

DOCUMENTS



The **FUTURE**  
of  
**CHRISTIANITY**

in **AFRICA**  
and  
in the **WORLD**



## **St. Charles Lwanga and Companions, Martyrs of Uganda**

King Mwanga of Uganda launched persecutions of Christians in response to their opposition. Charles Lwanga, the master of his pages, was martyred with some pages on June 3, 1886 at Namugongo. Twenty-two Catholic men, including seventeen young pages between the ages of 13 and 30, plus some Protestants, were martyred by King Mwanga in 1885-1887. Their heroic courage rivalled that of the early martyrs.

Beatified in 1920; canonized by Pope Paul VI in 1964; declared the protomartyrs of Black Africa. Patronage: African Catholic Youth Action, Catholic youth, converts, torture victims.

Prayer

*Father,*

*You have made the blood of the martyrs the seed of Christians.*

*May the witness of Saint Charles and his companions  
and their loyalty to Christ in the face of torture inspire  
countless men and women to live the Christian faith.*

"The Gospel cannot be deeply imprinted on the talents, life, and work of any people without the active presence of lay men" (*Ad Gentes*, No. 27). The development of zealous lay people, therefore, especially of the laity of Catholic Action, must be the constant concern of priests and religious, in close collaboration with the Hierarchy. Here, Africa can find and demonstrate new and original forms of lay organization and lay expression. The Martyrs of Uganda were laymen, who did not hesitate to shed their blood for the Faith. To the lay men and women of today, they make a most compelling appeal, to follow in their footsteps through every-day tasks, striving for that holiness of life which brings a rich harvest of souls".

ADDRESS of PAUL VI TO THE MEMBERS OF CATHOLIC ACTION  
AND OTHER CATHOLIC ASSOCIATIONS OF UGANDA Friday, 1 August 1969.

**Photos:**

**Shrine of Uganda Martyrs - Namugongo**  
**Colline Hotel Mukono - Lugazi Diocese**

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# PRESENTATION

IFCA's work in Africa continues. The third step at continental level definitely indicates a sign of hope both for those who participated in the meeting, as well as for those who, through this report, share with us this fruitful experience, which was held in Namugongo. Together with the lay martyrs from Uganda, we look forward towards the forthcoming Assembly of the African Synod of Bishops.

In his message for the occasion, the Holy Father reminded us of the three key words - contemplation, communion and mission - which John Paul II entrusted to CA at Loreto in 2004. He also referred to the "programme" which Paul VI presented to CA laypeople, precisely in Namugongo in 1969 and which is still relevant today. "First of all, have a great love for Jesus Christ, try to know Him better and to be always united with Him, have a great faith and firm trust in Him. Second, be faithful to the Church, pray with it, love it, make it know, and be always ready as the martyrs did, to offer a sincere testimony in its favour. Third, be strong and brave, be glad, be always happy and joyful".

We are pleased to note that this experience was a fruitful event in the conciliar Church in Africa. It served both as a contribution towards the coming synodal assembly as well as a help to laypeople to discover and assume their vocation as laypeople ready to give their share in the building of the Church and to be witnesses of the Risen Christ in African society and in the world.

H.E. Msgr. Lambiasi clarified that Catholic Action is a gift from the Holy Spirit to the Church. Its mission is to evangelize and as such to help laypeople discover their vocation and to take it seriously. Together they can thus live their vocation in all its fullness, in the local Church, in society, in their association and in the everyday circumstances where they are called to live, collaborating with their Pastors, just as Aquila and Priscilla collaborated with Paul the Apostle.

The lectures by the speakers, the discussions, the Eucharistic celebrations as well as the final conclusions, were clear evidence of the active participation of laypeople and priests with their Pastors. A special word of thanks goes to H.E. Msgr. Matthias Ssekamanya who has promoted, supported and

animated this meeting in all its different stages. We would also like to thank all the members of the national and diocesan Commission for the Laity, who, in a fraternal way, have welcomed this new being?? which will eventually bear fruit.

IFCA is committed to intensify its work in Africa and is thankful to CA leaders and priest assistants who are already working in CA and are members of IFCA. In collaboration with IFCA Secretariat, these are working to promote and support CA and to encourage twinnings with other diocesan CA groups in other continents and in other dioceses in Africa. This collaboration will help to render the announcement of the Gospel more fruitful and will help in the promotion of reconciliation, justice and peace, in the love of Christ and our fellow men.

Africa is a continent where contradictions are more evident. These are a great challenge for us lay CA members in Africa and in all the continents because of the fact that we are called to be “the light of the world and the salt of the earth”. As CA and as IFCA, through this continental meeting in Uganda, we realize that we can grow together through that formation which is the best way to lay the foundation for combined projects aimed at development and peace.

In his message for the World Day of Peace 2007, the Holy Father says: «At the origin of many tensions that threaten peace are surely the *many unjust inequalities* still tragically present in our world. Particularly insidious among these are, on the one hand, *inequality in access to essential goods* like food, water, shelter, health; on the other hand, there are *persistent inequalities between men and women in the exercise of basic human rights*. A fundamental element of building peace is the recognition of the *essential equality of human persons* springing from their common transcendental dignity. Equality on this level is a good belonging to all, inscribed in that natural “grammar” which is deducible from the divine plan of creation; it is a good that cannot be ignored or scorned without causing serious repercussions which put peace at risk. The extremely grave deprivation afflicting many peoples, *especially in Africa*, lies at the root of violent reactions and thus inflicts a terrible wound on peace».

IFCA Secretariat

# THE HOLY FATHER'S MESSAGE TO CATHOLIC ACTION IN AFRICA

To H.E. Msgr. Francesco Lambiasi  
General Assistant of the Italian Catholic Action  
IFCA Ecclesiastical Assistant  
Via della Conciliazione, 1  
00193 ROME

N. 39.305

Most Reverend Excellency,

on the occasion of the III African Continental Meeting of the International Forum of Catholic Action, that will be held in Lugazi, Uganda, I am glad to send to all the promoters and participants the blessing greeting of His Holiness Benedict XVI.

The Holy Father wishes to express His approval for the good initiative and the interesting theme of the Congress: "*The future of Christianity in Africa and in the world*". As main biblical reference you have appropriately chosen the same word of the Lord assumed by *Lineamenta* for the II Special Assembly of the Bishop Synod for Africa: "*You are the salt of the earth... You are the light of the world*" (Mt 5,13-14). So this meeting is wisely on the path of the Church in the African continent, being a meaningful moment towards the important synodal meeting.

The climax of the Congress will be the Eucharistic Celebration in the Ugandan Sanctuary of the Martyrs at Namugongo. To celebrate Saint Carlo Lwanga and his saints Companions means to confirm the choice to walk on the footpaths of these Christian lay people - youth and adolescents - who witnessed their faith till the bloodshed for the Gospel. For them Jesus Christ was not the symbol of a vague abstract value, nor simply a great character of the past, but a Person alive and concrete, an absolutely singular Person, who makes each baptised state together with the apostle Paul: "*He loved me and He offered Himself for me*" (Ga 2,20). To believe means, in fact, to belong to the Lord, be conquered by His love, commit ourselves to be with Him and for Him, light and salt of the Earth,

yeast of the society. This is how lay Christians can offer their specific contribution to build the society of love.

In a special way the members of Catholic Action know how they are committed to put into practice the triple mandate - contemplation, communion, and mission - that the venerable Pope John Paul II entrusted them, on the occasion of the great pilgrimage to Loreto, on September 5<sup>th</sup> 2004. Since this message was addressed to the whole Association, it represents a sort of “spiritual testament” for the members of Catholic Action. On the same line, the Holy Father Benedict XVI encourages to show by a life of faith and of praise to God that “all Christians are called at the mystical union” with Christ (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, n. 2014) to cultivate “a spirituality of communion” living humbly and grateful in the Holy Church, in syntony with the Pastors and with all the people of God, to witness the beauty of a living faith, that transforms the daily life and offers itself in an attractive way to all those who demand the reason of hope, that lives in us believers (cfr *IPt* 3,15).

To all those who will take part to this meeting, the Holy Father reminds the programme that the Servant of God, Paul VI, indicated during His memorable apostolic visit in Uganda, in the Sanctuary of Namugongo, when he said: “First of all, have a great love for Jesus Christ, try to know Him better, remain united to Him, have a great faith and a firm trust in Him. Second, be faithful to the Church, pray with it, love it, make it know, and be always ready as the martyrs did, to offer a sincere testimony in its favour. Third, be strong and brave, be glad, be always happy and joyful” (cfr *Insegnamenti di Paolo VI*, VII [1969] 589).

Assuring His prayers so that Catholic Action may grow and spread in the Ecclesial communities of Africa, also thanks to this III African Continental Meeting, the Holy Father gives your Excellency and all the participants His special Apostolic Blessing. I also send you my warm wish for a fruitful work and I take the opportunity of this circumstance to confirm myself.

Your most devoted in the Lord,

*Angelo Card. Sodano*  
Secretary of State

From the Vatican, 31<sup>st</sup> July 2006



# IFCA'S MESSAGE TO THE HOLY FATHER

Holy Father,

Gathered in Mukono, in Lugazi Diocese, from 5<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> August 2006, the representatives of Catholic Action from Burundi, Rwanda, Tanzania, Zambia, Rumania, Italy as well as many dioceses from Uganda, together with their Bishops, express their deep and filial gratitude for the message received on the occasion of the III IFCA African Continental Meeting.

Your words, Holiness, are encouraging for us for the future of CA in Africa. They are a demanding call to live as a whole our vocation as lay people both in Africa and in the world in order to assume our responsibilities in the Church "family of God" as well as in the society in our countries, to contribute to the preparation of the II Special Assembly of the Synod of the Bishops for Africa.

We have deepened the theme of the future of Christianity in Africa enlightened by the word of God which will be the theme of the next Synodal Assembly: "*You are the salt of the earth, you are the light of the world*". We have examined the text of the *Lineamenta* which stresses the importance of the vocation of the laity and of their formation - from inside the family - for a coherent and brave witness of faith, at the service of reconciliation, justice and peace in our countries and in all the continent.

We assure You our commitment at the school of Aquilas and Prisca and of so many lay people who in the history of the Church as well as today cooperate closely with the apostles and their successors and are witnesses of God's charity till the gift of their life.

The example of St. Charles Lwanga and his companions lay martyrs is extremely updated for the laity of CA in Africa and in the world.

Together with the Nuncio, the Bishops and the people of God, we have prayed for Your Holiness and for all the Church during the Eucharistic Celebration at Namugongo Sanctuary.

We express You our affection and faithfulness, we implore Your blessing upon our CA associations, upon our families and upon the whole African continent.

8<sup>th</sup> August 2006

**5<sup>th</sup> August 2006**

Eucharistic Celebration

## HOMILY

**Whoever lives the new commandment of love  
becomes *salt for the earth and light for the world***

H.E. Msgr. Matthias Ssekamanya  
Bishop of Lugazi Diocese

**O**ur Saviour Jesus Christ gave us the new commandment to love God above all and to love one another. Any Christian who so lives becomes *salt for the earth and light for the world*.

We are here for this International Forum for Catholic Action to reflect upon the role of the laity in the Church in Africa. I welcome you all to this Conference.

Jesus Christ teaches to love God and our neighbour and if we do so effectively, it becomes as if we season the life for one another in such a way that it becomes worthy living.

Active Laity must be motivated by Christian love which saves and establishes solidarity among the believers.

Indeed I can say like St. Augustine: What I am for you terrifies me but what I am with you consoles me. For you, I am a bishop but with you laity I am a Christian (LG 32).

Vatican II teaches that the lay apostolate is a participation in the saving mission of the Church itself. I would like to remind you, dear people of God that the laity are called in a special way to make the church present and operative in those places and circumstances where only through them can she become the salt of the earth (LG 34).

The Lord who loves all to be saved wishes to spread his kingdom by means of the laity also, a kingdom of truth and life, a kingdom of holi-

ness and grace, a kingdom of justice, love and peace (*LG* 36).

Indeed as Jesus is the vine, the success of the lay apostolate depends upon the laity's living in union with Christ. The Lord teaches: "He who abides in me and I in him, he bears much fruits, for without me you can do nothing" (*Jn* 15:5). He is the vine we are the branches.

Motivated by Christian love, we should work for peace, and for Pope Paul VI and Pope John Paul II peace is development (cfr Paul VI *Populorum Progressio* 1967, n. 87).

During the first African Synod, the Fathers of the Church stated that the Church must continue to exercise her prophetic role and be the voice of the voiceless and promoters of Christian family life, solidarity in Christian families (*Ecclesia in Africa* n. 70). They then called upon the laity to be the salt of the earth through cooperation with fellow believers in building up the nations in the light of Gospel teaching (*Ecclesia in Africa* III).

Now it is twelve years since the first special Assembly for Africa of the Synod of Bishops 10<sup>th</sup> April-8<sup>th</sup> May 1994.

When we look back, we are happy to see that we feel to be members of the same family of God where each one of us is expected to play an effective role in building up the Church in Africa. It is indeed good news to know that the Church is constantly growing:

*148,817,000 faithful*

*630 Bishops*

*31,259 priests of whom 20,358 are deacons.*

A second synod was declared by the late Pope John Paul II on 13<sup>th</sup> November 2004 and confirmed by Pope Benedict XVI on June 22<sup>nd</sup> 2005. The *Lineamenta* for the second synod on Africa is already out and in it there are the following questions which are challenges to the Church in Africa:

1. What has the synodal teaching of *Ecclesia in Africa* achieved or accomplished?
2. What has the Church in Africa done since then?
3. What remains to be done, mainly by the laity?

Can we say that the Church in Africa is growing in its expressed aspiration to live as members of the same family of God?

Does the Church in Africa experience true peace, love and solidarity?

On the other hand, in Africa we hear outcries of war, poverty, numberless refugees moving from country to country, poor health services, and insufficient means of education.

Can we say that the Church in Africa motivated by Christian love is playing effectively its role as salt of the earth and light to the world?

Indeed there is an urgent call to work for peace and development, to promote human dignity. The laity must be empowered to involve themselves on social-economic, political and cultural aspects of life, being guided by the teaching of the Gospel.

Experiences show retrogression after civil independence in several African states. Why? There are persistent social tensions in various parts of Africa, continuous violations of fundamental human rights. At times peace is confused with unanimity or tranquility imposed by force or keeping poverty in the hands of a single group, to the detriment of people.

The International Arms Trade continues to keep Africa in a perpetual state of wars.

There is a need to join hands to build a Christian Africa, enlighten by the Gospel.

We must establish a common struggle to bring about peace, democracy and respect of basic human rights.

We need to make a common commitment to bring about **reconciliation** in order to experience justice and peace.

### **Integrity of life**

Watch not to be manipulated by modern mass media - TV, radio, pornographic publications, political views contrary to the teaching of the Gospel.

The Gospel is to become the leaven of the African Christians to bring about unity and peace. Work together to alleviate poverty, corruption, injustice and violence. Join hands to heal the wounds, reconcile where it may be needed.

## **Deepen the social teachings of the Church**

They clarify the message of the Gospel and help to promote human development.

Man is the steward of creation. He must be helped to know the necessity of working in order to develop creation and enjoy the fruits of one's labour. But man does not work in isolation. A sense of solidarity in order to promote common good is needed.

At the same time, we should watch and control the possible excessive forms of centralization, bureaucracy.

We need the Church as a family of God, where there are diversity of talents, charisms, ministries, duties and services. But all must be geared to fulfill shared duties and responsibilities.

Each Christian in his own way contributes to the building up of the Body of Christ.

## **The call of the Laity**

Mutual respect and acceptance, incarnate Christian teaching in the African cultural values. To realize the link between poverty and violence and the need for good administration of African resources. Then the laity as a team should work to bring about Reconciliation which may encourage all to promote justice and peace.

The laity are being called upon to effectively contribute to the building up of the Church which harmoniously lives as a family of God. In a dynamic Church, there must be room to develop the diversity of talents of its members: charisms, different ministries, duties and services.

Each lay person is expected to contribute to the growth and healthy daily life of the Church. The Gospel must be incarnated in the African culture. The laity must be helped to see the link between poverty and violence and the need for good social-economic cultural and political administration of the African resources, enlightened by the Gospel teaching.

