they live and journey in the present and they look ahead to the future" (AM 11). The document also states that, "It is by granting and receiving forgiveness that the traumatized memories of individuals and communities have found healing and families formerly divided have rediscovered harmony" (AM21).

According to Dr. Emmanuel Aliba Kiiza, the Executive Secretary of the Justice and Peace Department of Uganda Episcopal Conference, this workshop is part of the process of developing a national plan for the Catholic Church to promote reconciliation in Uganda. ■



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ANNOUNCEMENT

CATHOLIC CHARISMATIC RENEWAL UGANDA



The International Catholic Charismatic Renewal is coming to Africa for the first time. Uganda has been chosen to host the event, which will involve an International Leaders' Conference at Speke Resort & Conference Centre, Munyonyo, Kampala

LEADERS CONFERENCE

- DATES** : 30th June to 4th July 2014
THEME : **"THEY WERE ALL FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT" (ACTS 2:4)**
WHO TO ATTEND : Potential Leaders, Former Leaders, Youth Leaders and Current Leaders

REGISTRATION HAS STARTED!!!

Register!!! Register!!! Register!!!

Registration forms are available with Prayer Group Leaders, Diocesan Service Team Leaders, and at Emmaus Center Katikamu, the National Office (UCCRO) or Online at www.ccruganda.org

NB: Please note that registration fee is 270,000/= and after 31st December 2013 you will be required to top up with 13,500/= . The earlier you pay the better!!!

MASAKA DIOCESE CELEBRATES THE CENTENARY OF THE INDIGENOUS PRIESTHOOD

By Fr. Joseph Kasangaki and Fr. Philip Odii



Bishops in a procession at Villa Maria Parish during the centenary celebration of the indigenous priesthood in Uganda

THOUSANDS of people from various parts of Masaka Diocese and beyond gathered at Villa Maria Catholic Parish in Kalungu District for the climax of the centenary celebration of the indigenous priesthood in Uganda. The event took place on Sunday, 24th November 2013 and the Holy Mass was presided over by Bishop John Baptist Kaggwa, the Ordinary of Masaka Diocese.

The first two indigenous priests in Uganda, Fr. Bazilio Lumu and Msgr. Victor Mukasa Womeraka, were ordained priests

on 29th June 1913. Lumu was from Bukalagi in the present Gomba District in Kiyinda-Mityana Diocese, and Mukasa was from Buubwe-Bugajju in the present Matala Parish in Masaka Diocese. Lumu died in 1946 and Mukasa died in 1979.

In his welcome remarks at the centenary celebration, Bishop Kaggwa paid tribute to the two priests who 100 years ago embraced the vocation to the priesthood. "We have all the reason to celebrate, because since their ordination

more and more priests have been ordained in Uganda and other parts of Africa. We admire their courage and determination to choose a vocation that was foreign to the people here. People here believed so much in the marriage vocation and they couldn't believe that one could lead a celibate life!" he stated.

The Bishop also appreciated the missionaries who enabled Lumu and Mukasa to become priests. "A credit goes to our fathers in faith here in Uganda, the White Fathers, led by Bishop Henry Streicher who trusted that Africans too could become Priests and be Missionaries to their fellow Africans. He firmly believed that the land of the martyrs had the capacity and potential of producing indigenous priests and religious", he noted.

Bishop Kaggwa further noted that "The first Priests challenge us with their uncompromised love for God and for dedication to the service of their people. They worked tirelessly in carrying out their Priestly duties among their fellow Africans and in very harsh conditions and they persevered. They were very scrupulous in observing their priestly commitments. We too should be courageous and persevere amidst our challenges especially celibacy".

The preacher of the day, His Eminence Emmanuel Cardinal Wamala, pointed out that this centenary of the indigenous

CONT'D ON PAGE 6

KAMPALA ARCHDIOCESE CELEBRATES ITS DAY

By Juliet Lukwago and Radio Sapientia Reporter

THE first Ugandans to be ordained priests were Bazilio Lumu and Victor Mukasa Womeraka. They were ordained on 29th June 1913 at Villa-Maria Parish in Masaka Diocese, by Bishop Henri Streicher, who was then the Vicar Apostolic of Northern Nyanza.

ON Saturday, 23rd November 2013, thousands of Christians from the 54 Catholic parishes that make up Kampala Archdiocese flocked to Rubaga Cathedral to celebrate the Archdiocesan day and the closing of the Year of Faith.

The colourful Eucharistic celebration was presided over by the Apostolic Nuncio to Uganda, His Excellency Most Rev. Michael August Blume, S.V.D. Among the concelebrants were His Grace Dr. Cyprian



His Excellency Most Rev. Michael A. Blume, S.V.D. (third-right), His Grace Dr. Cyprian Kizito Lwanga (fourth-left), Rt. Rev. Christopher Kakooza (third-left) posing for a photo with some of the concelebrants and Christians after Mass

CONT'D ON PAGE 6

MASAKA DIOCESE CELEBRATES THE CENTENARY OF THE INDIGENOUS PRIESTHOOD

FROM PAGE 5

priesthood has been celebrated in the Year of Faith and faith is a gift to us. The Year of Faith which was announced by Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI began on 11th October 2012 and ended on 24th November 2013.