Then the laity shall be *salt of the earth and light in the world*, constantly being motivated by the love of Christ the true Vine and by the love of one another for all are branches being fed from the same Vine.

# WELCOMING ADDRESS TO IFCA DELEGATES

*Mr Gideon Obbo, UNCCLA President*

Rt. Hon Henry Muganza Kajura 2<sup>nd</sup> Deputy Prime Minister, and Chief Guest  
Rt. Rev. Bishop Matthias Ssekamanya, Chairman Uganda Episcopal  
Conference, and Bishop Ordinary of Lugazi Diocese and our Host  
Bishop Chairman IFCA, my Lord Bishops present  
IFCA Delegates and distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen

**M**y dear sisters and brothers in Christ, all protocol observed, we warmly greet and welcome you to Uganda, Lugazi Diocese and to this conference in particular.

In a special way, I welcome our brothers and sisters from Rome, Rwanda, Burundi, Rumania, Congo, and Ethiopia and so on. I would like also to warmly welcome my brothers and sisters from the various dioceses. With one voice let us thank and glorify God for the gifts of this opportunity to hold this conference here in Uganda. Let us continue to bless and glorify His Holy Name.

I, as the National “Ssabakristu” (President of the laity), I stand here on behalf of the lay faithful of this nation to urge you to feel at home because you are among your brothers and sisters in Christ. I call upon you to freely, and fully participate in this memorable conference.

Dear guest of Honour, and fellow delegates, over the last 40 years or so, there has been a growing laxity in the Catholic teaching and tradition among our Catholic laity. Even the value of participation and decision making by the laity has been generally on the declining trend.

There has also been instances of lack of courage to publicly affirm Catholic faith and teaching among the lay leaders especially in public places. Coupled with this dear guest of honour and delegates, Uganda for many decades has passed through more than a fair share of turmoil. We have had wars, we have had cults, with devastating results, we have had epidemics such as HIV/AIDS, Malaria, Cholera, Ebola, all of which have left very deep scars on our people. All these events have had negative impact on our laity.

We have therefore warmly received and welcomed this Conference to Uganda to enable us to share with you experiences and together discuss a way forward for evangelization.

IFCA, in our understanding, is an Association of Catholic Lay Faithful, together with their clergy whose main purpose is to put into action the Catholic faith, teaching, and doctrine. I am convinced that our friends from IFCA Secretariat will give an in-depth definition and objectives of IFCA.

However, allow me to point out that Catholic Action was here in Uganda as early as the 1930's, and gained vibrancy in the 1950s when the Holy See hosted the first Leaders Meeting for the Apostolate of the Laity in Africa in Kisubi Seminary 1953. His Holiness Pope Pius XII in 1950, made a world wide appeal to establish Catholic Action Lay Movements and organizations, and in the following year (1951) he gave a major address, which was theological in character, on the urgent need of the *participation of the Laity in the Apostolate of the Church*. His Holiness further, declared that all faithful, without exception are members of the Mystical Body of Christ. Along this line, the Pope observed that "Priests are perennially very few compared with the needs of the apostolate. They cannot carry out on their own the apostolate of the Church in all places or environments". Teaching further, he noted that the Laity are not minors in the Church but collaborators with priests in the evangelization in areas such as Christian families, Christian Child education, Culture, Schools etc. The Pope called upon the laity to rise and fight what he called "an obnoxious tendency which imprisoned the influence of the Gospel and the Church within the confines of the Sanctuary and sacristy or to the purely religious sphere..."

You will agree with me that Catholic Action/IFCA such as Guilds, Movements, and Associations are some of the direct response to this call of the Pope. In order to fulfill the Pope's call - which is still relevant up to today - in this conference and in our respective countries we need to strategize and find ways and means of actualizing this noble call of the Pope. We need to establish and join Catholic Action Lay Movements, Organizations, and Guilds, as more ways towards achieving the Pope's message.

Let me attempt to suggest some of the objectives of this Conference. I know however that some delegates may have more to say about what I want to suggest:

1. Re-awaken the laity for active participation both in the Church and in society.

2. Mobilize all the lay faithful for a deeper evangelization.
3. Empower the laity to render the Church present in their places of work.
4. Network worldwide with the already active dioceses and countries after this conference.

These are some of our expectations from this Conference and again I know that each delegate has his/her expectations, which I urge you to discuss freely and share with others during the Conference.

1. An action plan for involving the lay faithful more in the evangelization.
2. Rejuvenation of Catholic Action in all the dioceses of Uganda, so that whole Uganda becomes a full member of IFCA.

Knowing that organizing this conference has taken a lot of effort, time and resources, allow me to express our sincere feeling of gratitude to the following:

1. We thank our guest of honour Rt. Hon. Henry Muganwa Kajura for accepting to come and be with us here today, welcome and thank you Sir.
2. We thank, Rt. Rev. Bishop Matthias Ssekamanya the main celebrant today, for the wonderful homily. In the same way, I want to thank the choir for the wonderful liturgy.
3. We thank IFCA Secretariat in Rome for their great contribution and support to the local organizing committee of this conference.
4. We thank Rev. Fr. Salvatore, Africa Coordinator of IFCA. He made several journeys to Uganda and written volumes of letters to us when organizing this conference.
5. We thank our Bishop Chairman of Uganda Episcopal Conference and Ordinary of Lugazi, Rt. Rev. Bishop Ssekamanya who is also in his individual capacity and whose diocese is IFCA member.
6. We thank Rt. Rev. Bishop Christopher Kakooza, who has been very instrumental in the preparations of this conference. We enjoyed meeting at your residence.
7. We thank all of you delegates for coming to attend the conference.
8. We thank the Local Organizing Committee, and indeed the management and staff of Colline Hotel for hosting us here, just one year after hosting yet, another important Catholic Church event AMECEA.
9. We know that we cannot mention each one of you who have participated in organizing this conference, but sincerely pray that the Holy Spirit renew each one of us through our Uganda Martyrs.

I wish you fruitful and successful deliberations.



# CATHOLIC ACTION, A GIFT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT TO THE CHURCH

*H.E. Msgr. Francesco Lambiasi*  
*General Assistant of the Italian Catholic Action*  
*IFCA Ecclesiastical Assistant*

0. Introduction
  1. The history of Christianity is at its very beginning...
  2. Our times are just the right time for evangelization
  3. CA is an essential and irreplaceable charism
    1. CA's "charismatic" nature
    2. The characteristics of CA's charism. CA is:
      - a. missionary
      - b. diocesan
      - c. unitarian
      - d. lay
    3. The indispensable element: formation
- Conclusion: the service given by IFCA

## **Introduction**

I will be dividing my intervention into three sections. I will put forward a statement and expand it in more details. I will be speaking at length on the last part as this concerns CA directly and thus is of greater interest to us.

1. The history of Christianity is at its very beginning
2. Our times are just the right time for evangelization
3. CA is an essential and irreplaceable charism

As these statements are not so obvious and as such not very evident, I will try every so often to prove their plausibility.

Before starting, I must make it clear that coming from Western Europe, I cannot treat my subject but from this local cultural and pastoral context. However, I maintain that, in spite of the differences and if there are no better suggestions, my considerations should apply even to the African context which you represent. If not, these could at least instigate a debate during which you will be able to give your views.

Right from the beginning of my intervention, as IFCA's Assistant, together with you, I would like to thank the Lord for giving us this opportunity. I am happy to be able to meet each and every one of you, particularly the Church in Lugazi and in Uganda.

## **1. The history of Christianity is at its very beginning**

Two thousand years of history seem such a long time, but are they really? Already in the encyclical *Redemptoris Missio*, the Pope dared to affirm that "after two thousand years of evangelization there is still a lot to be done" (*RM* 1). This was repeated in *Novo Millennium Ineunte* which says that "the missionary mandate accompanies us into the Third Millennium and urges us to share the enthusiasm of the first Christians... our steps must quicken as we travel the highways of the world" (*NMI* 58).

We know that at the beginning of the III Millennium the pace at which the faithful acted did not show any signs of fatigue and they were constantly on the move. In fact, what are two thousand years in relation to the billions and millions of years which passed from the beginning of the earth and of the whole universe?

But there is another more profound motive which we should reflect upon - we, who belong to this generation - are not at the end but at the beginning of Christianity and this is due to the grace of the Holy Spirit: in fact on the day of Pentecost Christianity was born young and from that day it was destined to remain always young. Pentecost is not an intermittent current: it is an ongoing or rather an ongoing motivation. Thus, thanks to the Spirit of the Risen Christ, Christianity is always restarting and the Church is always renewing itself not only from time to time but from day to day. The *memoria Iesu* which the Lord has commanded us to celebrate in the Holy Mass is not a nostalgic sentimental occasion or a purely commemoration. It is neither hypothetical archeology.

But there is a third reason which convinces us that we are not only lucky spectators but actors in the ever new beginning of Christianity. Blessed John XXIII used to refer to our times as "a new spring".

This is rather dramatic: during the past century, the Church has witnessed the martyrdom of an endless number of its sons and daughters. Never like the '900 have there been so many persecutions and so many martyrs. It seems that there were more martyrs during the XX century than in all the 19 preceding centuries! These innumerable martyrs do not only

show the ferocity of totalitarian and oppressive regimes but show, above all, the heroic faithfulness of Christians who have preferred to die rather than renounce their faith. This fidelity is the clearest evidence of the fruitfulness and vitality of Christianity. According to the famous statement made by Tertulliano: “The blood of the martyrs is the seed of Christianity”.

## **2. Our times are just the right time for evangelization**

Let us keep the year 2000 as our point of reference. During the preparations for the Great Jubilee John Paul II, in *Tertio Millennio Adveniente (TMA)*, gave us some reflections on evangelization.

“Therefore, ever since the apostolic age, *the Church's mission* has continued without interruption within the whole human family. The first evangelization took place above all in the region of the Mediterranean. In the course of the first millennium, missions setting out from Rome and Constantinople brought Christianity to *the whole continent of Europe*. At the same time they made their way to the heart of *Asia*, as far as India and China. The end of the fifteenth century marked both the discovery of *America* and the beginning of the evangelization of that great continent, North and South. Simultaneously, while the sub-Saharan coasts of Africa welcomed the light of Christ, Saint Francis Xavier, Patron of the Missions, reached Japan. At the end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth, a layman, Andrew Kim, brought Christianity to Korea. In the same period the proclamation of the Gospel reached Indochina, as well as *Australia and the Islands of the Pacific*. The nineteenth century witnessed vast missionary activity among the *peoples of Africa*. All these efforts bore fruit which has lasted up to the present day” (*TMA* 57).

In our times we have experienced an important event in history, namely the II Vatican Council, the “sure compass” for the III Millennium, as Benedict XVI reminded us in His first message of the 20<sup>th</sup> April 2005.

“With the Great Jubilee, the Church has entered the new Millennium with the Gospel, which the II Vatican Council has made relevant to today’s world, in hand. Very rightly, John Paul II referred to the Council as the ‘compass’ which can orientate us in the vast ocean of the III Millennium (cfr Apostolic Letter *Novo Millennio Ineunte*, 57-58). Even in his spiritual will he stated: ‘I am convinced that even in the distant future young generations will still benefit from the wealth which this XX century Council has lavished on us’ (17<sup>th</sup> March 2000). Therefore, as I

am about to take over the service as Peter's Successor, I would like to affirm strongly that my wish is to carry on with the realization of the II Vatican Council. I would like to follow in the footsteps of my Predecessors and in continued fidelity to the two thousand year old tradition of the Church. Precisely this year, we are celebrating the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary from the closing of the Conciliar sessions (8<sup>th</sup> December 1965). The Conciliar Documents have not become outdated with the passing of time; their teachings are still relevant to the actual daily situations within the Church and to those of the present globalized world".

If we look at the statistics, provided in October 2005, by the Agency FIDES we notice that the Church is proclaiming and carrying out its mission in all the continents.

From the Church's Statistical Year Book it transpires that on the 31<sup>st</sup> December 2003, the world population was 6,301,377,000. This showed an increase of 79,483,000 over the preceding year. The global increase was broken down per continent: Africa +20,042,000; America +8,424,000; Asia + 45,205,000; Europe +4,954,000; Oceania +858,000.

On this same date, the number of Catholics was 1,085,557,000 which showed an increase of 15,242,000 over the preceding year. Broken down by continent, this was: Africa +6,231,000; America +6,678,000; Asia +2,434,000; Oceania +113,000. The only decrease, even this year, was registered in Europe with -214,000.

The percentage of Catholics has increased globally from 0,3% up to 17,23%. Broken down by continent, the following variations were registered: an increase in Africa +0,34; America +0,17; Asia +0,03; a decrease in Europe -0,31 and Oceania -0,37.

The reference to the Council and to the statistical data are two facts which invite us, or rather call for our commitment towards evangelization in the diverse contexts wherein we live. We know that Europe offers many *areopaghi* wherein we can proclaim the Gospel. The long debate on modernity and its outcome is so vast and complex that it is difficult to evaluate it correctly. The term postmodern reveals its ambiguity. The idea of its success contrasted strongly with the impression that it was too accelerated and very exasperating. What we actually need is a deep reflection which focuses on the contemporary aspects which are the most important for our discussion upon man's future.

Earlier on I referred to the course taken by modernity when it tried to study how science and politics help to bring about a rational and perfect

society. At the end of the 60s, the myth of the future and of progress appeared. At that time, work was the essential element for self-realization. Nietzsche said: "Great revolutions advance at a bird's pace". Gradually, in the course of the 70s, important values like work, progress and reason no longer interested young people. These were replaced by edonism, which focused on body worship and attention to sex. The sliding of modern values was slow but could not be stopped. Today the great idea of progress has been replaced by instant gratification, pleasure is given more importance than work and emotions have replaced reason. The concept of eternity has been lost and life has been lengthened. If it is true that every period has a myth, today the myth is not Prometheus but Narcissus, Pinocchio, the eternal boy, the nomad or the vagabond.

Faced with this situation, the answer of the Church is the new evangelization, as the Pope has been saying since 1979 in Puebla and later in Europe, Africa, in the global world as and in each local reality: by treading "the way" of the man of our times, man who is the "way of the Church", as John Paul II said in his first encyclical *Redemptor Hominis*, we meet God in our neighbour. In *Deus Caritas Est* Benedict XVI also speaks about our meeting God in our neighbour:

"Only my readiness to encounter my neighbour and to show him love makes me sensitive to God as well. Only if I serve my neighbour can my eyes be opened to what God does for me and how much he loves me. The saints - consider the example of Blessed Teresa of Calcutta - constantly renewed their capacity for love of neighbour from their encounter with the Eucharistic Lord, and conversely this encounter acquired its realism and depth in their service to others. Love of God and love of neighbour are thus inseparable, they form a single commandment. But both live from the love of God who has loved us first. No longer is it a question, then, of a 'commandment' imposed from without and calling for the impossible, but rather of a freely-bestowed experience of love from within, a love which by its very nature must then be shared with others. Love grows through love. Love is 'divine' because it comes from God and unites us to God; through this unifying process it makes us a 'we' which transcends our divisions and makes us one, until in the end God is 'all in all' (*1 Co 15:28*)" (*DC 18*).

The first and most important act of charity, which the world needs from the Church today, is to discover the way of love of the Gospel, the good news that God is love. This is the Gospel of love: *it is not we who have loved God first... it is He who loved us first (1Jn 4.10.19)*.

It is not a question of stating what the world is but finding out who God is and what the world is in the light of God.

There might be the risk of reducing the Gospel simply into a doctrine, trying to teach it before announcing it through our witness or changing it into a series of rules detached from real life. We should try to go back to that which is fundamental that is the story of Jesus Christ's human life, as a happy life: happy because it was blessed and because he achieved his purpose. But how can we propose to live a life following Christ's example if we are not living witnesses of sanctity?