The Cardinal was thankful that Bishop Streitcher permitted Bazilio Lumu and Victor Mukasa to become the first Ugandan priests. Uganda, he said, was not the first country to be evangelized in the South of Sahara but produced the first indigenous priests.

Wamala also expressed gratitude to God for blessing Uganda with more and more priests ever since the first two were ordained. He explained that Priesthood is a gift to those whom God has chosen to be priests and this gift has to be used with love and joy. It is not given out of merit but entrusted to the individual for serving the people of God. Priests therefore are accountable to God and they have the

obligation of keeping the dignity of the Priesthood.

The Cardinal called upon the faithful to correct priests whenever they go wrong to show how much they love them rather than keeping quiet. He however noted that sometimes the faithful are the cause of the downfall of priests. He asked priests to take seriously the message that Msgr. Victor Mukasa gave at his 60th Priestly ordination anniversary celebration (1973). Msgr. Mukasa stated thus: "You priest should keep that zeal you had when you had just been ordained. Do not be overtaken by earthly things".

The Apostolic Nuncio to Uganda, His Excellency Most Rev. Michael August Blume, S.V.D., congratulated priests and the faithful upon celebrating the centenary of indigenous priesthood in Uganda. He asked the faithful to continue praying for priests, assuring them that it is their prayers that keep priests going.

The Vice President of the Republic of Uganda, His Excellency Edward Kiwanuka Ssekandi, paid tribute to King Mutesa I of Buganda for inviting the missionaries whose evangelisation work has bore so much fruits. He promised that the Government of Uganda will work hand in hand with the Church to ensure that the historical church of Villa Maria is raised to the level of a tourist site.

Honourable Ssekandi also thanked the Catholic Church for being a partner with Government in developing Uganda. He pointed out that Government is ready to work with the church in developing the nation.

The celebration was graced by several bishops, priests, religious men and women, political and cultural leaders. Among the dignitaries was the Nnaalinnya Sarah Kagere who represented the Kabaka of Buganda, Ronald Muwenda Mutebi II. ■

KAMPALA ARCHDIOCESE CELEBRATES ITS DAY

FROM PAGE 5

Kizito Lwanga the Archbishop of Kampala, His Eminence Emmanuel Cardinal Wamala, Rt. Rev. Christopher Kakooza the Auxiliary Bishop of Kampala Archdiocese, Rt. Rev. Edward Baharagata the Bishop Emeritus of Hoima, and several priests.

In his homily, the Nuncio applauded the Catholic Church in Uganda for her strong faith, noting that the Year of Faith which was being closed was indeed an opportunity for Christians to get energised and become true witnesses of Christ in their life.

"Pope Benedict XVI set aside a special year for Catholics throughout the world to rediscover, and share with others, the precious gift of faith entrusted to the

Church and the personal gift of faith that we have each received from God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit", the Nuncio stated.

The Prelate also noted that in the Year of Faith, the Holy Father wanted Christians to rediscover the journey of faith so as to shed ever clearer light on the joy and renewed enthusiasm of the encounter with Christ; to rediscover a taste for feeding on the Word of God, faithfully handed down by the Church, and on the Bread of Life, offered by Christ as sustenance for his disciples.

The Nuncio explained that the Year of Faith was decreed by Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI and it runs from 11th October 2012 to 24th November 2013. The Pope, he said, chose to open the Year of Faith on 11th October 2012 because that date is the anniversary of two important events in the life of the Catholic Church - the 50th anniversary of the opening of the Second Vatican Council (11th October 1962 to 8th December 1965), and the 20th anniversary of the promulgation of the Catechism of the Catholic Church by Blessed Pope John Paul II (11th October 1992).

Archbishop Blume also

talked about the Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation, *Africae Munus* (Africa's Commitment) of Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI. He observed that this document, which is the outcome of the Second Special Assembly for Africa of the Synod of Bishops, challenges the Catholic Church in Africa to work for reconciliation, justice and peace from which God's image of love to human kind is depicted. It calls for proclamation of the gospel that will bring life to the fatigued, strengthening of the family, the young and youth who are under attack from the strong emerging cultures.

The Archbishop of Kampala, His Grace Dr. Cyprian Kizito Lwanga, appreciated the Nuncio for presiding over the celebrations, and officially welcomed him to the Archdiocese of Kampala by giving him a local Ganda name of the Ngabi clan, "Samula".

In his speech, the Archbishop announced the 2014 Archdiocesan work plan, which covers among other things, the developing of Catholic institutions and parishes, education, leadership, family protection, evangelization and the celebrations of the 50 years since the canonization of the 22 Uganda Martyrs.

After the Mass, the Christians had a matchpast (parade), and donated cement and other items to support the campaign of building church institutions and parishes. ■



Photo by Juliet Lukwago

A brass band leading the entrance procession of the Mass during the Kampala Archdiocesan Day Celebration.

BIOGRAPHY OF FR. BAZILIO LUMU AND MSGR. VICTOR MUKASA WOMERAKA

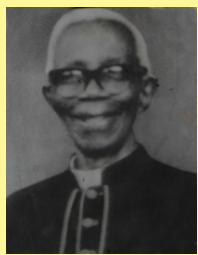
Compiled by Juliet Lukwago and Fr. Philip Odii



Rev. Fr. Bazilio Lumu (left) and Msgr. Victor Mukasa (right).

THE first Ugandans to be ordained priests were Bazilio Lumu and Victor Mukasa Womeraka. They were ordained on 29th June 1913 at Villa-Maria Parish in Masaka Diocese, by Bishop Henri Streicher, who was then the Vicar Apostolic of Northern Nyanza.

Fr. Lumu celebrated his first Mass at Katigondo Seminary for the seminarians, and Fr. Mukasa Womeraka celebrated his at Villa Maria before a huge congregation. The two priests were among the first six seminarians who were admitted at the new seminary at Rubaga in Kampala in 1903, before it was relocated to Kisubi, near Entebbe. Later on it was relocated to Biikira, Kyotera in Masaka, then to Bukalasa and finally to Katigondo in 1911.



FR. BASILIO LUMU

Basilio Lumu was born around 1875 in Bukalagi, in the present Gomba district (Kiyinda-Mityana Diocese). His father was Wamala of the Ndiga (Sheep) clan and his mother's name remains unknown. Both parents died when Lumu was a toddler. He was baptised at Lubaga on 8th September 1891.

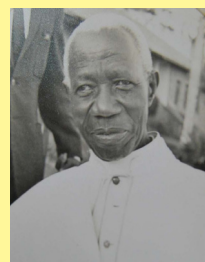
As a result of the religious war of 1892, Lumu's family fled to Buddu (Masaka), where most Catholics migrated. He attended the mission school at Kampungu,

Kalisizo, in the present Rakai district before moving to Villa Maria towards the end of 1892. His education was sponsored by Chief Alex Ssebowa and it was at Villa Maria that he was presented to the junior seminary in 1893. At the time he joined the junior seminary, there were 33 candidates, but only Lumu went on to become a priest.

Lumu joined the major seminary on 13th October 1903 together with five other students, namely, Adriano Mukasa, Andrea Namusanga, Teodoro Tibazalika, Vitorio Katula and Vitorio Mukasa Womeraka. The six were the first major seminarians in Uganda and only two of them became priests (Bazilio Lumu and Vitorio Mukasa Womeraka).

On 6th January 1904, Lumu and his colleagues were given clerical habit of a black cassock, black sash, a toga and shoes. In 1908, Bazilio Lumu, Victor Mukasa and Yoana Muswabuzi were sent for probation at Nandere mission. The probation ended in August 1909 and they returned to the seminary. A few days later, Lumu and Mukasa were sent to Villa Maria for a second probation. While at Villa Maria, Lumu got seriously ill and nearly died. The White Sisters treated him and he got well. At the end of the year, the two returned to the seminary and continued with their formation.

On 24th December 1911, Lumu and Mukasa were made sub-deacons. On 4th August 1912, they were ordained deacons, and on 29th June 1913, they were ordained priests. After their ordination to the priesthood, Fr. Lumu and Fr. Mukasa were appointed to teach at Bukalasa Minor Seminary. Lumu remained here until 1918. He later served in the parishes of Mitala Maria, Narozari, Nazareti, Kitovu and Villa Maria. Lumu died on 3rd March 1946, at the age of 71 and was buried in Bukalasa. His remains were later transferred to Villa-Maria Church.



MSGR. VICTOR MUKASA WOMERAKA

Victor Mukasa Womeraka was born in 1882, at Bubwe-Buggaju, in the present Matala Catholic Parish, Masaka Diocese. His parents were Petro Lugi of the Nkima (Monkey) clan and Anne Ndisala Nalubega

of the Ngabi (Bush Buck) clan. His mother died when Mukasa was four and he was brought up by his maternal grandfather and later on by his maternal uncle.

Mukasa joined the catechumenate at Villa Maria in 1893 and was baptised on 1st February 1894. A year after his baptism, Mukasa's uncle brought him to Villa Maria and entrusted him to the care of the parish priest, Rev. Fr. Henri Streicher. He worked at the parish but also attended school.