### **3. CA is an indispensable and irreplaceable charism**

#### *3.1 - CA's charismatic nature/identity*

Referring to CA as a charism is not an exaggeration. The Pope has referred to it as a charism in his message to the extraordinary Assembly of the ICA on the 8<sup>th</sup> September 2003. "Your long history originated from a charism, that is, from a special gift of the Spirit of the Risen Christ. He never let his Church lack the talents and resources of grace which the faithful need in order to be able to serve the cause of the Gospel. Dear friends, reflect with humble pride and deep joy, upon the charism of Catholic Action!".

John Paul II had already used the term "gift of the Spirit" on another occasion when he referred to the letter from the Italian Episcopal Conference to the ICA, which says: "CA is not an ecclesial association among the others but it is a *gift of God* and is a source for the strengthening of ecclesial communion".

It is CA's *history, identity* and the *mission* entrusted to it which make CA a charism.

In recent centuries the story started with an extraordinary adventure, inspired by the Spirit and initiated by Mario Fani and Giovanni Acquaderni more than 130 years ago. "It is such a joy to note that in different periods in history, as far back as the time of the first Christian community, lay people like Aquila and Priscilla, like so many other collaborators of the apostles, have, as living stones, contributed to the building of the Church and towards its mission".

CA's history is also charismatic because it is a history of sanctity. This is evident from the lives of so many CA saints and blessed such as the

Mexican saints, Saint Gianna Beretta Molla, blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati, the couple Luigi and Maria Beltrame Quattrocchi, the Mexican blessed Anacleto - the Mexican Gandhi - and as the Pope affirms, “of so many others who have led, extraordinary normal lives wherein they showed a heroic faithfulness to their baptismal vows”.

The authenticity of this charism was confirmed by the Hierarchy, through the explicit recognition which we find in the Second Vatican Council: *LG* 33, *AdG* 15, *ChD* 17. The Italian Episcopal Conference recognized CA as “a specifically chosen association, promoted by the ecclesial authority to be more closely involved in its apostolic mission” (Italian Episcopal Conference’s *Letter*, 22<sup>nd</sup> May 1981, 25).

### *3.2 - The characteristics of CA’s charism*

CA’s charismatic nature has been acknowledged not only because of its history but also because of its still today active and actual identity.

It is a charism which has been fully described in the Conciliar Decree on the apostolate of the laity, *Apostolicam Actuositatem*. This Decree speaks about the “four characteristics” which define CA: its ecclesial, lay and organic nature and its close collaboration with the Hierarchy (*AA* n. 20) and in *Lumen Gentium* 33 where CA is compared with the lay collaborators of the Apostle Paul. Lately we have the important teachings of Paul VI and John Paul II. John Paul II spoke about CA’s identity in his address on the occasion of ICA extraordinary Assembly of 8<sup>th</sup> September 2003.

a. The first characteristic is its missionary nature: “You are lay Christians experts in the wonderful adventure of making the Gospel and life converge, showing how well ‘the good news’ respond to the searching questions which arise in each person’s hearts and is the clearest and truest light that can guide society in the building of the ‘civilization of love’”.

Therefore CA is there to evangelize. In this sense, CA is, from its nature, extrovert: it was born to move on, lives to evangelize and if it stops doing this, it runs the risk of dying. So CA cannot limit itself only to safeguard faith or to defend it but rather to defend faith by spreading it.

Thus CA cannot depend only on those who are responsible for the formation of others and who have been prepared to help members mature in their faith but it should also prepare evangelizers, capable of animating or re-animating faith in those who have abandoned it.

### *b. Its diocesan nature*

“As lay people you have chosen to live for the Church and for its global mission, ‘dedicated, with a direct and organic connection to the diocesan community’, so as to make of each Christian community a family that cares for all its children” (John Paul II, 8<sup>th</sup> September 2003).

Again, it is its ecclesial nature which determines CA’s diocesan profile and which distinguishes it from the other movements. These too, being ecclesial, are part of the diocese. But it is typical of CA to live for the diocese with a direct and organic link which results from its dedication to the particular Church.

John Paul II told the Assistants of the ICA “not to be afraid to welcome CA’s associative experience in the parishes. In CA they can find, not only a valid and motivated support, but also a spiritual companionship and friendship together with a wealth which results from the sharing of the spiritual gifts of each member of the community” (19<sup>th</sup> February 2003).

### *c. Its unitary nature*

“As lay people you have chosen to follow in the form of an associative, the Gospel’s ideal of sanctity in the particular Church, so as to cooperate jointly as ‘an organic body’ in the evangelizing mission of every ecclesial community” (John Paul II, 8<sup>th</sup> September 2003).

Just as a tree is not a collection of branches, so CA is not a collection of sectors and movements: its unitary nature is a qualifying distinction. It means that fragmentation in the associative life and excessive rigidity in distinguishing between sectors and movements should be overcome. CA should be conscious of this unity and of the necessity to make this more evident... It is the approach which the new CA has adopted.

It also means an “exercise” in fostering unity in the sense that, in the life of the association and of the Christian community, we should look for that which unites us, for that which helps us grow, for that which is positive and which favours a culture of communion and is essential for the ecclesial and social community.

### *d. The fourth characteristic which distinguishes CA is its lay nature*

John Paul II, first and foremost, made it a point to explain that CA’s ecclesial and lay nature are not a contradiction. “The special link between CA and



pastors respects and promotes the constitutional lay character of CA members” and it clarifies the true meaning of CA’s lay nature. It actually means ‘looking at the world through God’s eyes’” (7). Only in this way can CA lay members be immersed in the world without being submerged by the world! It is only through faith that the Church can succeed not to estrange itself from everyday and family problems, from problems related to peace and justice, so that it may be able to contribute towards the building of a civilization of love in an effective way.

Here I would like to raise two points: one concerns the *democratic choice* and the other the so-called *religious choice*.

### *The democratic choice*

As an association, CA is guided by statutory norms and by regulations which regulate its functioning, its choices and its organisms and elections. This is a very mature and responsible choice. It shows and ensures a true and profound communion. In fact, communion and democracy are like the body and the soul: just as a soul cannot live without a body and viceversa, so a democracy without communion becomes a structure without a soul, it becomes a dead body, a corpse.

So it is important not to regard communion and democracy as being incompatible. All members should be prepared and helped to be united first and foremost in that which is essential and to be able to come to an agreement in matters which are negotiable (cfr *NMI* 45).

### *The religious choice*

CA should be at the service of man. It should give its service in the world without focusing on any specific field. Thus, in an evangelic way, it shows sympathy and love towards everybody. One must remember that CA has a concrete perspective and style: in fact CA does not choose any particular sector within the Church (for example catechesis or charitable works) nor a particular sphere of civic life. John Paul II in his last message once again invites CA to address its mission to “the workplaces and schools, in health-care and recreation centres and cultural and economic and political spheres” (John Paul II, 8<sup>th</sup> September 2003).

When involving itself in these spheres, CA has to ensure that it overcomes the risk of secularism which reduces faith to a purely interior mat-

ter which is totally irrelevant in the construction of the city of man. It has also to avoid the risk of integralism which does not respect the legitimate autonomy of temporal realities. We may say that CA is called upon to be a witness of “the renewing and transforming strength of Christianity” by involving itself effectively in civil society so as to be able to build “the common house” keeping in mind man’s dignity and vocation.

### *3.3 - The indispensable condition: formation*

Formation is the heart of CA and the soul of its missionary commitment. Formation in CA is the moment and place where together we listen to life and put questions to faith. We need to ask ourselves whether we really pay attention to each individual and to his/her journey in Christian life and to his/her readiness to assume the questions that faith puts to them.

Involved in this great task of the Church to announce the truth, CA takes a special care to accompany its members through personal itineraries towards the Truth starting from life; to assume the questions of those believers who meet more difficulties, of those who, though wishing for faith, still have so many doubts and uncertainties. Formation in CA looses many chances if it is more likely that in the school than that in the family, where people grow through personal training, warmth of relations, dialogue between generations... Formation in CA is an experience open to all those who wish to share faith, culture, styles, proposals.

### **Conclusion: IFCA service**

“Just because the Church needs a Catholic Action that is alive, strong and beautiful, I would like to repeat to each and everyone of you: *Duc in altum!* CA take courage for the future... CA be a prophetic presence in the world... CA be humble and daring enough to fix your gaze on Jesus!...” (ICA XI national Assembly, 26<sup>th</sup> April 2002). These encouraging words by John Paul II at the beginning of the III Millennium have become common property of all CA associations. We do hope that CA follows the evangelical path of incarnation, inculturation, in order to be able to give so many laypeople the joy of meeting Christ along the paths of holiness, through that pedagogy of holiness that *Novo Millennio Ineunte* recalls: “a genuine training in holiness adapted to people’s needs” (NMI 31).

In this respect IFCA can provide a good service, and we thank the Lord for these meetings. First of all they allow us to gather together as a

sign of the Church “missionary communion”. And then to verify common criteria of reference for the choices we make in our realities by our projects, proposals, priorities, so that the outlines of CA’s face may come out and make it alive, strong and beautiful: both for those who participate in it and those who meet it.

Primacy of the spirit, formation, mission, responsables, assistants, adults, youths, families, children, poor, individual itineraries and group itineraries, methodologies and fields of intervention... These words as well as other words raising from your own experiences, will help us to meet all those whom you represent here, those whom you work with, and to share labours and satisfactions, uncertainties and positive signals. CA is present in so many different realities with a rich store of magisterium and experience and we would like it to be present in a greater and greater number of dioceses in the world. Let us pray the Lord to support us so that we may open a path to many others in your dioceses, in your countries starting from Uganda, from this Church that has given us hospitality and that we love.

On the occasion of II IFCA Assembly held in Vienna in 1994, Card. Pironio gave a lecture that I happened to read and to appreciate. Now I would like to conclude by repeating his words, words which were full of affection and trust in CA. He knew CA in Argentina, where he was Ecclesiastical Assistant and promoted it in Rome as President of the Pontifical Council for the Laity. IFCA should be specially thankful to him as he remembered CA even in his will where he said: “I have loved Catholic Action dearly”.

“The world needs new men and women who live in today’s world and have a deep personal experience of God and who proclaim the good news with the Spirit’s prophetic courage. When they do this in an organic way they express the communion of a Church which is greatly involved in the building of a fraternal society where solidarity prevails. CA’s journey corresponds to Mary’s journey: it is a way of fidelity and service, of contemplative silence and of suffering, a way of joy and hope. It is always the fruitful way of the *Fiat* and the *Magnificat*, the work of grace and of total and generous self-giving.

May our Mother Mary be with us and may she help us to achieve the joyful readiness of the disciples, the zeal of the witnesses and the calm strength of the martyrs”.

**6<sup>th</sup> August 2006**

## **THE UGANDA MARTYRS ARE CHRISTIAN ROLE MODELS OF THE LAITY**

*H.E. Msgr. Matthias Ssekamanya  
Bishop of Lugazi Diocese*

**T**hey lived faithfully the Christian virtues of faith, hope and charity. They did their best to live what the missionaries taught them about faith. They carried out faithfully their daily Christian duties i.e. simple morning and evening prayers, recitation of the rosary in their respective homes and Sunday sanctification. On the other hand, they squarely faced the heroic way of Christian living which was necessary at that time, they accepted being ridiculed, called fools, suffered a lot for defending justice and the virtue of chastity. They trusted in God's power in whom they put their total trust. They gave mutual fraternal support to each other. The virtue of fraternal charity was the bond that kept them together in their struggles against all sorts of snares of the devil.

There are three pillars which helped the Uganda Martyrs not to waver in their faith. These are:

- I. Love of God above all things
- II. Christian Fraternal Charity and Solidarity
- III. Life of Prayer

### **I. Love of God above all**

The Uganda Martyrs strongly believed that God the creator of all and Father of our Saviour Jesus Christ is the only one to be loved above all and obeyed. He is the source of all the good any human being may long for to receive.

Thus, Matthias Mulumba when looking for the lasting spiritual treasure, felt an interior driving force that was pushing him to discover pro-

perly the genuine prophets of God. His foster father Magatto had convinced him that the Ganda traditional religion which exaggerated the spiritual powers of ancestors was very limited and quite empty of any value. By then, spiritual power believed to be helpful, were thought of being ancestors, or trees, or rivers, or animals, etc.

Matthias Mulumba was not settled till he discovered the truth. Thus, when muslims came to our country and started teaching Islam, Matthias Mulumba found their teaching better than the Ganda traditional religion. He embraced Islam fervently and accepted to be circumcised. But soon after embracing Islam, Mulumba came to know about the teaching of the Anglican Missionaries. He discovered that it was much better than what he had received from Islam. The Gospel of Jesus convinced him more and so he started to study and follow the religion of the Anglican missionary. Before being baptized, the catholic missionaries came into the country.

After very careful observation and inquiries, the catholic teaching was more valuable and convincing to him. Again he started being taught Christian religion by Catholic missionaries. He embraced it with his whole heart, later on he abandoned all that is incompatible with Christianity such as polygamous life, pride, superstitions, trust in the powers of ancestors and some other creatures. He totally surrendered to Christ and his Gospel teaching. He became humble, devoted, used his temporal position of leadership to evangelize many of his friends and subjects. Later on, more Ugandans: children such as Kizito, Mbaaga Tuzinde and the adults such as Andrew Kaggwa, Bruno, Luke, Joseph Musasa etc.

## **II. They practised Christian fraternal charity, solidarity and mutual moral support**

They supported one another in their faith. Thus, in the King's palace, Joseph Mukasa and Charles Lwanga worked together to teach religion and give moral support to the young ones with whom they were living and working. Eight of them are among the twenty two canonized Martyrs of Uganda (Kizito, Denis Ssebugwawo, Mukasa Kiriwawanvu, Gyaviira, Mbaaga Tuzinde, Mugagga, Ambrozio Kibuuka and Achileo Kiwanuka).

At the home of Andrew Kaggwa, other neophytes such as James Buuzabalyawo, Adolf Ludigo, Anatoli Kiriggwajjo used to come together to deepen their faith, teach religion to catechumens and assisting in preparing food, collecting firewood that would be needed to cook.

When King Muteesa I threatened to kill all the Christians and catechumens, the missionaries left the country and took refuge to Tanzania in 1882. The neophyte leaders, namely Joseph Mukasa, Charles Lwanga and Andrew Kagwa, collected their fellow believers and decided the following:

1. To support one another so that none of them would drop off.
2. To continue spreading the Gospel to the whole country in the following divisions of their mission:
  - Charles Lwanga and Joseph Mukasa to continue teaching religion to catechumens in the King's Palace.
  - Andrew Kagwa and James to spread the Gospel in and around Kampala Town.
  - Matthias Mulumba who lived 45 miles away to carry the Gospel to the whole country. This they did successfully. By the time the missionaries came back (two years later) in 1885, there were by far more catechumens.
3. They decided to help one another to live exemplary life, be loyal to the King in their duties. To show that Christianity is not contrary to being a good citizen.
4. They agreed to do their best to plead to the King for the return of the missionaries and this they did successfully.

### **III. Living the life of prayer**

They prayed together and individually. There were three major centres of prayer:

1. In the King's Palace
2. At the home of Andrew Kagwa
3. At the home of Matthias Mulumba (45 miles away. He would be assisted by Luke and Noa).

Uganda Martyrs accepted to forego the privileged relationship the King of Buganda had established with them such as working in his inner palace chambers, they enjoyed love, honour, trust. They went as far as accepting the loss of love and solidarity they had with their respective family members.

### **The Uganda Martyrs stood firm for three Christian virtues**

The Uganda Martyrs as Christians stood firm for the three basic Christian virtues of faith, hope and charity:

1. Justice; 2. Christian chastity; 3. Strong faith in God, the father of all.

### **1. St. Joseph Mukasa and several others stood firm in defense of Justice**

We are told that there was a belief that in Buganda any non citizen who would enter the country through the eastern part of it was taken to be a danger to the country. Thus, to avoid evils that he could cause in the country, he had to be killed. It happened that at the beginning of evangelizing Uganda, that news reached the King that there was a white man who was coming into the country through the eastern part of it. This was a taboo. Thus, the King ordered his men to go and kill him. This white man was the first Anglican Bishop, Hannington, by name. When Joseph Mukasa came to know about it, he did his best to dissuade the King not to have the Bishop killed. He advised the King to order Bishop Hannington not to enter his country but to go back. Unfortunately the King did not change his order and the Bishop was killed on 29<sup>th</sup> October 1985.