In 1896, Pere Gacon of Villa Maria was sent to start a new parish at Bujuni in Bunyoro and Mukasa was chosen to go with him. They returned to Buddu the following year and went to Sse Islands due to the conflicts in the area.

In August 1897, Mukasa together with the seminarians from Kisubi travelled to Bukumbi in Tanganyika to attend the Episcopal ordination of Fr. Streicher. It was there that the new bishop who had known the boy very well selected him to join the seminary. He joined the junior seminary in Kisubi in September 1897.

Mukasa joined the major seminary in 1903 together with Lumu and four other seminarians. In 1904 the six were given clerical habit of a black cassock, black sash, a toga and shoes. He was sent to Nandere mission for his first probation in 1908. At the end of this probation in August 1909, he returned to the seminary. A few days later he was sent to Villa Maria for his second probation.

On 24th December 1911 Mukasa and Lumu were made sub-deacons and on 4th August 1912 they were ordained deacons. They were ordained priests on 29th June 1913.

Mukasa and Lumu were appointed to Bukalasa Minor Seminary where they taught till 1918. In 1918, Mukasa was transferred to Villa Maria where he stayed until 1921. In 1921 Fr. Mukasa was transferred to Narozari parish as the parish priest till 1924. He then worked in the parishes of Kasozi, Vvumba in Ssinga, Villa Maria, Nazareti, Kabuwoko, Lwaggulwe, Biganda, Kitaasa, and then back to Villa Maria where he remained until his death on 12th August 1979. He died at the age of 97, having served as a priest for 66 years. He was blessed to celebrate the Silver Jubilee, Golden Jubilee and the 60 years of his priesthood. ■

NAGONGERA PARISH IN TORORO ARCHDIOCESE CELEBRATES 100 YEARS OF EXISTENCE

By Fr. Philip Odii

ON Saturday, 30th November 2013, Nagongera Parish (St. Wilbrod) in Tororo Archdiocese celebrated 100 years since it was established by the Mill Hill Missionaries. The Mass was presided over by His Grace Denis Kiwanuka Lote, the Archbishop of Tororo. The concelebrants included Rt. Rev. Emmanuel Obbo, Bishop of Soroti Catholic Diocese, Rt. Rev. Joseph Oyanga, Bishop Emeritus of Lira Diocese and several priests.

During the colourful celebration which was attended by thousands of people, the Archbishop officiated the wedding of 58 couples. The theme of the celebration was, "Marching in Faith, Hope and Love". In his message for the centenary celebration, the Archbishop pointed out that Nagongera Parish is the third Parish which is celebrating 100 years since the Christian faith reached the present Archdiocese of Tororo. The other two are Nyondo in 2006 and Budaka in 2002. He noted that since 1913 the Christian faith has grown so strong and spread wide that it has been necessary to split it in order to create new Parishes. The following are the parishes he said owe their existence to Nagongera Parish:- Mulanda, Achilet, Namwaya, Agururu, Sacred Heart-Tororo, Osia, Malaba, Nyangole, Kwapa, Molo, Dabani, Lumino, Busia. He plans to open the following new parishes in the near future: Busitema, Iyolwa, Soni Kainja and Paya.

Fr. William Van Leeuwen who had worked in Nagongera Parish for many years, preached at the Mass. In his homily, Fr. William highlighted the message of the gospel reading (Mark 16:14-20) chosen for the day, in which Jesus shortly before his ascension into Heaven, commissioned his 12 apostles to go out and preach the Good News of Salvation. He assured the congregation that when God commissions a person, He also accompanies him or her in the mission. The missionaries, he said, obeyed the command of Christ to go out and preach and today the fruits are evident in the centenary celebration of Nagongera parish. He however observed that the faith of many people today has gone down. "People have become more worldly", he said.

Van Leeuwen challenged the people to renew their faith in Christ. He recalled the times he used to conduct home to home pastoral visitations, praying for the people and seeking to strengthen



Archbishop Denis Kiwanuka of Tororo blessing couples who wedded during the Centenary Celebration of Nagongera Parish.

their faith. This pastoral visitation was popularly called "Woth Lero" (Walking in the Light), in the local Dhopadhola language.

Fr. Van Leeuwen also reminded the congregation that the Mill Hill Missionaries led by Fr. James Willemen, built a church in Nagongera so that people can come to hear the Word of God and renew their faith. This faith, he said, is what we take back home.

The State Minister in Charge of the Vice-President's Office and MP for Busunju County in Mityana District, Hon. Vincent Nyanzi, represented the Vice-President of the Republic of Uganda, His Excellency Edward Kiwanuka Ssekandi. In the speech read by the Minister, the Vice President commended Nagongera Parish for its contribution towards the socio-economic transformation of the area through the church founded education and health institutions. He appreciated the Archbishop of Tororo, the priests and all the church leaders for the good work they are doing. He also appreciated the Catholic Church in general for supplementing the efforts of government in development. The government, he said, is endeavouring to improve infrastructure and security, and the church should take advantage of this effort.

The Minister called on the Church to partner with government in improving household income and in the fight against HIV/AIDS and immorality. "The Church is a key element in promoting morality", he said.

The Minister donated 2 million Uganda shillings towards the renovation of Nagongera parish church.

The celebration was graced by the presence of His Majesty Moses Owor, the Kwar Adhola (King of the Jopadhola), Hon. Sarah Opendi, the State Minister for Primary Health Care and the Woman MP for Tororo District, Hon. Fox Odoi the MP for West Budama County, Hon. Olive Kabaale the Woman MP for Iganga District, and many other civil leaders.

The origin of Nagongera Parish is said to date back as far as the Pre-World War I era. After the Mill Hill Missionaries had established parishes in Budaka (1902), the mother parish of Tororo Archdiocese, and Nyondo (1906), they moved southwards and arrived within the northern part of the present Nagongera Parish. Between 1908 and 1910, they established the very first station at Senda-Pamadolo, where they had celebrated the first Mass upon their arrival. Thereafter, Chief Oloo Majanga, who had succeeded his father as the paramount chief of Padhola, embraced the missionaries as was the will of his father Majanga. He settled them to a new place which is near the present Rock Hill Primary School in Nagongera Sub-County. The missionaries constructed a semi-permanent church in the area.

In May 1913, Fr. James Willem and Fr. Joseph Spears transferred their station to the present site where a permanent church was built. Fr. Willem was the first Parish Priest of Nagongera and he served from 1913 to 1948. ■

DIRECTORS OF THE PONTIFICAL MISSION SOCIETIES HOLD THEIR NATIONAL COUNCIL MEETING

(Source: PMS National Office)



His Excellency Most Rev. Michael A. Blume, S.V.D. (fourth-left), Rt. Rev. Paul Ssemogerere (third-left), Fr. Philip Balikuddembe (fifth-left) posing for a photo with the Diocesan PMS Directors and staff of PMS National Office

THE Directors of the Pontifical Mission Societies (PMS) in Uganda converged at Kasana-Luweero Diocese for their National Council meeting. The meeting was held from 25th to 29th November 2013 and was attended by 18 participants comprising of Diocesan PMS Directors and staff from the National PMS office based at Uganda Catholic Secretariat.

The Apostolic Nuncio to Uganda, His Excellency Most Rev. Michael August Blume, S.V.D, who addressed the participants on the closing day, highlighted the content of the newly published Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* (The Joy of the Gospel) of Pope Francis. The Exhortation which was released on 26th November 2013 deals with the Church's primary mission of evangelisation in the modern world. The Nuncio pointed out that it was indeed timely to communicate the content of the Exhortation to the PMS Directors since they are heading the Pontifical Societies which are at the service of the Roman Pontiff. He encouraged all of them and indeed all Christians to read the Exhortation which he said would enrich the mission animation in this era of evangelisation.

On the opening day of the council

meeting, Bishop Paul Ssemogerere of Kasana-Luweero Diocese and President of the Pontifical Commission for Mission of Uganda Episcopal Conference warmly welcomed the directors to the diocese. In his address he stressed the importance of the meeting and challenged the participants to share the outcome of the PMS activities planned for the year, the progress made during the animation among the people, the challenges experienced and the strategies for overcoming them as they carry out the mission of evangelization.

The bishop extended to the directors, greetings and appreciation from the bishops of the Uganda Episcopal Conference who had just concluded their November Plenary. He told them that while working, they must bear in mind that the bishops are the arch-animators in their individual dioceses and they as directors only participate in this shared mission.

Bishop Ssemogerere appreciated the gradual increase in collections to the Universal Solidarity Fund and called upon the directors to aggressively and persuasively continue with the animation and to attract others to this work of evangelisation within the dioceses. He

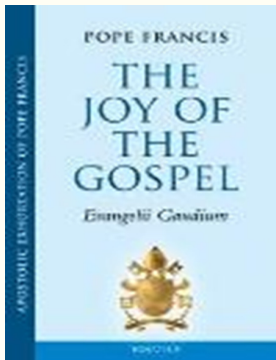
pointed out that the Church in Africa and Uganda in particular is being challenged to rise up and grow and consequently be able to support herself rather than look at herself as poor and incapable.

The National Director of PMS, Fr Philip Balikuddembe, appreciated Bishop Paul Ssemogerere for accepting to host the PMS National Council meeting. He thanked the directors for the animation work they are doing in their respective dioceses. He outlined the following as the objectives of this council meeting: to make analysis of the animation work, share success stories and hardships experienced, re-examine and find new means of evangelisation in the mission animation relevant to the pastoral needs, re-animate the animators on the Gospel values, maintain the PMS apostolic identity, and respond to *Africae Munus* (Africa's Commitment), the Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation of Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI.