Later on Joseph Mukasa would remind the King that he had done wrong to kill the innocent white man who did not know about the culture of the country. He showed that even a King is not above God's law. The blame of Joseph Mukasa annoyed the King so much that later on he condemned him to death to get rid of him and even falsely accused him of other things when he said: "He insulted me by saying that it was wrong to kill the white man in Busoga, and that my father Muteesa, should have never done such a thing. He is also the man who tempted to poison me by asking Pere Lourde to give me medicine which almost killed me. I have often forbidden him to practice the white men's religion, but he does not listen. He even teaches that religion to my servants here at court, and has incited them against me". Joseph retorted: "I am then to die for my religion."

As a matter of fact, the neophytes were very loyal servants to their king. One of the indicators is that earlier, they saved him from being overthrown by his very prime minister together with some chiefs. It happened that the prime minister Mukasa and some key chiefs of King Mwanga conspired to overthrow him. But Joseph Mukasa, Andrew and Charles Lwanga came to know about the plot, they secretly informed the Queen Mother who took effective action and the plot failed. This created bitterness in the prime minister's heart who was primarily accountable for the killing of Andrew Kaggwa.

## **2. The Uganda Martyrs are role models in preserving the virtue of chastity**

The King had taken the malpractice of homosexuality. Thus the young boys such as Kizito, Denis and Mbaaga fell preys to the King. But once they knew about the teaching of the Gospel, they stopped totally this malpractice with the King. This annoyed him very much. Yet the young boys were always faithful to their daily duties. The King held Joseph Mukasa responsible for making the young people rebellious. Thus, he sentenced Joseph Mukasa to death. The King said: “The servants are no longer doing a thing that I tell them.” He was referring to homosexuality which they refused. And Joseph Mukasa together with Charles Lwanga always helped them to disappear from the King’s presence, in case he indicated some excitement in this regard.

Bruno Sserunkuuna fell in love with a woman and lived with her for sometime but his fellow Christians reported him to the missionaries. He was warned to stop that relationship with the women. On his own, Bruno decided and left the home of his relatives and went to live with his fellow Christians at Andrew Kaggwa’s home. He had a problem of drinking much, and indeed this would excite his sexual desires. He corrected this. And on his way to martyrdom he and his fellow prisoners passed by the home of his brother Ssebbowa. Bruno felt thirsty and a desire of having some local beer. He called his brother to bring him some. But he remembered Christ who was thirsty on the Cross but was given vinegar instead of water. Sserunkuuma did not drink the beer offered. He only said to his brother Ssebbowa: “Goodbye, we are going before you to prepare places for you in heaven”.

## **3. The Uganda Martyrs defied cultural practices and beliefs that are incompatible with the Gospel**

The reaction of Joseph Mukasa in the case of killing Bishop Hannington is one of them.

The two cousins Achilles Kiwanuka and Ambrozius Kibuuka, after being evangelized threw away the charms which the parents had given them and they made this known to them. The parents ordered them not to return to the King’s palace where they had learned Christianity. There was a fear that the whole line of their clan would be exterminated because the boys had gravely offended the spirits of their ancestor. But the boys disregarded the order of their parents due to the teaching of Christ which says “who loves his



mother or father or relative more than myself is not worthy of me". Christ received them in heaven and the line of their clan still continues up to today, we know their descendants and can trace them back to the Martyrs.

We are told that near the home of Matthias Mulumba, there was a very big forest. It was related with a belief that in that forest there was a big snake believed to be a god. The story goes that in case some people did not give due respect to the snake it would sting him dead. After baptism, Matthias Mulumba was no longer attaching importance to the story of the snake. To prove to people that what they believe was not true, one day he took his panga, a spear; he put on his cross and rosary and then he went to the forest to look for the snake and kill it. He went several times, but he never even saw the snake. Thus he later on proved to the people that what they believed in, was empty, not true.

This should teach us a lesson, especially the social Anthropology scholars that for the sake of Christ, there are some so called cultural practices, or beliefs, or values which must be abandoned by any genuine Christian. It should be remembered that even Jews, the special chosen people of God, had to abandon some of their cultural practices and beliefs.

### **In the time of terror, the Uganda Martyrs supported each other**

Mwanga to his chief accused Joseph Mukasa: "This is the fellow who always wanted to teach me, and told me to put away my charms." Mukasa replied: "I am then to die for my religion".

### **Injustice**

Before his executioners Joseph gave a message to the King: "Tell Kabaka Mwanga from me that he has condemned me unjustly, but that I forgive him. However let him repent, for if he does not, I shall be his accuser before the judgment seat of God".

### **God granted them courage**

After the killing of Joseph Mukasa, the Christian boys, far from being disheartened by the death of their leader, were in high spirits, encouraging one another and saying: "Let us remain firm! If the Kabaka wishes to put us to death, then we too shall know how to die like Joseph our leader".

In fact many who were still catechumens asked for baptism, between November 15<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> 1886 among those baptized many became martyrs,

gave their lives for Christ. They would tell the missionaries: “We are destined for death, give us baptism before we die.” “There is no loss in our death, but we need to be baptized before”. They would go together. One night 40 were baptized and among them not less than 7 became martyrs.

Charles Lwanga supported and encouraged the young ones, especially Kizito the youngest of all. The night before their condemnation, Charles Lwanga took Kizito by the hand and said to him: “When the decisive moment arrives, I shall take your hand like this. If we have to die for Jesus, we shall die together hand in hand.” He said to the other young ones, especially Mugagga, Mbaaga, Gyaviira: “Remain firm.” One chief wanted to save Mugagga for he was his relative - then he shouted: “Mugagga, what are you doing among the Christians? Don’t be a fool! When did you ever learn to pray?” Mugagga replied: “I have been receiving instructions by night, so as to avoid vexing the king and being troubled by you. Charles Lwanga has been my instructor, model and protector, and I wish to die with him for Jesus”. When the King suggested to them to stop practicing Christian religion, they replied: “we shall never cease to be Christians, whatever may come”.

### **They stood for Christ**

The condition set for the followers of Christ is hard and challenging, when he says: “Anyone who loses his life for my sake, will save it.” Anyone who wants to follow him, Jesus teaches, “let him renounce himself and take up his cross everyday and follow me.” The Uganda Martyrs faced the challenge squarely and fulfilled conditions set by Jesus and now they are happily with Him in Heaven (*Lk 9:23-26*).

Their Martyrdom encourages us to face hardships of any kind for the sake of His Kingdom. They could have used the words of St. Paul: “We see no way out but we never despair... Always we carry with us in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus, too, may be visible in our death”. We should remember that the encouragement of St. Paul which says: “The temporary, light burden of our hardships is earning us for ever an utterly incomparable eternal weight of glory” (*2Co 4:7-15*).

The witness of the Uganda Martyrs can be taken as the Christian role model of the laity to stand firm for the Love of God above all and to love one another, to stand firm for justice and in preserving the virtue of chastity, all supported by the life of prayer.

**6<sup>th</sup> August 2006**

Eucharistic Celebration

Uganda Martyrs' National Shrine, Namugongo

## HOMILY

*Archbishop Christophe Pierre  
Apostolic Nuncio*

We all feel welcome in this Basilica, built at the place of Martyrdom of St Charles Lwanga, catechist and leader of that group of newly converted young men who gave their lives in faithfulness to Christ 120 years ago. In 1969, Pope Paul VI blessed the foundation stone of the Basilica on this sacred ground that we rightly call the birth place of the Church in Uganda and in the whole of Africa. John Paul II came here in 1993.

You have yourselves decided to begin your meeting with a pilgrimage to this site where the blood of Charles Lwanga, of the young Kizito and of the other martyrs made fertile the soil from which has grown the Church in this land; the blood of the martyrs gives life to our Church because it is a continuation of the precious blood of the eternal Son of God shed on the Cross. It is that blood which washes us clean in baptism.

I invite you to contemplate the beautiful statue, at the centre of this Basilica, of Charles Lwanga baptising Kizito. Most of the martyrs had been baptised by the missionaries. Some were still catechumens. However, when it became evident that belonging to Christ meant martyrdom, Charles Lwanga took the initiative to baptise the catechumens. The youngest and weakest, Kizito, insisted on being part of them. Charles Lwanga hesitated for a while but in the end he gave in, telling little Kizito: "When the final test comes, I shall take your hand. If we have to die for Jesus, we shall die together, hand in hand."

It has not escaped any of you that the martyrs of Uganda were all lay people; people born and bred in this land, people coming from various backgrounds, well rooted into the society, exercising, quite often, important responsibilities, persons respected for their human qualities and skills, people who had also their limitations, their defects, people who were sinners. They were like us! This small group of men and women, mainly attached to the court of the King (the Kabaka) came into contact with the missionaries. They felt attracted by their witness and their message as if it responded to the deepest expectations of their hearts. While listening to their teaching and interacting with them, they were discovering an answer to their thirst for truth, to their quest for God!

In the message from the Cardinal Secretary of State, which has been read to us by Bishop Lambiasi, we heard the invitation of the Holy Father to “walk along the path of these lay Christians - young and children - who gave witness to their faith till martyrdom.” Benedict XVI reminded us about the triple programme indicated by his predecessor Paul VI during his visit to Namugongo in 1969.

Let us reflect upon these three points of Paul VI: to love Jesus Christ; to be faithful to the Church; to be strong and courageous, in happiness and joy.

This was the experience of the martyrs of Uganda, and the reason why their example has been and remains so luminous and powerful today. Their lives were strikingly similar to what the first disciples experienced from the day they were introduced to Jesus by John the Baptist. Jesus asked them: “What are you looking for?” They answered: “Rabbi, where are you staying?”; “Come and see” was the invitation of Christ. Andrew and John met Jesus for the first time and never left him because he was the one who corresponded to the deepest desires of their hearts.

I am convinced that the great history of Catholic Action started from the same experience. A very zealous priest from Belgium, called Cardijn, who eventually became a Cardinal, felt deeply, like Jesus, the need to call young workers, because they were “like sheep without a shepherd”. He founded the Young Christian Workers movement, the first of the many branches of Catholic Action, which have spread all over the world. You certainly know blessed Marcel Callo who comes from Rennes in Brittany; Rennes, where I was born. He followed Christ as a young worker and was arrested during the Second World War because of his strong faith and Christian commitment. Even in the extreme conditions

of a concentration camp, he remained a joyful witness to his faith, a zealous apostle, and offered his own life.

Indeed, Paul VI gives us the three main dimensions of Catholic Action.

The first one is the encounter with Christ. Remember the words of the first disciples to their friends: “We have met the Lord”. The martyrs of Uganda called one another, helped one another to be faithful to death. Cardinal Cardijn used to tell us that the young workers will be apostles to the young workers. In his apostolic letter *Christifideles laici*, John Paul II underlines that, through the sacraments of baptism and confirmation, the Christian is identified with Christ and becomes a follower of the Son of God. His “vocation and mission” is to be a living witness of this “new life”, running like a new blood in his veins. Such witness is to be seen and experienced through his whole existence, by word and deed. The Pope reminds us that “witness” means “martyr”!

There is a quotation from the Apostolic Letter *Novo millennio ineunte* which expresses very well this message: “[our vocation] implies the conviction that, since Baptism is a true entry into the holiness of God through incorporation into Christ and the indwelling of his Spirit, it would be a contradiction to settle for a life of mediocrity, marked by a minimalist ethic and a shallow religiosity” (31).

This leads us to the second aspect: the martyrs of Uganda would never have encountered Christ had he not been announced to them by the missionaries, that is, by the Church. And their story teaches us that they became “Church” from the very day they became disciples of Jesus. They grew in faith, hope and love through the Church and they died as members of the Church. They were killed by the King because he felt - wrongly - that they had given their loyalty to another “organization”.

But for them the Church was not another organization. At times, people see the Church as a sect, a NGO, one group among many in the society. For the martyrs however the Church was the body of Christ, the living sign and sacrament of His presence in the world. Belonging to the Church, they felt attached to Christ and were receiving His life and His strength. Through the Church, they had understood the words of Jesus: “You are the salt of the earth... You are the light of the world” (*Mt* 5:13.14).

The Church is also an essential part of the Catholic Action. I personally experienced it in my own family, because my parents were themselves

involved in Catholic Action. Christ was alive in the hearts of my parents. And I felt, as a child, that the Church was present in my family. I realise today that, even before going to Church, I “experienced” what the Church was.

It was the living witness of my father and my mother, through their daily life, in the way they were living as a family, through their social, professional, political commitments, the Church was not outside the home. The Church was at home!

The same exhortation *Christifideles laici* invites Christians to become the Church as the leaven in the society, so that this society does not remain enclosed in itself, but opens to the grace of God and turns itself towards the Kingdom. Such is the meaning of Jesus’ prayer “Thy Kingdom come”.

The third aspect is the logical consequence of the previous one. Once we have encountered Christ as our Saviour, when we experience his friendship and the power of his presence in our life through the Church, we receive as a special grace the courage not only to be faithful, but above all to witness.

Indeed “God is love”, as we have been reminded by Benedict XVI. The meaning of our life is to spread such love received as a gift from him.

The works of love are the fruits of Catholic Action.

# IFCA, A PLACE OF MEETING, EXCHANGE, SOLIDARITY

*Oana Tuduce*  
*Catholic Action of Rumania*  
*IFCA Secretariat*

Excellencies, dear friends,

We wish to thank the Lord and to share our joy for being here with you on the occasion of such a great solemnity as the Transfiguration.

We have come from different countries of Africa and Europe to this Shrine which is so meaningful for the Church in Africa and in the world, on the occasion of the III African Continental meeting promoted by IFCA together with Lugazi diocese and the National Committee for Laity of Uganda.

We wish to thank H.E. Msgr. Mattias Ssesamanya, Bishop of Lugazi diocese, on behalf of everybody.

By this Eucharistic celebration we feel in communion with the universal Church and with the Holy Father Benedict XVI. We wish to assure him our faithfulness, our prayer and our commitment and we are particularly grateful for the message he addressed to us.

We would like to introduce ourselves and tell you shortly what CA is. For this reason we will listen again to the three duties that the Servant of God John Paul II gave to CA of the whole world during a meeting in Loreto in 2004.

The first is “contemplation”: strive to move on along the path of holiness, keeping your gaze fixed on Jesus, the only Teacher and Saviour of all.

The second duty is “communion”: endeavour to promote the spirituality of unity with the Pastors of the Church, with all the brethren in the faith and with the other ecclesial associations. Be the leaven of dialogue with all the people of good will.

he third duty is “mission”: as lay people, bring the leaven of the Gospel to homes and schools, to places of work and leisure. The Gospel is a word of hope and salvation for the whole world.

There are a lot of CA associations in the world using this name or another. They started to meet since 1987 and formed IFCA (International Forum of Catholic Action), a young body that now is almost 20 years old.

IFCA is composed of associations or federations of national or diocesan associations and movements which keep together the “four notes” stated in *Apostolicam Actuositatem* 20 and in *Christifideles Laici* 31, even if they take different forms and names.

IFCA goals are the following:

1. being a place of meeting and solidarity between the Catholic Action of different countries and regions.
2. Analyzing in a worldwide dimension, the problems that society poses both to the Church and to Catholic Action.
3. Animating and promoting the “new evangelization” with due respect to the structural and pastoral reality of every Catholic Action.

It was settled and works as a “forum”, that is a place of meeting, exchange, collaboration and promotion of Catholic Action, fully respecting the characteristics and the conditions of every local Church.

We can define Catholic Action as a family, since it includes people of different ages, accompanies them during their human and Christian growing, forms them to be responsible on the path of sanctity. It introduces them in the wide family of God that is the Church called to announce the joy of the Gospel.

As John Paul II said: “The Church is counting on the active presence of Catholic Action and on its faithful devotion to the great cause of Christ’s Kingdom. I too look to catholic Action with great confidence, and I encourage all its members to be generous witnesses of the Good news of the Gospel in order to restore hope to contemporary society which is in search of peace” (12<sup>th</sup> September 2004).