Fr Ambrose Bwangatto, who is a lecturer at St Mbaaga Major Seminary in Kampala, was the chief facilitator. He guided the directors to reflect on "Spirituality, Cooperation and their Subject Position" in the work of mission animation in their dioceses. ■

POPE ISSUES FIRST APOSTOLIC EXHORTATION: **EVANGELII GAUDIUM**

(Source: www.vatican.va)



(VATICAN RADIO): On Tuesday, 26 November 2013, Pope Francis issued his first Apostolic Exhortation, *Evangelii Gaudium*, translated into English

as "The Joy of the Gospel". The 224-page document outlines the Pope's vision for a missionary Church, whose "doors should always be open". The Pope speaks on numerous themes, including evangelization, peace, homiletics, social justice, the family, respect for creation, faith and politics, ecumenism, interreligious dialogue, and the role of women and of the laity in the Church.

Highlights of the document by Vatican Radio

The Joy of the Gospel is the title Pope Francis has chosen for this first major document of his pontificate, putting down in print the joyous spirit of encounter with Christ that characterizes every public appearance he has made so far. The man who has constantly kept the media's attention with his desire to embrace and share his faith with everyone he meets, now urges us to do exactly the same. To "recover the original freshness of the Gospel", as he puts it, through a thorough renewal of the Church's structures and vision. Including what he calls "a conversion

of the papacy" to make it better able to serve the mission of evangelization in the modern world. The Church, he says, should not be afraid to re-examine "customs not directly connected to the heart of the Gospel" even if they may have deep historical roots.

In strikingly direct and personal language, the Pope appeals to all Christians to bring about a "revolution of tenderness" by opening their hearts each day to God's unfailing love and forgiveness. The great danger in today's consumer society, he says, is "the desolation and anguish" that comes from a "covetous heart, the feverish pursuit of frivolous pleasures, and a blunted conscience." Whenever our interior life becomes caught up in its own interests, he warns, "there is no longer room for others, no place for the poor." As we open our hearts, the Pope goes on, so the doors of our churches must always be open and the sacraments available to all. The Eucharist, he says pointedly, "is not a prize for the perfect, but a powerful medicine and nourishment for the weak". And he repeats his ideal of a Church that is "bruised, hurting and dirty because it has been out on the streets" rather than a Church that is caught up in a slavish preoccupation with liturgy and doctrine, procedure and prestige. "God save us," he exclaims, "from a worldly Church with superficial spiritual and pastoral trappings!" Urging a greater role for the laity, the Pope warns of "excessive clericalism" and calls for "a more incisive female presence in the Church", especially "where important decisions are made."

Looking beyond the Church, Pope

Francis denounces the current economic system as "unjust at its root", based on a tyranny of the marketplace, in which financial speculation, widespread corruption and tax evasion reign supreme. He also denounces attacks on religious freedom and new persecutions directed against Christians. Noting that secularization has eroded ethical values, producing a sense of disorientation and superficiality, the Pope highlights the importance of marriage and stable family relationships. Returning to his vision of a Church that is poor and for the poor, the Pope urges us to pay particular attention to those on the margins of society, including the homeless, the addicted, refugees, indigenous peoples, the elderly, migrants, victims of trafficking and unborn children. While it is not "progressive" to try to resolve problems by eliminating a human life, he says, it's also true that "we have done little to adequately accompany women in very difficult situations, where abortion appears as a quick solution to their profound anguish."

Finally the new papal document also focuses on the themes of promoting peace, justice and fraternity, through patient and respectful dialogue with all people of all faiths and none. Better relations with other Christians, with Jews and with Muslims are all seen as indispensable ways of promoting peace and combating fundamentalism. While urging Christians to "avoid hateful generalisations" about Islam, the Pope also calls "humbly" on Islamic countries to guarantee full religious freedom to Christians" ■



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EVERY DAY IS A DAY OF **THANKSGIVING!**

By Fr. Deogratias O. Ekisa S.T.D



LIKE in all other cultures, children in Uganda are taught to always say “thank you” for gifts or favors received. But there is one exception to this rule: you do not say “thank you” to someone who gives you medicine or medical care.

The “Miss Manners” in you must be asking: “Why not? Why break the universal rule of gratitude?”

Ugandans believe that saying “thank you” with words is only one way of showing gratitude. And indeed, for most favors received, we use words to express our gratitude. But for the more important favors, such as the restoration of health, words are just not sufficient. Such a situation calls for a more profound way of showing gratitude, that is, through action. And so, the recipient of medicine, after getting better, is expected to bring the gift of a chicken or even a goat to the giver

of the medicine. Bringing such a gift is a more fitting way to show gratitude in this particular situation. This is because thankfulness is an attitude. Gratitude should be a way of life. Every day is a day of thanksgiving.

We Christians have lots of things for which to be thankful to God, something we try to do at every Mass. At the beginning of the Eucharistic Prayer the priest invites us: “Let us give thanks to the Lord our God,” to which we reply, “it is right and just.” And then he goes on to name those things for which we owe deep gratitude to God, such as his creating us and his redeeming us. In the Preface of the Fourth Eucharistic Prayer, he says: “It is truly right to give you thanks. . . you, who alone are good, the source of life, have made all that is” And in Preface VII of Sundays in Ordinary Time he says: “It is

truly right and just . . . to give you thanks . . . almighty and eternal God. For you so loved the world that in your mercy you sent us the Redeemer”

But considering the worth of the gifts we have received, expressing gratitude through worship at Mass cannot be enough. That is why at the end of Mass, that is, after we have thanked God with our words (Eucharist means thanksgiving), the priest tells us: “Go in peace, glorying God by your life,” to which we respond: “Thanks be to God.” In others words, he tells that there is more thanking that needs to be done, thanking to be done out there in living out our daily lives as Christians; for every day is a day of thanksgiving. We thank God more profoundly and more fittingly, by living our daily lives according to the commandments, by truly loving God and loving our neighbor. ■

THE DEATH OF OF DR ABRAHAM GAMBA OF UGANDA CATHOLIC SECRETARIAT



The Late Dr. Abraham Gamba

ON 7TH NOVEMBER 2013, the staff of Uganda Catholic Secretariat was befallen with the sad news about the death of their colleague, Dr. Abraham Gamba Osiga. The late Dr. Gamba who succumbed to kidney failure at International Hospital Kampala (IHK), was born in 1949 in Paminya Village, Nebbi District.

Gamba started working at Uganda Catholic Secretariat, which is the executive arm of the Uganda Episcopal Conference, in 2011. He worked under the department of Uganda Catholic Medical Bureau (UCMB) as the HIV/AIDS Medical Coordinator. He was thus responsible for the coordination of medical aspects

of HIV/AIDS services in all Health Care Facilities (HCF) in the UCMB network providing anti-retroviral treatment.

He was laid to rest on 9th November 2013, at his ancestral home in Paminya-Olak village, Atego Sub county, Nebbi district.

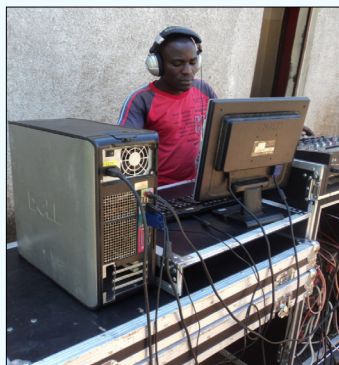


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RADIO SAPIENTIA is a Catholic radio owned by Uganda Episcopal Conference. It started broadcasting officially on the 3rd June 2001. It is located along Hanlon Road, within the compound of Uganda Catholic Secretariat adjacent to St Francis of St. Raphael Hospital, Nsambya. Radio Sapiencia broadcasts from a 5KW transmitter with its self-supporting tower.

Radio Sapiencia aims at promoting radio broadcasting in order to evangelize and educate people all over Uganda through well researched programmes. In fulfilling its mission, the radio runs programmes in accordance with the teaching of the Catholic Church and with the following main goals:

- i) To promote issues of moral, religious, economic, social, political and cultural importance.
- ii) To create an educative forum that encourages all Ugandans to exchange ideas and information about their country and international affairs.
- iii) To promote cooperation and unity among all Ugandans.
- iv) To generate income for the sustenance of the radio and for the promotion of the charitable activities of the Catholic Church in Uganda.

Radio Sapiencia's programming, which combines both spiritual and secular programmes, focuses on the human being as whole. It mainly broadcasts in two languages: Luganda and English, and is on air 24 hours a day. The advertisers, who promote and facilitate the station, are its indispensable partners.

Radio Sapiencia has some projects meant to help its listeners. They include Sapiencia Cash Flow Club (self-help), and Sap-tula, which was started to help the girl child acquire skills in tailoring through vocational education.

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KEY IDEAS AND PRINCIPAL THEMES OF **AFRICAE MUNUS** (AFRICA'S COMMITMENT)

(Source: www.news.va)



Trip of Pope Benedict XVI in Benin - © KTO

*The Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation “**Africae Munus**” of His Holiness Benedict XVI was signed on 19th November 2011 at the Basilica of the Immaculate Conception in Ouidah, Benin. The Pope Emeritus released the document following the Second Special Assembly for Africa of the Synod of Bishops, held from 4th to 25th October 2009 in Rome. The theme of the Synod was, “**The Church in Africa in Service to Reconciliation, Justice and Peace, ‘You are the salt of the earth... You are the light of the world’ (Mt. 5:13-14)**”.*

Here below are the key ideas and principal themes of Africae Munus prepared by Archbishop Nicola Eterovic, Secretary General of the Synod of Bishops.