**7<sup>th</sup> August 2006**

Eucharistic Celebration

## HOMILY

(Synthesis)

*H.E. Msgr. Evariste Ngoyagoye  
Bishop of Bujumbura  
President of the Lay Apostolate, Burundi*

In the first Reading we heard about Hananiah and Jeremiah.

Hananiah is accused of stirring up the people using God's Words so as to make the people trust in a lie.

This call addressed by the Lord to Hananiah applies also to us today: we should evangelize according to God's Word.

In the passage of the Gospel, there are crowds of people who go to Jesus because they want to see him, to listen to him, to know him.

Today also there are many people who wish to know the Lord. So our commitment is to show them Jesus. In the Gospel Jesus says to his disciples: "Give them some food yourselves", he wants us to give food to those who need it.

The Lord entrusts this commitment to us and he trusts us, he wants us to give food, bread to those who come near.

Let us pray the Lord to give us his strength, his support so that we can be able to carry on this commitment.

We have been given the Eucharist also, and we should give importance not only to food but also to God's Word. We should share it, and the Eucharist helps us fulfil our task.

# THE CATHOLIC LAITY IN UGANDA

Mr. Gideon Obbo

UNCCLA President

I greet you in the love of the Father, the Peace of Christ and Joy of the Holy Spirit. I am pleased on behalf of UNCCLA, and on my own behalf to receive you all on the occasion of IFCA Conference organized largely by the Laity working hand in hand with Lugazi Diocese, to Uganda, the Land of Martyrs, our pioneer lay faithful.

The Uganda Martyrs are a cornerstone of our faith here in Uganda, in Africa and the world over. They were very simple ordinary lay people to whom faith had just been introduced. They mastered it and through their dedication they spread it in words and actions to the extent of shedding their blood. *They became the salt and light of our faith and saints to be emulated forever.* Therefore, allow me to welcome you in a very special way to the land and to the home of the Uganda Martyrs.

Gathered here as we are, in this International Forum of Catholic Action (IFCA) Conference, we are challenged by the example of the Uganda Martyrs, to follow in their footsteps. To be *the salt of the earth and light of the world* (cfr Mt 5:13); to reflect on our mission as Christians, to renew our Christian commitment to the faith we embraced, to make a programme of action for the growth of our Church and society and to let our light shine before all people and in all sectors of life.

Uganda is a unique nation in Africa in the history of our faith. Besides being a land of the Martyrs (1885-1887), it produced the first African priests in (1913), namely Rev. Fr. Victor Mukasa, and Rev. Fr. Basil Lumu from Masaka Diocese and the first black African Bishop (1939) Rt. Rev. Dr. Joseph Kiwanuka, for Masaka Diocese first and later on Kampala Archdiocese and was chosen by the Holy Father Pope Paul VI in 1969 for the first visit of the Pope to Africa to confirm the faith of the African Church. And again the late Holy Father John Paul II visited us in 1993. This shows evident signs of growth in faith, also manifested in the big number of indigenous priests, religious, catechists and dedicated lay people.

## Pastoral work

Uganda has a population of about 28 million inhabitants, of whom 12,600,000 (45%) are Catholics. The Second Vatican Council brought a new life to the Uganda Church. Liturgical books were translated into various local languages and Mass hymns in local languages were composed. Drums and other traditional musical instruments were introduced in the liturgy. This increased the people's active participation in the liturgy. Lay people became more involved in the Church activities. For effective pastoral work, the church introduced a system of Small basic Christian Communities (the bubondos). The Catholic families are divided into small Christian Communities of 12 to 20 families each. These communities become the basic Churches, with leaders, liturgical services and a shared social life. Where these have succeeded the Church is healthy and alive with a strong lay participation in the Church and leadership. The Small basic Christian Communities are growing stronger. In 1975 the then seven AMECEA countries (Ethiopia Kenya, Malawi, Uganda, Sudan, Zambia and Tanzania) adopted the Small Christian Communities as their common pastoral strategy. The AMECEA Plenary Assembly in 1992 reaffirmed that: "*The Small Christian Communities are not optional in our Churches; they are central to the life of faith and the ministry of evangelization.*"

From these Small basic Christian Communities, leaders are chosen to represent the faithful in the Sub-Parish, Parish, Deaconry, Diocesan and finally in the National Lay Council. These councils at the above mentioned levels manage most of the Church activities. They have been instrumental in evangelization and raising the self sufficiency of the local Churches financially. Together with the clergy, they prepare the Church programmes and the budget, including the maintenance of the clergy and the catechists and engage themselves in raising funds for various development projects. This is being the *true salt of the Earth and light of the World.*

Coordinated by the Lay Councils at all levels are the lay organizations and movements. There are many traditional pious organizations, e.g. the Legion of Mary, Tertiaries of different orders and prayer groups under the patronage of different saints. The major lay movements are the Xaverians, Focolare, Marian Movements, the Catholic Charismatic Renewal, the Kibina Kya-Bajjulizi (Martyrs Guild); the Young Christian Students (YCS), Young Christian Workers (YCW) and some Guilds and

Associations of different Catholic Professionals like teachers. These movements are well organized from the grassroots to the national level.

### **Uganda Episcopal Conference**

The Uganda Catholic Church with 12.6 millions members is divided into 19 Dioceses. The Dioceses are headed by the Bishops, who together form the Uganda Episcopal Conference, which is the Apex body running the Affairs of the Church in Uganda. The Dioceses are grouped in four Metropolitan or Ecclesiastical provinces, namely: Tororo in the Eastern Region of Uganda; Mbarara in the West; Gulu in the North and Kampala in Central Uganda. Each province or Archdiocese is headed by an Archbishop. The Catholic Secretariat headed by the Secretary General of the Episcopal Conference, coordinates the pastoral and charitable activities of the different Dioceses.

The Secretariat has twelve Commissions, the Pastoral and Liturgical Lay Apostolate, Education, Medical, Caritas (for social services and development), Social Communications, Finance, Justice and Peace. Each Commission has counterpart offices in each Diocese. Once a year each Commission meets with its diocesan coordinators as National Councils for Policy Making.

### **Uganda National Council for the Catholic Laity (UNCCLA)**

The Laity in Uganda are organized under the Uganda National Council of the Catholic Laity (UNCCLA), formed in 1994, which is under the Lay Apostolate Commission of the Episcopal Conference. It is headed by a Bishop and animated by a National Director.

Under UNCCLA are the Councils for Children, Youths, Adults and Lay Apostolate Movements, associations and Guilds. UNCCLA Programmes and activities are executed by the National Executive Committee (NEC) headed by its President. NEC is mandated by the Annual General Meeting (AGM) which is composed of members of the above mentioned National Councils, Movements and representatives of all the Diocesan Councils of the Catholic Laity.

UNCCLA has an approved constitution which spells out its detailed vision, mission, aims and objectives. It also gives the full structure, membership and composition. Other rules and procedures are also taken care

of under the different articles and clauses. UNCCLA is an umbrella for all lay movements and organizations. It is a Center of Unity, Co-ordination and Protection of Catholic values and interests. Through UNCCLA, the laity are in the forefront of the Church's Mission in Uganda.

The lay office is primarily directed to represent the risen Christ beyond the Christian Community to the world. When Christ sends us forth to announce the Good News, there is no essential difference between the laity and the ordained, only that there are areas that the laity has access, where the ordained do not (temporal World).

The Role of the Laity in the Church: historically, and as alluded to earlier, the Laity have contributed to the development and defense of Christian beliefs and still have the same mission today. The history of Christianity in Uganda vividly brings this out. The Ugandan Laity were deeply involved in the mission of the Church right from the beginning. This was partly due to the historical influences, for instance when the French Missionaries withdrew from Uganda in 1882-1884 and left the newly Baptized Lay men and women alone, the latter kept the light of Christianity shining. They took over all responsibility concerning the Catholic faith and the Church. The spiritual empowerment they had received enabled them to share the Good news with those who were interested and in that way, Christianity flourished.

In Uganda the Church functions well, it enables people to continue to live and hope for a better future, provides necessary assistance, and is a guarantor of living in harmony, peace and justice: e.g. in Northern Uganda the Church is a source of reconciliation and forgiveness, championing opposition to corruption, championing promotion of Women, Children, Youth, and the marginalize; the dignity of every human person and defence of human rights.

We the laity are the Church, in this respect; we are deeply involved in all those activities within our Church. In spite of the tremendous growth registered; we should still improve on the quality of Christian life virtues and values especially in lay leadership, Christian conviction, social involvement and being channels of forgiveness, reconciliation and peace. We should be foresighted-men and women of vision in all our endeavors.

Turning to our theme today: "The Laity: Be *salt and light in Africa (Mt 5:13)* The future of christianity in Africa and in the World". The ever conti-

nuous changes in the world require the laity to continue salting and lighting the world. In Africa, the sacrifice of the Uganda Martyrs constantly reminds us of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who is the way, the truth and the life. Our role is to follow Him in spite of the challenges that we face. We, the laity, should remove the obstacles that lead to loss of human dignity such as hunger, homelessness, weary, nakedness, fear, restlessness, imprisonment, wars from the Earth/World and create justice, happiness to mankind.

The Bible (cfr *Mk 9:50*) reminds us that: “*Salt is a good thing, but if it no longer tastes like salt, it cannot be salty again*”. Be salt and live at peace with yourself first, your family, your neighbour and the community.

Then they will know we are Christians by your love. As salt seasons, and improves the flavour of food, we should change the face of human history, from divisions, prejudice, hatred and ignorance of the word of God, with our faith, hope and love, with our intelligence, courage and peace, we have to harmonize the World we live in, remove injustices... share our bread with the hungry... remove pointing fingers... the evils... then our salt shall taste like salt and our light will shine in the darkness, when we have lit it. In Uganda as already pointed out, the various Catholic Action Groups, and Laity Professional Associations have been instrumental in salting the earth, e.g. building of schools, medical centres, politics, law, family life, agriculture etc.

### **Early Catholic Laity's participation**

The Holy See in 1953 hosted the first leaders meeting for the Apostolate of the Laity in Africa, particularly in Uganda at Kisubi Seminary and Pope Pius XII addressed this meeting through his message, delivered by Giovan Battista Montini (later Pope Paul VI). He stressed the need to have confidence and trust in the Church and its hierarchy for proper guidance and assistance out of the contrasting and conflicting ideologies of extreme capitalism and socialism of that period. That the main task for the laity was to detect the negative elements in society that militate against Christian values. This was to be done through the promotion of social justice and truth.

The contribution of that meeting was a clear distinction made between Christian apostolate in general and Catholic Action in particular. Christian apostolate was defined as the carrying out of Christ's evangelical mission in depth, time, and global cultural terms through the Church

(cfr *Lk* 12:49; *Jn* 17:18; 20:21). Catholic Action, however, was defined as a general united action of all Catholic laity: an organized way of evangelizing society often carried out by a few zealous laity, especially in those places where only a lay person is able to render the Church present.

The Catholic faith was the last of the main three faith (e.g. Muslims, Anglican and Catholics) to come to Uganda, but it numerically surpassed the other two religions. Unfortunately it remained a *sleeping giant* in terms of political leadership. There was a myth that only Anglicans were for political leadership positions and not Catholics and Muslims.

This attitude was historical and propagated in the country from the dawn of the British administration. The Catholic Church in Uganda to-day through the Uganda Episcopal Conference, has set up instruments of formation which has energized the laity so that their temporal commitment is inspired by the Gospel and the Church's social doctrine (cfr *Mt* 23).

Historically, we see Catholics seeking to be involved in the political leadership positions. We witness Matayo Mugwany's audacity in 1955, seeking the position of the Post of Buganda Katikiroship, which was traditionally, a protestant preserve. They (Catholics) later on formed political parties, trade unions, got involved in the promotion of human rights, in Education, in the Press (the famous Muno and Musizi Publications), in cooperative societies/unions and in the promotion of the role and dignity of women, e.g. the introduction of the girl movement and the girls single schools and institutions to train and educate the girl child.

The above mentioned examples of the involvement of the laity is clear evidence that the laity in Uganda are protagonists of the social teaching of the Church. However, the laity are still more challenged to double their efforts to restore their former glory and stop to be seen as the *sleeping giant*.

## **Challenges**

I have to point out some challenges which we consider undermining the morals of our society, with the youth obviously being the most vulnerable.

### *Absence of Love*

I think today, the world is upside down, and is suffering so much because there is so very little love in the home and in family life. We

have no time for our children, we have no time for each other, there is no time to fellowship. Love begins at home, lives in homes, and yet parents no longer have time for each other and that is why there is so much suffering and so much unhappiness in the world today. Everybody to-day seems to be in such a terrible rush anxious for greater developments and greater riches and so on, so that children have very little time with their parents. Many parents have very little time for each other, and in the home begins the disruption of the peace by the world.

The above can be summarized as: lack of firm Christian commitment in the family setting, which as you all know, is the first school. The children must learn from their parents about Christian values of loving God, loving members of the family and society and showing courtesy to all they meet. Above all, the habit of prayer and worship can only be copied from parents. Lack of this Catholic upbringing has led many youths to, looking for seemingly easy solutions to problems by joining other persuasion of worship e.g. Pentecostals, so called Miracle Centres, etc. and sometimes resorting to witchcraft! Parents are required to find time for the children and at the same time teach them by example. We should be role models to our children, not only in careers, but also in our faith.

### *Wars*

The political and social-economic situation in our country is still disturbing. This is a direct consequence of the disruption that begins in a home. War destroys, war kills, and yet all people who engage in war are children of God. In Uganda the Northern part has been embroiled in war. Although in the end there may be winners and losers in war, but this can never and will never justify the suffering, pain and loss of life meted out to the people.

We thank Government, religious and cultural leaders for efforts made in ending the senseless war in Northern Uganda. The persistent plea of our religious leaders to the parties involved, to discuss and pursue peaceful means is ultimately bringing some hope. We pray that the war ends soon, and when it ends all of us, Government and the Church should participate in promoting meaningful reconciliation for lasting peace.

### *Poverty*

Poverty is still biting over 60% of our people, and the standard of living is still very low. This type of poverty is physical and can be seen



and touched. However, the most terrible poverty is loneliness and the feeling of being unloved. The feeling of being unwanted deprives, depresses and torments.

Economists and Scholars, most times stress poverty in terms of hunger, nakedness, and homelessness. I wish to point out however, that, the poverty of being unwanted, unloved and uncared for, is the greatest poverty. Mother Theresa says: "If you judge people, you have no time to love them." She continues: "I try to give to the poor people for love what the rich could get for money. No, I wouldn't touch a leper for a thousand pounds, yet I willingly cure him for the love of God".

We must start in our own homes, offices, vocations to remedy this kind of poverty. Our Lord in *John 15:12* commands us to love one another as he himself loved us. *Being salt of the earth and light of Africa*, we shall be known as the Lords disciples by the love we show for one another (cfr *Jn 13:35*).

### *Diseases*

Diseases like Malaria and AIDS have claimed life in great numbers. We continue to be grateful to Governments and the Church for awareness programmes with regard to endemic diseases like Malaria, HIV/AIDS and so on. We thank Mother Church especially for its correct direction of "behaviour change" as a way of combating HIV/AIDS, and the awareness and prevention messages on other diseases like Malaria. We thank very sincerely Mother Church for her resolute and firm stand against Contraceptives, Abortion, homosexuality and other immoral behaviors.

### **The way forward**

The Catholic Church in Uganda, Africa and the World over must live more fully the message which the Lord entrusted to her. She must proclaim it integrally to all who do not yet know the Saviour Lord Jesus Christ to children, youth and adults who are in the waves of the daily mushrooming Pentecostal and evangelization sects plus bad cultural practices and ideologies and beliefs.

Priority should be put on the mission of developing people and society as a whole, integral development. Civic leaders of African nations should be called upon to recognize and promote this cause. They should fight corruption and all the evils that have eaten deep into the morals of society. There is a very urgent need to fight ignorance and poverty.

We have seen Catholic families being easily divided. We lack a common front, this renders us vulnerable to all the new temptations. We need a stronger Synergy between the Clergy and the Laity in order to overcome this. We need to join Catholic Action Groups, Guilds, Associations and Movements so as to face the challenges.