The document has two parts. Part one (nos. 14-96) discerns the fundamental structures of the ecclesial mission on the continent, a mission which aspires to reconciliation, justice and peace, and has its origin in the person of Jesus Christ. Listening to Him, Christians are invited to let themselves be reconciled with God, becoming just in order to build a just social

order in keeping with the logic of the Beatitudes, and committing themselves to fraternal service for love of truth, which is a source of peace. Attention then turns to the paths towards reconciliation, justice and peace. These include authentic conversion, the celebration of the Sacrament of Penance, the spirituality of communion, the inculturation of the Gospel, the protection of life, migrants, displaced persons, refugees, the good governance of States, and ecumenical and inter-religious dialogue especially with traditional religions and Islam. In part two (nos. 97-177), all members of the Church are invited to contribute to communion and peace in the Church and in society. It also identifies areas for the apostolate: the Church as the presence of Christ, the world of education, health care and the communications media. The Exhortation opens a horizon of hope to Africa which, by welcoming Jesus Christ, must free itself from the forces which paralyze it.

‘Africae Munus’ is the continuation of ‘Ecclesia in Africa’, which was published after the First Special Assembly for Africa of the Synod of Bishops and gave great

impetus to the growth of the Church in Africa developing, among other things, the idea of the Church as Family of God which has been beneficial to the Universal Church. ‘Africae Munus’ aims to reinforce this ecclesial dynamism, to outline a programme for pastoral activity for the coming decades of evangelisation in Africa, underlining the need for reconciliation, justice and peace.

The Church, Sacrament of union with God and man, must be a place of reconciliation, a gift of God, in order to be an effective tool of justice and peace for the whole of society. Reconciliation comes from the mystery of the Risen Christ Who is present in His church through the Word of God and the Sacraments, especially those of Penance and the Eucharist. Through the grace of the Spirit, the Eucharist creates a new brotherhood which overcomes languages, cultures, ethnicities, divisions, tribalism, racism and ethnocentrism. In her work of evangelisation and education in the Christian faith, the Church must concentrate on lived catechesis, which leads to profound conversion and to real commitment to live the Gospel at a

personal, family and social level. The Social Doctrine of the Church is of great help in sustaining human development. 'Africae Munus' offers the Church in Africa practical guidance for pastoral activity over coming decades.

- Evangelisation ad gentes, the announcement of the Gospel to those who still do not know Jesus Christ, is still of vital importance in Africa. It is a pastoral priority which involves all African Christians.
- Ordinary evangelisation must be increasingly promoted in the various particular Churches, through commitment to fostering reconciliation, justice and peace.
- There is also an urgent need to work for the new evangelisation in Africa, especially among people who have distanced themselves from the Church or who do not behave in a Christian fashion. African Christians, and in particular the clergy and consecrated persons, are likewise called to support new evangelisation in secularised nations. This is an exchange of gifts, because African missionaries are already at work in countries which once produced missionaries who went forth to announce the Good News in Africa.

Among the practical suggestions contained in 'Africae Munus', we may note

the following:

- Saints, people reconciled with God and neighbour, are exemplary heralds of justice and apostles of peace. The Church – all of whose members are called to sanctity – must discover fresh ardour, the ardour of the many saints and martyrs, confessors and virgins of the African continent, devotion to whom should be renewed and promoted (AM 113).
- In order to find further examples of sanctity, also obtaining new intercessors in heaven, pastors of the particular Churches are encouraged 'to recognize among servants of the Gospel in Africa those who could be canonized according to the norms of the Church' (AM 114).
- The bonds of communion between the Holy Father and the bishops of Africa must be strengthened, as must the bonds among Africa bishops themselves, at the national, regional and continental level.
- It is considered important 'for the bishops to help support, effectively and affectively, the Symposium of Bishops' Conferences of Africa and Madagascar (SECAM) as a continental structure of solidarity and ecclesial communion' (AM 107).
- For a deeper appreciation of the mystery of the Eucharist and to increase Eucharistic devotion, emphasis is given to

the Synod Fathers' proposal to celebrate a continental Eucharistic Congress (AM 153).

- African countries are encouraged to 'celebrate yearly 'a day or week of reconciliation, particularly during Advent or Lent' (AM 157).
- In agreement with the Holy See, SECAM may contribute to promoting 'a continent-wide Year of Reconciliation to beg of God special forgiveness for all the evils and injuries mutually inflicted in Africa, and for the reconciliation of persons and groups who have been hurt in the Church and in the whole of society' (AM 157).

Grateful for the gift of faith in the One Triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, with renewed enthusiasm the Church in Africa reaffirms her commitment to evangelisation and human development, so that the entire continent may become a vast field of reconciliation, justice and peace. In this way, the Church contributes to forging the new Africa, which is increasingly called to become the 'spiritual lung' of humankind'. ■

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