## **Conclusion**

Today's theme: "*Laity: salt of the earth, light of Africa*" is pertinent in addressing the challenges that face society. We call upon all Christians to *be salt of the earth*. We need to develop a synergy with Governments on how individuals and groups can ultimately enhance both government and Church effort in addressing these challenges.

The Church has a complementary role to the state of reaching out to the laity. We should transform the world through the power of the Gospel lived and witnessed to in our daily life.

This calls for vibrancy, commitment and active participation in the mission of Jesus Christ our Saviour in teaching and leading the people of God both in the Church and Society (cfr *Mt 13:36-37*). The Church is not only an indispensable partner in development but also a vital medium of implementation of its own and Government Policy.

As we end, we call upon all of you to emulate our saints the Uganda Martyrs, who profoundly inspire us in many ways, such as faith, patience, self-giving and sacrifice amidst turbulence. Let these gifts which helped our forefathers in faith to persevere, help us to realize the great potential that God endowed us with. Let these virtues re-energize us in evangelization to become true salt of the earth and light of Africa.

Let us strengthen the bond that exists between the Laity and the Ordained faithful so as to build a strong united Army of the Lord.

## **Questions**

May I take this opportunity to leave these points for all of us to reflect on and deliberate during this conference? We are the salt and light of the World. Jesus is calling us to walk in his foot steps as individuals, head of families, as leaders in our parishes, dioceses and national councils. "Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness but will have the light of life (cfr *Jn 8:13*).

1. Are we portraying the image of a fully supported, and duly controlled being consumed by the love of Jesus and therefore full of love for oneself, family and community members?
2. Jesus teaches us that he is the way, the truth and the life (cfr *Jn* 8,2).  
 We are here to carry out Jesus' mission which is also the mission of the Church. Do we look at Jesus as our way? He has lit the way we are supposed to and must strive to walk along the same way, lest we loose sight of him and get lost forever in darkness.  
 We have set our feet on the plough, we should plough straight, no looking back and no looking at the side. Those who look back forget they have a task to perform, their faith fades into dreams of regrets, unforgiveness and loose sight of Jesus then fall off the straight path and get lost.  
 Those who look at the side can never plough in straight lines. Their faith is shaken and devoured by attractions of this world yet Jesus should be our point of focus even when those trials, tribulations, challenges etc come our way we should overcome them.  
 Are you one of these individuals or leaders stuck to Jesus, his word and the teaching of the Church come what may? Yes falling is there, stumbling is there, times of uncertainty are there but the sacraments are there to lift us up and keep looking and focusing on the one and only good and true shepherd. Jesus is the truth - this is freedom and liberation, the truth of God's Salvation for humanity. Jesus tells us that we who believe in him if we remain in his word, we will truly be his disciples, we will know the truth and the truth will set us free (cfr *Jn* 8:31).
3. Are we ready to stand for and by the truth despite the challenges we meet as Catholics and Leaders?
4. After this conference we are going to disperse to different destinations, what shall we take to those we lead? Shall we be better Catholics and Leaders or we are here just to pass time and feel big that we have visited Uganda or Lugazi and attended a big conference? Will there be prominent signs of personal transformation and commitment to our call? How shall we spread the taste of our salt to the rest of the world? Will our light continue shining or we have lit it and are ready to put it under a tub.

Let me end by reaffirming that despite the trials and tribulations the Laity and the Church are experiencing, the people of Uganda and the Catholic Laity in particular once again warmly welcome you with love and Joy and want to share with you and be strengthened in the faith and in their determination to build a better nation. This Conference should encourage us to remain faithful to the Mission of Christ which is the Mission of the Church and of every baptized Christian. It should also challenge us to build a more loving, caring, just and united, humane and peaceful society. We eagerly await the decisions and way forward of this Conference.

I end therefore, by calling upon you all to receive the message of this Conference with openness, love and commitment to continue to fulfill the programme we are to commit ourselves to after this Conference. Brethren it is not that we have already attained perfect maturity, let's continue pursuing our goal in hope that we may possess it since we have indeed been taken possession of by Christ Jesus. We must keep in the race because it is not yet won (cfr *Ph* 12-16).

I wish you a happy and fruitful deliberating and a happy stay in good health. May the Holy Spirit lead and guide you in everything you think, do and say! May God bless you all abundantly.

## *THE CHURCH CANNOT ABANDON MAN...*

### **The Social Teaching of the Church applied to the Great Lakes regions. Introductory considerations for an in depth evangelization**

*Rev. Salvator Niciteretse*

I would like to start by clarifying that the teachings of the Church as regards social matters is definitely not abstract or theoretical. It is a reflection on the behaviour and involvement of Christians in society. There is a close relation and a constant enrichment between doctrine and actual practice. Action detached from its doctrinal sources is just as empirical and sterile as principles which are not put into practice.

In this intervention, I will try, first of all, to highlight briefly the definition, objective, finality and the biblical and theological basis of these teaching. Secondly, I will point out some of the major challenges related to the dignity and the undeniable rights of the human person in the Great Lakes regions. I will then proceed to present some reflections on social commitment and some guidelines for social action, which could apply in this area.

#### **I. Definition, objective, finality and biblical and theological basis**

When we speak about the social doctrine of the Church we are referring to all the doctrinal principles, criteria of judgement and guidelines of action which should orientate social work. All these find their source in the Holy Bible, in the teachings of the Fathers of the Church, of the great theologians and of the recent Popes.

The first objective is the human dignity of man who is created in God's image and the safeguarding of his undeniable rights<sup>1</sup>. In other words evangelization always brings about a revelation "gestis verbis que" that is the announcement of the christian truth about man in society in social, political and economic spheres. The ultimate aim is always the promotion and the integral liberation of the human person both in its ter-

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<sup>1</sup>. Munarriz J.M., *Doctrine sociale de l'Eglise*, Cerf Paris, 1992, p. 20.

restrial and transcending dimension, thus contributing towards the building of the ultimate and definitive Kingdom, without however confusing earthly progress with the Kingdom of God<sup>2</sup>.

### **Fundamental biblical and theological principles of human dignity**

Texts from the Prophets are particularly relevant to the question of human dignity as these show the close relations that exist between justice and God's worship. Some might say that the prophets were against worship. In reality, the prophets preached about Yahweh's worship incessantly but they were concerned by the dissonance which prevailed in religious life. This is shown in *Amos 5:4-7*, *Isaiah 1:11-17*, *Micah 6:6-8*, *Jeremiah 7:4-7*, *Isaiah 58:3-11*. In their message the prophets point out how the chosen people exploited each other, as it happens in our countries still today.

We can thus say that the prophets after Amos repeatedly insisted on the need for justice and solidarity. They passed harsh judgement on the rich who oppressed the poor and spoke in favour of widows and orphans. They showered threats on the powerful and insisted that accumulated iniquities can only bring about terrible punishments. They maintained that faithfulness to the alliance and lack of justice are inconceivable. Justice to God and justice towards men are inseparable. God is the defender and the liberator of the poor. It is impossible to please God if one does not show solidarity with the emarginated and the poor because God himself is one with them.

The New Testament confirms and amplifies the meaning already given to the word justice in the Old Testament. The fundamental principles of justice are found in the Beatitudes. Justice presupposes a new life which results from conversion which takes place in man's heart but which has to be expressed visibly in social and communitarian life. The *Letter to Philemon* shows that the new freedom brought about by institutionalized justice in society is not different from the justice referred to in the Gospel. When we say that it is not different, we are limiting ourselves to a simple but important assertion which excludes further questions. *We are not trying to blame structures for the evil that prevails. The root of all evil lies within free and responsible people who should be converted by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ in order to live and act as new creatures in the love of*

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<sup>2</sup>. Justice and Peace Pontifical Commission, *Compendium of Social Teaching of the Church*, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2004, pp. 6-7.

*their neighbour, in their search for effective ways to bring about justice, in controlling themselves and in the exercise of virtue.* Here lies the good news of the New Testament: overcoming justice by charity.

In short, charity and love of the poor stand out throughout the New Testament. In fact they are the driving force which inspired Christ's disciples to work for the building of a society where the exploitation of the poor and indifference towards the emarginated were unknown. Through conversion the rich share their wealth with the poor and restitute the wealth which they gained unjustly. This is the only way of welcoming salvation in ones house and in ones heart (*Lk 19:1-10*).

This teaching is also founded on the theology of creation, of the Incarnation and on the Church theology<sup>3</sup>. According to Vatican II, through Jesus Christ, humanity is united to divinity and man is looked upon in a new and clearer way. The new Adam, Christ, in the revelation of the mystery of God and His love, fully manifests man to man himself and reveals to him the nobility of his vocation. The Council says: "Through His incarnation, the Son of God has united himself in some fashion with every man" (*GS 22*). When it understands Christ's message, "the Church cannot abandon man, for his destiny, calling, birth and death, salvation or perdition is closely and unbreakably linked with Christ" (cf *Redemptor Hominis 14*). As such, the Church should defend human dignity. Notwithstanding this, the situation in our Sub-region, does not respect this dignity. So this brings us to some of the major challenges which stem from this situation.

## **II. Some major challenges as regards human dignity**

When one studies the situation in our society, one immediately notices the big challenges which have to be faced as regards human dignity which are: violence, poverty, inadequate distribution of wealth, the rich becoming always richer and the poor always poorer, the ever-growing number of poor people, the philosophy of *business is business* which has become the law of the jungle, the distortion of the concept of democracy, ethnocentric totalitarianism, debt which is incurred not to relieve the miserable situation of thousands of people, unemployment, inadequate education, sects, lack of interconfessional dialogue...

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<sup>3</sup>. Schooyans, M., *Initiation a l'Enseignement social de l'Eglise*, Ed. Emmanuel Paris 1992 p. 10.

*a. The growing poverty in the regions of the Great Lakes*

In order to be able to understand poverty, one has to establish clear criteria to define it. One has to consider the well-being of the individual person and the establishment of the poverty line. Therefore, one considers as poor, those, whose consumption is below average and who cannot avail themselves of the basic services. In the case of these regions, poverty is measured by considering the income, the basic needs such as a decent dwelling, adequate nutrition, health and educational facilities... and other basic functional elements.

For example, according to the human poverty index (HPI) given by the PNUD in the 2004 report, up to the year 2000, 45% of the population in the Sub-region suffered poverty. Here we must pay attention to the economic and social consequences. The inhuman living conditions hinder the realisation of the human person, his calling for development and for salvation, indicate great disrespect towards the human person and present a materialistic vision and conception of human life (*PP* 21-22; *QA* 135). This presents a great challenge to an in depth evangelisation.

*b. The distortion of our democratic systems in the Sub-region*

Man, the defence of human rights and fundamental human liberty, the commitment towards a just and peaceful society in a democratic system which safeguards democratic values, have to be considered. Christians, like all the other citizens, should ensure that democracy remains a political system which ensures that citizens have a say in political decisions and guarantees citizens the possibility to choose, control their political leaders and replace them, in a pacific way, whenever this is felt necessary.

As John Paul II says: a good democratic and political system is not possible without a code of ethics, without values and above all if it is not based on the principle that natural rights are rights and not gifts and that man is the goal and not the means in the system. If not based on these principles, democracy could be changed and transformed into devious or declared totalitarianism. The values which we are speaking about are fundamentally the rights of the human person. Believers who are involved in politics should defend the values of a true democracy which are the good of the human person, his freedom and the good of society as a whole.

Nevertheless, in many African countries, as well as in Burundi, the democratic system did not start off well. Here I quote the words of the



Bishops of Burundi: “Our democracy has deviated right from its very beginning. The fundamental criterion of each government, that is, that of being of service to the people, was never the real basis of the attempt to establish democracy. The political party rather than encouraging competition and dynamism towards progress stopped at being an ethnic assembly. Common good was ignored and individual and ethnic interests became the goals. The country was no longer looked upon as belonging to all and as having to be shared by all. It was no longer the *res publica*, the Republic” (*Letter of 26<sup>th</sup> July 1995*).

From our point of view, this bad start for democracy originated from the fact that our country, like many other African countries, was and still is a satellite or a dependant of foreign powers. Further to this, our leaders and the intellectual élite of Burundi no longer enjoy freedom of thought and do not prove to be creative and inventive.

Here I would like to affirm the words of Mgr. Jerome Gapangwa, Bishop of Uvira (Congo) when he said, “*When faced with local socio-political situations, our leaders and the African élite react by trying to copy foreign solutions or models. These might have given good results elsewhere but are not a universal remedy. African problems require African solutions. Copying foreign models only leads to disaster and inefficiency. Africa should find its own way of organising itself and of establishing democracy*”.

The laity, especially the intellectual élite, should, enlightened by the Gospel, try to realise and overcome the alienation into which they have fallen and understand their responsibility to help in the mental and cultural liberating process of their fellow countrymen.

### *c. The challenge of ethnocentric totalitarianism which goes against human dignity*

In the Sub-region the problem of ethnocentrism has become a major problem which has to be solved urgently. All sorts of exclusions have to be stopped and people have to forget ethnic rights and start thinking about universal rights. Ethnocentrism is in actual fact a cover-up for the egoism of certain individuals and groups who subject universal interests to the interests of a particular group of people. In fact, our social conflicts, which normally end up in bloodshed, originate from that which Adrien Ntabona calls ethnocentric totalitarianism.

Ethnocentric totalitarianism refuses to respect individual autonomy and cannot distance itself from the idea of its group without risking

exclusion from the group and even life itself. Ethnic groups are so closed within themselves that they do not tolerate their members to behave differently from the group. They do not allow their members to have their personal opinion or to be critical. They all think like a herd. All moral values are sacrificed in the egoistic interest of the ethnic group. In moral judgements, ethnic criteria of a sound conscience give way to ethnocentric criteria because the deciding factor of the behaviour of the ethnic group is the interest of the group and the individual is only a pawn in the hands of the group.

Those who occupy places of responsibility within the Church should insist with the political leaders that they are to ensure that every person has a right to be accepted and integrated within society. This should apply to all, including refugees and the emarginated. All efforts should be made to forbid any system closed in one's own ethnic identity. In order to achieve this, a great effort has to be made to educate people to be open and tolerant. One has also to pay attention to this when it comes to agreements at international level with those, who are in favour of ethnic cleansing, or with illegal and oppressive regimes.

#### *d. The challenge of inter-religious dialogue to defend man's place in society*

Within the process for peace and democratization, the greatest challenge, which every Church and every religious association faces, is to promote an all-round inter-religious dialogue. Inter-religious dialogue could be an effective way whereby, together with other confessions, the Church can find ways for promoting peace and justice, for protecting the weak and the downtrodden and means for overcoming all types of fundamentalism.

### **III. Some reflections on social commitment as guidelines for social action**

In order to be effective, when working as a team in the social field, we should base our efforts on values and conviction. Effectiveness stems from a person's interiority, from his spirituality, from an openness to life and to change, from a will enriched by experience. We thus come to some reflections on social commitment. These are some practical suggestions if we want to work for a society which is righteous and solidary, which is more human and fraternal and consequently more peaceful.

### *a. Promoting spiritual dynamism*

Etymologically the word “spiritual” signifies an interior breath, the spirit, a vital dynamism, which, even when infused in matter, it overpowers it and leaves its mark on it. Transformed by faith, believers are imbued with spiritual dynamism, which, throughout history has led them to be witnesses of deep social commitment. Some of these examples are: Vincent de Paul, John Bosco, Francesca Cabrini, Cardinal Lavignerie, Leone XIII...

Spiritual dynamism may be referred to as the “forgotten dimension” because of its interiority and its profound and religious dimension. As Paul Tillich rightly says: “Being religious means provoking oneself to ask questions about one’s own life and being open to the answers, even if these are very upsetting... A religion, in all its true essence, identifies itself with the human being in all that which relates to the sense of life such as one’s own existence<sup>4</sup>. This interiority opens up the vertical dimension which guides the choice of values and social projects. Therefore, we must promote this spiritual dynamism which in turn promotes social humanism.

### *b. Promoting social humanism*

Humanism is based on the sovereignty of the human person and on civilizing values. Some of these are: the sacredness of life, the dignity and sovereignty of the human person, respect towards psychic and moral integrity, equality among individuals and peoples, democratic freedoms (including religious freedom), economic growth to help human development, the supremacy of politics over economy, social rights...

This humanism is complete when it includes the vertical dimension. The expression “social humanism” carries with it solidarity in the sense that true human development includes all men without any social or economic distinction, any race... This is what Paul VI meant when he speaks of full-bodied and solidary development, that is have more “so that they might increase their personal worth” (cfr *PP* 42-43).

### *c. Promoting change in our Region<sup>5</sup>*

The change which we are suggesting here is not to be taken to mean any change. One can change for the better but even for the worse. From the

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<sup>4</sup>. Tillich P., *La dimension oubliée*, Bruges, DDB 1969 p. 49.

<sup>5</sup>. Louis, O’Neill, *Initiation a l’éthique sociale*, Fides, Quebec, 1998 - pp.460-461.

Christian point of view, change has to mean continuity and evolution. Continuity safeguards the acquired values “does not throw away the child with the hot water”. On the other hand, the evolution of social conditions cannot come about without changes and innovations. The ethic of change does away with outdated structures as these have definitely to be changed when they bring about social distortions. When the established order consolidates inequality, inefficiency and desperation, the search for change becomes a moral obligation.

*d. Promoting information and combating misinformation*

Christians should involve themselves in politics in order to work for a better society wherein peace, social justice and equality prevail. This is everybody's right and duty. Lay Christians should work to create an awareness within the whole community as to the information given about the rights of those who are deceived, on social injustice, on false statements and about untruths which are circulated to incriminate enemies. People will know better how to react if they are well informed. Being informed about current events, especially during wars, helps not only to restore situations back to normal but also to prevent things from happening. Lay Christians are not afraid to put social pressure to change oppressive structures. Rather than reverting to violence, they should be taught to revert to strikes, boycotts, civil disobedience or marches and manifestations for peace. These are ways of putting pressure without reverting to violence and are actions which should be acceptable in a democracy. The aim is not to have a confrontation with the adversary or the oppressing group but to undermine his political, economic ideologies behind his power. One can thus understand that lay Christians should be educated to revert to non-violent action and to dialogue.

*e. Educating and forming believers to revert to dialogue and to non-violence*

In their messages of the 13<sup>th</sup> December 1996, 29<sup>th</sup> August 1997 and 28<sup>th</sup> May 1998, the Bishops of Burundi insist that peace is not possible without a sincere and profound dialogue among all those who live in Burundi. Our aim is to work for peace in our country all together. In many African traditions, dialogue has been the way to reconciliation in families hit by conflicts, among neighbours and between countries. Only this guarantees respect to all and helps to rebuild relations and re-establish reciprocal

respect. Christians, who are present in all spheres of social life, should be well educated in sincere dialogue in political life. This means that everyone should denounce all untruths, try to find out the truth about one's enemies and realize and accept one's own responsibility in the conflicts.

Following the example of their Master, lay Christians should be committed to non-violence because violence goes against man, against justice and against peace. Therefore non-violence is founded on the conviction that every man is unique and that his life and dignity as a human person should always be respected. It is impossible to establish peace, promote justice or defend democracy through violence which is the negation of these three values. That is why the ethics of non-violence go against all actions which ignore the equal dignity of each individual and is against theft, the exploitation of man by man and disrespect towards human life.

This presupposes a spiritual conversion. Without God, non-violence risks at becoming an imposed obligation which is not so effective. Educating in non-violence is a permanent educational process which should reach all public and private life sectors. The Church should intervene by trying to reach all men and man as a whole in one way or another.

#### *f. Priority of the formation of consciences*

All religious confessions should, in a convincing and incessant way, proclaim the message of universal fraternity which finds its roots in God. This message is inspired by the Holy Spirit and proceeds from brotherly love. We, believers, should be the forbearers of the utopia of universal fraternity<sup>6</sup> among our fellow men. This spirit of fraternity should be evident in the just distribution and sharing of wealth and in our respect towards each other's differences<sup>7</sup>.

Our mission is "to be the voice of those who have no voice" (*Ecclesia in Africa* 70 and 106). The community of believers is called upon to proclaim and defend human rights and to promote social justice persistently. The human person is endowed with a value and a dignity which goes beyond any ethnic, political or any other affiliation to a particular group. It is the primary work of the Church to stress this fact.

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<sup>6</sup>. Utopia means no illusion but a dynamic project rooted in reality aimed to carry out an alternative project.

<sup>7</sup>. Ferrari G., *Mondialisation, un phénomène positif?*

This shows how important it is to form and educate consciences to value the sacredness of life as man's primary right. In actual fact, one who kills another person negates his own humanity and reifies the other person's life as well as himself. He prepares his own death and denies God in whose image man is created. As such he is an atheist without knowing it.

Although relativism might be accepted in cultural and political regimes, it cannot be applied to moral values. God's commandments are not negotiable. Especially in politics, it is important to insist that persons and social projects should complement one another in order that the full truth may outshine the partial vision which individuals and groups might have. In fact, it is precisely because of absolute relativism that political leaders take it upon themselves to bring about discord in order to gain and retain power. Those who lead religious confessions should instil social, political and moral values in their followers and insist that these should be at the basis of all the social projects which many countries, especially those in the southern region, need so badly.

We would like to mention in particular the right to life which should make it possible for anyone to live with anybody, even with one's adversaries, in full respect of each other. The rights of the weak and of minorities, which determine the level of maturity in a society, should not be forgotten. In political spheres, where very often these values are ignored, honesty and truth should be safeguarded. Lastly, the idea of the common good, the nation and the state should prevail to overcome the interests of individuals, groups and parties and to ensure professional consciousness which is progressively diminishing even in the actual context of democratization. One should start thinking of leading the people and their leaders to appreciate diversity and complementarity in social projects and the concurrent running of diverse projects in a nation as a contribution towards the enrichment for their country.

## **Conclusion**

We know very well that throughout history, evangelization has always had to face two fundamental challenges. These are: a certain "disembodied spiritualism" which looks at faith purely from the vertical dimension forgetting completely the meaning of the Incarnation in today's history and a certain "political messianism" which instead, looks only in a horizontal direction. This stresses socio-economic and political liberation and

tries to change events at the expense of necessary individual conversion and the integral promotion and development of the whole man and of each and every man<sup>8</sup>.

True faith in Jesus Christ should make us keep the two dimensions in mind, the vertical and the horizontal, mysticism and politics<sup>9</sup>. We should be committed to defend human dignity, to work for the common good, for people's wellbeing, to safeguard human rights and to encourage the participation of each and every citizen in the running of his country...

We should not be discouraged. "*Duc in altum*, Catholic Action, face the future with courage!" John Paul II told us. "Faith, which I love best, is hope" (C. Péguy). Indeed, there is the hope of free men and women, who strengthened by faith, decide to change society. They become collaborators in the work of providence "*pars providentiae*", as Thomas d'Aquino said<sup>10</sup>. They have a daring hope and a creative utopia, which make them look at "future realities" in the light of the prevailing virtual situations. These projects only materialize through the efforts of men and women of good or rather strong will.

I would like to stress that hope is absolutely necessary in those who have to face "society's bosses". These bosses are the ones who have money, control information, manipulate knowledge and try to dictate laws to those who are politically powerful; those who try to undermine "utopists" by suggesting them two unquestionable arguments.

The arguments which they present are:

a. "society's bosses" could be the only possible reformers because unbeatable capitalism, which follows a continual adaptation process, is the key for a better tomorrow. The philosophy *business is business* in mercantile culture, the ideology of market globalization and competitiveness (the new law of the jungle) are bound to bring happiness to humanity. "Society's bosses", who may be found more or less everywhere, tell us that we have to be patient and be ready to sacrifice ourselves for a short period of time. They maintain that our only hope lies here.

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<sup>8</sup>. Paul VI, *Populorum Progression* 14

<sup>9</sup>. Niciteretse, S., *Forming and educating laypeople to responsibility in society* in IFCA Newsletter 2/2000

<sup>10</sup>. Thomas d'Aquin, *Summa Theologiae* 1<sup>a</sup> 2<sup>a</sup> e Q. 91 art. 2, c.

b. “Those who hold power” tell us that “misfortunes will befall those who do not uphold their advice that there should be only one line of thought. Reformists are dangerous utopists. They ignore economy rules, underestimate the costs which has to be paid for the change they propose and are not realistic”<sup>11</sup>. Today, those who hold power, those who influence public opinion, as well as the politicians, also share this opinion.

Faced by them, those who uphold the idea of a righteous, solidary and a more human and fraternal society are like David in front of Goliath or like the prophet Elijah in front of the priests of Baal. One must have an unshakable hope to face these challenges. Strengthened by faith, hope acquires an unequalled dynamism and becomes, so to say, unbeatable. Believers are convinced that creation is waiting to be set free (*Rm* 8:22), that the heaven will eventually ferment the dough, that the spiritual Advent begins here on earth in the material universe, that the Resurrection represents the victory of the Holy Spirit who renews the face of the earth and that the poor and the meek, very often forgotten in the reckonings of man, will be listed in the Lamb’s book of life (*Rv* 21:23-27).

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<sup>11</sup> *The Revelation* 21,23-27.



8<sup>th</sup> August 2006

Eucharistic Celebration

## HOMILY

H. E. Msgr. Francesco Lambiasi

IFCA Ecclesiastic Assistant

**A**s we have read in the first Reading, Paul dedicates a whole chapter of his *Letter to the Romans* to greet some brothers and sisters from that community he longs so much to visit.

The first ones to be greeted are two Christians, a couple, Aquila and Prisca, to whom the apostle uses words of unbounded gratitude.

Let's listen again to this brother and very warm greeting: *Romans* 16,3-5:

*“My greetings to Prisca and Aquila, my fellow-workers in Christ Jesus who risked their own necks to save my life; to them, thanks not only from me, but from whole the churches among the gentiles; and my greetings to the church at their house.”*

This couple is particularly dear to us as members of Catholic Action: it has been quoted to us as a sort of our “ancestors” when after the II Vatican Council, the pastoral teaching of the Church wanted to express the most characteristic note, the one about the direct and organic link with the pastors as regard to evangelization: “lay people may be called in different ways and in a closer co-operation with the apostolate of the hierarchy like those women and men who helped the apostle Paul to announce the Gospel and worked hard for the Lord (*Lumen Gentium* 33)”.

Let's retrace the path made by Aquila and Prisca to catch, in their apostolical outline, the most current features of our great ideal and of our most true and intimate identity. On Aquila and Prisca's traces we synthetically collect a *history*, a *word*, a *deacony*.

### 1. A *history*

First of all let's the texts talk, obviously they cannot be read as a recipe

book to be applied mechanically in our situations, but they can offer some points of reference and some useful orientations for our goal. These texts can be grouped in two series: the first, the one of Paul's texts (*1Co* 16,19; *Rm* 16,3-5a, *2Tm* 4,19) and the second, the one of Luke's texts (in *Acts* 18,1-3,18,26).

From these two passages we get some general information about Prisca and her spouse which will help us to fix the service they offered for the evangelization. Aquila is a Jew, from the Roman province of Ponto. Prisca or Priscilla, a nickname, probably she is also Jew, with a Latin name as her husband, and according to the spreading habit of the time. According to the *Acts*, the couple arrived from Corinth, after the expulsion of the Jews from Rome, as ordered by the emperor Claudius, towards the year 49. If, as it seems, the edict by Claudius hit not only the leaders and activists, we can conclude the couple was indicated in the capital of the empire because of their missionary fervour.

Aquila and Prisca were "curtain makers" and they had to be wealthy since theirs was "*domus ecclesia*" in Ephesus: at their home the Christian community met (*1Co* 16,19; cfr also *Ro* 16,4). They had a curtain factory where, during his Corinth staying, also the apostle, their guest, worked (*Acts* 18,3).

Together with Paul in that time they cooperated in the ministry in Corinth for more than a year and half (*Acts* 18,11.18). Then, during the third journey made by Paul for other two years and three months (*Acts* 19,8) they are in Ephesus, where the *First Letter to the Corinthians* was written (16,19). For another couple of years, between the second and third journey of the apostle, the couple continued to evangelize without him in Ephesus. One of the happiest results of their work was the transformation of Apollos in apostle accurately and wholly educated in "the way of God" (*Acts* 18,24-28).

## **2. A word**

The title Paul attributes to Prisca and her husband is "co-operators". Both in the profane and religious Greek world the word *synergos* indicates someone (a god or a man) who gives help or cooperation to another, or cooperates for a precise goal together with others.

As regard to the New Testament, the word is repeated 13 times and always referred to people: 12 people in Paul (*1Th* 3,2; *1Co* 3,9; *Ph* 2,25; 4,3; *Phm* 1,24; *2Co* 1,24; 8,23; *Ro* 16,3.9.21; *Col* 4,11) and once in 3 *John* 8. It is

then a typical Paulin word the apostle uses exclusively referred to his missionary action and with a different meaning from the one used before him. In fact he uses it referred to people committed with him in his missionary work as true “co-workers”. From the exegetic analysis of the readings there are some elements which are fundamental to define Paul’s co-operators.

The main ones are:

- a. the *synergos* is commissioned by God. He/she is not “employed” by Paul, but rather an authentically co-operator who carries on a duty entrusted by God. In this way all *synergoi* - included Paul - are as a matter of principle in the same condition of dependence from God who has assumed them as his co-operators: “We are, in fact co-operators of God” (1 Co 3,9).
- b. The *synergos* co-operates in the same common work. He/she carries on Paul’s identical activity even if duties and functions are different (cfr 1Co 3, 4-8). So *synergos* does not indicate either a functional submission to Paul nor a purely friendly relationship as the one established among work or mission mates. We rather want to indicate a co-responsibility in carrying on a common work. Since Paul defines himself by this word means that he does not identifies himself with an employer who gives different duties to some helpers or performers.
- c. To determine a further specific meaning of co-operation it is fundamental the text 1Co 3,5-15. In it we find the traits of the physiognomy of “co-operators”. First of all he stresses the “ministeriality” or deaconry of co-operators; these ones are only instruments that can plant or irrigate, but it is God who makes grow. Then it is underlined that the basement of co-operation is the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Paul as a good architect has put the basement, the others have built on it, but “nobody can lay down any other foundation than the one which is there already, namely Jesus Christ” (v.11). This Gospel is the rule for all co-operators, even for Paul himself. At last with reference to God’s judgement, Paul stresses both that each co-operator has to account for his work to God only and that the judgement on his co-operators is reserved only to God (cfr vv. 12-15).
- d. Even though Paul was aware and jealous of his apostolical authority in his missionary work, nevertheless he acknowledges the maturity of his co-operators and their autonomous capability. For this reason he never puts himself above them but always next to them. He never tried to keep

them tied to himself or to debase them to simple performers in his apostolical deeds. Shortly: Paul's personal parameters were never used as rules for his co-operators' missionary activity, but only the preached Gospel.

### **3. A *deaconry***

Aquila and Prisca are a couple at the service of welcoming and at the service of the Word.

#### **3.1 - *At the service of welcoming***

The texts we are dealing with talk about the welcoming of Paul in Corinth (*Acts* 18,2-3) and twice about the welcoming in their house of the Christian community (*ICo* 16,9; *Ro* 16,5a).

For the first Christians hospitality was reserved to the travelling missionaries. Detached from everything, without a shelter and a family, the missionaries are hosted in the house of brothers in the faith (*Acts* 18,3.7; *Mk* 10,29ss; *Lk* 18,29ss). Hospitality is a real service to the Gospel: in the diversity of the situations, both sedentary and travelling Christians, are responsible of evangelization. This movement will continue. In this way *Didaché* will ask to reserve a warm welcoming to those missionaries (*Didaché* 11, 3-4) as well as in the *Third Letter* by John, the presbytery warmly suggests the community to welcome the travelling ones since they are at the service of the Lord and host them means to co-operate to evangelization (*Jn* 6b-8). It is in this spirit that Aquila and Prisca welcome Paul in Corinth and give him a work (*Acts* 18,2ss). The apostle is in a difficult moment: after the failure at Athens he has arrived in Corinth, depressed, and very soon he has to fight with the strong Jew colony of the place (*Acts* 18,6-7; cfr *1Th* 2,14-16). The friendship of the Jew-Christian couple is the first service Paul has received from Aquila and Prisca, a service he will always be grateful.

Another service Aquila and his wife offer to evangelization is the hospitality to the Christian community. This confirms the situation of ease of the couple; they had to own a house big enough to host meetings of groups made up between thirty/fifty people who gathered in houses to share their faith, pray, celebrate the Eucharist and the brotherly *agape* (*ICo* 11, 20-34).

In the final part of the *First Letter to the Corinthians*, Paul praises Stephan and his family for their service for peace and unity. Also Aquila

and Prisca had to had such a service. They were capable of it: as Jews of the diaspora, they were open both to the Judaic world and the Greek-Roman one. Paul praises openly the gratitude of the Churches of the Gentiles towards the couple (*Ro* 16,4). This needs a constant task to overcome all ethnical, religious and social accounts to build communion and *koinonia*.

### *3.2 - At the service of the Word*

We have to remember in the New Testament not only the apostles assure the service to the Word (*Acts* 2,4). Also Stephen and Philip announce the good news (*Acts* 6.5ss; 8,5-10). But all Paul's co-operators are at the service of the announcement of the Word. Also Aquila and Prisca, as *synergoi* of Paul, co-operate with him to the birth of the community in Corinth and Ephesus. In a special way they carry on this minister towards Apollo after his arrival in Ephesus. Jew from Alexandria, probable disciple of Filonian school, great orator, Apollo was already Christian but his doctrine was very close to "johannites" world of the primitive Christianity. The couple is soon aware of some holes in Apollo's teaching and they burden themselves to "give him more detailed instruction about the Way" (*Acts* 18,26), offering Paul one of his most brilliant co-operators. Is it exaggerated to state this couple, whose children are never named, has generated a true apostle to the Church?

### **Conclusion**

Let's go back to the passage we started with: we can find in it some traits which well define the CA lay people: to announce Jesus Christ, work hard with the apostle, to play his/her life to save others', to welcome the Christian community in his/her own home. We could say the apostolical ideal of CA is to announce the Gospel as lay people - in communion with our Pastors - to save the world.

Let's pray the Holy Spirit, the invisible still always present protagonist of the evangelization, in communion with Mary, with John Paul II, untiring evangelizer of the old and new millennium, and with Benedict XVI. Let's pray so that our Lord never leaves his Church without Christian passionate lay people who announce by ordinary words of life - as Aquila and Prisca - the only Name under the sky where we have received the salvation, the one of Jesus Christ our Lord. In fact "nobody else can save us" (*Acts* 4,12).

"No, not a formula will save us, but a Person, and the assurance which he gives to us. *I am with you!*" (*NMI* 29).

## FINAL STATEMENT

**F**rom 5<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> August 2006 the III African Continental Meeting - promoted by IFCA Secretariat - was held in Uganda in the diocese of Lugazi.

There were delegations of CA associations and movements from Burundi, Rwanda, Tanzania, Zambia, Rumania and Italy as well as from the different dioceses of Uganda. They were welcomed by H.E. Msgr. Matthias Ssekamanya, Bishop of Lugazi and President of Uganda Episcopal Conference and by H.E. Msgr. Christofer Kakooze, President of the Commission for the Lay Apostolate.

The theme of the meeting was: “The future of Christianity in Africa and in the world. *Catholic Action in Africa, launch out into the deep, look to the future whith courage!*”. The Gospel reference “*You are the salt of the earth, you are the light of the world*” was taken from the theme of the Second Special Synod of the Bishops for Africa.

The participants bishops, priests, laypeople belonging to CA and to other associations and movements, deepened the theme of the *Lineamenta*, recently proposed to the African Church in preparation to the III Assembly. They paid a special attention to the call to be fully aware of the laypeople’s vocation: called through Baptism to become co-responsible in the Church to be witnesses of Christ in the world, called to assume the glorious duty to evangelize one’s own continent “at the service of reconciliation, justice and peace”.

The highest moment of the meeting was the Eucharistic concelebration at Numugongo Shrine in the Solemnity of the Transfiguration, presided over by the Apostolic Nuncio H.E. Msgr. Christophe Pierre. The examples of Charles Lwanga and his lay companions, who witnessed their faithfulness to Christ through bloodshed, is extremely relevant and remains a shining example for the laypeople of the III Millennium both in Africa and in the world.

At the opening of the meeting as well as at Namugongo, H.E. Msgr. Francesco Lambiasi, IFCA Ecclesiastical Assistant and ICA General Assistant, read the encouraging message addressed by the Holy Father Benedict XVI to the participants and to the whole CA in Africa through Cardinal Angelo Sodano, Secretary of the State.

The Council documents, especially *Apostolicam Actuositatem*, *Christifideles Laici* and *Lineamenta*, were the thread running through the moments of reflection, confrontation and dialogue. There emerged the urgency of well prepared lay people, qualified according to the Social Doctrine of the Church, as well as the following priorities: basic formation in the parishes, in the small communities, at diocesan level; promotion of peace, reconciliation and solidarity at national and international level; formation of leaders in socio-political and economical spheres; building the Church as a family and working with Christian families, rediscovering the laypeople's mission, educating according to the Christian values and caring for the Catechesis, involving youths.

The presentation of the associative realities both of the African and the European countries and of the ecclesiastical regions of Uganda was very interesting. It was followed by the presentation of CA vocation with a special reference to both the Council teaching - the "four notes" stated in AA 20 - and the postconciliar *Christifideles Laici* n. 30 and 31, as well as to the "three duties" entrusted by John Paul II to the CA of the III Millennium in Loreto in 2004: contemplation, communion and mission.

From the reflection upon the "four notes": ecclesiality, lay status, organicity and cooperation with the Hierarchy - which are to be known and developed - raised the urgency for CA to continue, qualify, spread laypeople's formation, as recalled also in the *Lineamenta* (cfr n. 66).

A global formation which should make the most of the Social Teaching of the Church, should be nourished by the prayer and should become a pedagogy of holiness for the laypeople in their ordinary daily life. A formation for children, youth, adults, families, school, carried out through contents, methods, instruments, proposals.

In today's context with a multiplicity of associations and new movements, the validity of an association such as CA, a gift of the Holy Spirit to the Church, was confirmed, with full respect for all the other lay associations.

A CA which is "one" in its common characteristics and "diverse" in its need to be inculturated and organized in forms that are appropriate to the different contexts.

This characteristic can foster the "spirituality of communion" in cooperation with the Pastors and at the service of unity and "to witness the beauty of

a living faith that transforms the daily life and offers itself in an attractive way to all those who demand the reason of hope that lives in us believers” (from the Holy Father’s *Message*).

A preferential way was found out to walk along together: the twinnings, the exchanges among “sister CA” at the service of “sister Churches”, in order to make diocesan laypeople grow, with a special attention to the youths: mature and co-responsible laypeople, with wide horizons open to solidarity.

At the end of the meeting the participants thanked the Holy Father, assuring him of their commitment, affection and faithfulness, at the school of Aquila and Prisca, of St Charles Lwanga and his companions, of so many laypeople who have lived fully their own vocation in cooperation with the apostles in the history of the Church as well as today.

Lugazi, 8<sup>th</sup> August 2006



## **III African Continental Meeting**

Uganda, Lugazi, 5<sup>th</sup> - 9<sup>th</sup> August 2006

***“You are the salt of the earth...  
You are the light of the world” (Mt 5:13-14)***

### **THE FUTURE OF CHRISTIANITY IN AFRICA AND IN THE WORLD**

*Catholic Action in Africa, launch out into the deep,  
look to the future with courage!*

#### **PROGRAMME**

##### **Saturday, August 5<sup>th</sup> - Opening session**

Arrival of the delegates at the Colline Hotel, Mukono

- 3.30 pm      Prayer to the Holy Spirit
- 4.00 pm      Presentation of the Delegations
- 5.00 pm      Opening Eucharistic Celebration  
                 Presided over by H.E. Msgr. Matthias SSEKAMANYA  
                 Bishop of Lugazi  
                 President of the Uganda Catholic Bishops' Conference  
                 *St. Joseph Naggalama S.S.S. Choir*
- 6.30 pm      Official opening
- Mr. Gideon OBBO, Laity President
  - H.E. Msgr. Christopher KAKOOZA  
      Bishop Chairman of the Laity Commission,  
      Uganda
  - H.E. Msgr. Francesco LAMBIASI  
      IFCA Ecclesiastical Assistant  
      Italian Catholic Action General Assistant

**Sunday, August 6<sup>th</sup>**

***The martyrs of Uganda witnesses of faith***

- 7.30 am Talk: “*The martyrs of Uganda witnesses of faith for Africa and for the universal Church in the III millennium*”  
H.E. Msgr. Matthias SSEKAMANYA
- 10.15 am Eucharistic Celebration  
at Uganda Martyrs’ National Shrine  
Presided over by H.E. Msgr. Christophe PIERRE  
Apostolic Nuncio Uganda  
*St. Francis Choir, Christ the King Parish*
- 1.00 pm Presentation of the continental Meeting:  
- Mr. Gideon OBBO  
- H.E. Msgr. Christopher KAKOOZA  
- Short presentation: “*Identity and nature of CA and IFCA*” (IFCA secretariat)

**Monday, August 7<sup>th</sup>**

***The Future of Christianity***

- 7.00 am Eucharistic Celebration at the Colline Hotel  
Presided over by H.E. Msgr. Evariste NGOYAGOYE  
Bishop of Bujumbura, President of the Episcopal  
Commission for the Lay Apostolate, Burundi  
*St. Paul Mukono parish Choir*
- 9.00 am **Session I**  
“*The laity: be the Light and Salt in Africa - The Future of Christianity in Africa and in the World*”  
Challenges for the evangelization towards the II Synod  
Mr. Gideon OBBO, Uganda Laity President
- 11.00 am **Session II**  
“*Social Teaching of the Church and Way Forward*”  
Rev. Salvator NICITERETSE, Secretary of Episcopal  
Commission for the Lay Apostolate  
IFCA ecclesiastical assistant for Africa

- 3.00 pm Discussions in Small Groups
- 4.30 pm Small Groups report in Plenary Session

**Tuesday, August 8<sup>th</sup>**

***Catholic Action's identity and commitment***

- 6.30 am Eucharistic Celebration at the Colline Hotel  
Presided over by H.E. Msgr. Francesco LAMBIASI  
*St. Kizito Lugazi Parish Choir*
- 9.00 am **Session III**  
PANEL - Prospects of CA and IFCA  
*"Catholic Action one and diverse"*  
  
Oana TUDUCE, Rumanian Catholic Action  
Interventions of CA delegates of every country/1
- 11.00 am Interventions of CA delegates of every country /2  
IFCA in Africa: situation and prospects
- 3.00 pm Discussions in Small Groups for final document
- 4.30 pm Small Groups report in Plenary session
- 7.00 pm Final Prayer  
  
Closing ceremonies

**Wednesday, August 9<sup>th</sup>**

- 6.30 am Eucharistic Celebration  
Presided over by H.E. Msgr. Servilien NZAKAMWITA  
Bishop of Byumba  
President of the Episcopal Commission  
for the Lay Apostolate, Rwanda

## LIST OF THE PARTICIPANTS

Uganda - Lugazi	H.E. Mathias Ssekamanya
Uganda - Lugazi	Fr. Ignatius Kayita
Uganda - Lugazi	Agnes Nsubuga
Uganda - Lugazi	Andwen Busuukuva
Uganda - Lugazi	Catherine Nabwami
Uganda - Lugazi	Cristopher Nsubuga
Uganda - Lugazi	Denis Bakimera
Uganda - Lugazi	Dennis Yiga
Uganda - Lugazi	Fr. Antony Balagira
Uganda - Lugazi	Fr. Denis Luntamye
Uganda - Lugazi	Fr. Deogratias Mugabo
Uganda - Lugazi	Fr. Emmanuel Walakira
Uganda - Lugazi	Fr. Ignatius Kivumbi
Uganda - Lugazi	Fr. Ignatius Ndawula
Uganda - Lugazi	Fr. Paul Muyimwa
Uganda - Lugazi	Fr. Paul Ssebitoogo
Uganda - Lugazi	Fr. Pius Nuumva
Uganda - Lugazi	Francis Ssempebwa
Uganda - Lugazi	Fred Mulumba
Uganda - Lugazi	Joseph Lutaaya
Uganda - Lugazi	Josephine Mary Nabuyungo
Uganda - Lugazi	Maria Kato Nantume
Uganda - Lugazi	Maria Namubiru
Uganda - Lugazi	Mary Assumpta Gidudu
Uganda - Lugazi	Rosemary Misigalo
Uganda - Lugazi	Rosemary Nabicemera
Uganda - Lugazi	Sr. Elizabeth Ann
	l.s.o.s.f. Nansubuga
Uganda - Arua	Fr. Aquilino Acidri
Uganda - Arua	Martha Tiperu
Uganda - Arua	Robert Adrabo Atiku
Uganda - Jinja	Emmanuel Mutimula
Uganda - Jinja	Fr. Joseph Balikudembe
Uganda - Jinja	Margaret Kitamirike

Uganda - Kampala	H.E. Christopher Kakooza
Uganda - Kampala	Aloysius Mutyaba Mukudi
Uganda - Kampala	Charles B. Mbaziira
Uganda - Kampala	Charles. Ndawula
Uganda - Kampala	Dr. Martin Nsubuga
Uganda - Kampala	Jean-Marie Nsambu
Uganda - Kampala	Lawrence d.m. Mulyazzaawo
Uganda - Kampala	Martine Kyaga
Uganda - Kampala	Patrick s.f.o. Bwire
Uganda - Kampala	Peter Lusembo
Uganda - Kampala	Robert Eddi Ssempe
Uganda - Kampala	Semakula Kiwauka
Uganda - Kampala	Susan Muwanga
Uganda - Kampala	Vincent Musubire
Uganda - Kasana- Luwero	Florence Nassanga Musoke
Uganda - Kasana- Luwero	Joseph Ochera
Uganda - Kasese	Augustine Murugahara
Uganda - Kasese	Teopista Asiiimwe
Uganda - Kiyinda Mityana	Prossy Kasumba
Uganda - Kiyinda Mityana	Vincent Katende
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Uganda - Kotido	Ventonrina Talamoi
Uganda - Masaka	Francis Xavier Namugera
Uganda - Masaka	Mary Kikambi
Uganda - Mbarara	Ageno Agnes Tinkasiimire
Uganda - Moroto	H.E. Henry A. Ssentongo
Uganda - Moroto	Fr. Martin Odong
Uganda - Moroto	Lucy Akol
Uganda - Soroti	Eric Okiror
Uganda - Soroti	Hellen Acen
Uganda - Tororo	Josue Okoth
Uganda - Tororo	Rose Ndegezi
Uganda -	Joseph Alumansi
Uganda -	Gideon Obbo
Uganda -	Matia T. Lukaayi
Uganda -	Beatrice Ventile Ogony

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Burundi - Bujumbura  
Burundi - Bujumbura  
Burundi - Bujumbura  
Burundi - Bujumbura  
Burundi - Bujumbura  
Burundi - Ruyigi  
Burundi - Bujumbura  
Burundi - Bujumbura  
Burundi - Bubanza

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abbé Salvator Niciteretse  
Térence Mbonabuca  
Félicité Niyongere  
Thomas Nijimbere  
Anitha Ndayiragije  
Justin Ndacijimana  
Jean-Bosco Nyanawi  
Julien Mpabwanimana  
Conrad Bubumi

Rwanda -  
Rwanda - Kigali  
Rwanda - Kabgayi  
Rwanda - Gikonaoro  
Rwanda - Byumba  
Rwanda - Ruhengeri

Augustin Karenzi  
Etienne Hagumimkna  
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Tanzania - Kigoma

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Fr. John C. Msemwa Mbivilila

Zambia -  
Zambia -

Fr. Obino Mulenga  
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St. Charles Lwanga and Companions,  
Martyrs of Uganda

"You are the salt of the earth...  
You are the light of the world"

(Mt 5, 13-14)

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