



FINAL MESSAGE, 18th SECAM Plenary Assembly and Golden Jubilee

Jul 30, 2019

KAMPALA, UGANDA -

MESSAGE

“That they may know Christ and have life in abundance” (Jn 17:3; 10:10).

1. The celebration of the Golden Jubilee of the Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar (SECAM) and its 18th Plenary Assembly took place from 19 to 29 July 2019, in Kampala (Uganda), on the theme “Church Family of God in Africa, celebrate your jubilee, proclaim Jesus Christ your Saviour”. At the end of this Plenary Assembly, which was devoted to pastoral reflections on the theme “That they may know Christ and have life in abundance” (Jn 17:3; 10:10). We, the Pastors address this Message to the Church Family of God in Africa and Madagascar

I. The Jubilee, a Time of Thanksgiving

2. We give thanks to God the giver of life for all his goodness bestowed on Africa, “the new homeland of Christ” (Pope Paul VI); strengthened by his word and the sacraments, we surrender ourselves to be guided by the Holy Spirit.

3. We are grateful to God for the pilgrimage of Pope Paul VI to Kampala in memory of the Martyrs of Uganda in 1969, during which he addressed a strong message to Africa: “You Africans are now missionaries to yourselves, the church of Christ is well and truly planted in this blessed soil”. “You may and you must have African Christianity.”

4. We give thanks to God for the missionaries past and present who have helped Africa to know Christ “the Way the Truth and Life” (Jn. 14:6).

5. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to the Holy Father Pope Francis. In his Message he encourages SECAM to continue to be of valuable service to the local churches throughout the entire continent of Africa. We are also thankful to the Congregation for the Evangelization of the Peoples.

6. We express our sincere thanks to the Catholic Church in Uganda, which through her pastors, men and women religious, the lay faithful, and the youth, has shown us very generous hospitality.

7. We are sincerely grateful to the people of Uganda, the President of the Republic with his Government and the Parliament for their warm welcome, hospitality and support during our stay here in this beautiful country.

8. We equally grateful to the media, security agents and all the bodies that have contributed to the success of this Jubilee.

II. The Jubilee, a time of communion

9. Since the launch of the Golden Jubilee, we have experienced with joy a true communion of Christian communities, priests and religious congregations of the continent with SECAM.

10. This communion is rooted in our common faith in Christ our Saviour through the Holy Spirit. The prayer of the Jubilee and the reflections proposed for each month have given rise to a spiritual dynamism, reinforced by the memory of our holy martyrs of Uganda.

11. The presence in Kampala of Cardinals, Bishops, Priests, men and women religious and lay faithful from various countries in Africa, Madagascar and Islands, Europe, America and Asia, demonstrates the universality of the Church which is rooted in the death and resurrection of Christ.

12. This Jubilee was also a time of ecumenical communion, as witnessed by the presence among us of the representatives of our sister Churches. In giving up their lives to and for Christ, the martyrs of Uganda of all Christian denominations had already invited us to live according to the will of Christ: "May all be one, so that the world may believe" (Jn 17:21).

13. The Golden Jubilee of SECAM is a commitment to the service of reconciliation, justice and peace which promotes communion and pastoral solidarity which enables us to stand together against: ideological colonization, land grabbing, political and democratic destabilization, human trafficking, terrorism and arms trafficking, etc.

III. Jubilee, a Time of Hope

14. Confronted with the anguish of our people, SECAM from its beginning aimed at being a sign of hope, especially for families and our countries.

15. The family founded on the union of man and woman remains the first place of evangelization; that is why SECAM has kept insisting on its importance, vocation and nature as ordained by God (cf. Gen. 2:24).

16. Through its socio-pastoral instruments such as Caritas, Justice and Peace Commissions and the various bodies and actors engaged in the promotion of integral human development, SECAM continues to commit itself to the pastoral care of migrants and refugees, and to the protection of integral ecology (cf. *Laudato Si*). It also highlights the socio-political dimensions of evangelization and calls on politicians and governments to work for the wellbeing of their people.

17. The martyrs of Uganda remind us of the importance of remaining faithful to our faith in Christ and to our baptismal commitment. They are also models for all the baptized, especially the catechists.

18. Children and the youth are crucial in the work of evangelization. They need to be given special attention and quality Christian education to make them effective witnesses to Christ.

19. Women have an irreplaceable role and place in the Church and society. Their participation in education and evangelization is indispensable.

20. To keep alive the momentum of the Jubilee, SECAM will issue an important document, the “Kampala Document” which will help the people of God to deepen their knowledge of Christ our Savior and make him known as the Way, the Truth and the Life.

21. *We entrust Africa and the mission of the Church to Mary, Queen of Africa; may St. Joseph, the Martyrs of Uganda, and all the Saints of Africa and Madagascar obtain for us a renewed zeal to follow Jesus Christ. May the Jubilee we have just celebrated be for us the springboard for a new life in Jesus Christ, and for service of the gospel in Africa and the world. Amen!*

Given in Kampala by SECAM on the 28th July 2019

Signed by:

His Eminence Philippe Nakellentuba Cardinal Ouédraogo,

Archbishop of Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso

President

COMMITMENTS AND EXHORTATIONS

Church Family of God in Africa, this Jubilee is a time of grace. It invites us to hold firm to our faith and undergo conversion. To this end we commit ourselves:

1. To invest more deeply in the biblical, theological, moral and spiritual formation of all the baptized; to nourish them

with the word of God and the sacraments, so that they may make the gospel penetrate all aspects of life. Encouraged by the example of the African saints, may they resist the diverse attractions of the new religious movements and ideologies that are contrary to the Catholic faith.

2. To make the Jubilee a springboard for the new evangelization, through the participation of the Small Christian Communities, pious societies and new forms of religious associations.

3. To promote further the pastoral care of the family so that it can bear prophetic witness within the society.

4. To promote the human formation and the professional, moral and spiritual education of children and the youth and to help them to be more deeply rooted in the values of the gospel in order to prevent them from engaging in all forms of fundamentalism and violence.

5. To take into account in the evangelizing mission of the church the new forms of information technology and the traditional means of communication and to evangelize them.

6. To strengthen ecumenical communion among the different Christian denominations, and to promote interfaith relationship.

7. To deepen collaboration with our political leaders and call them to accountability so as to put our human and natural resources at the service of development, reconciliation, justice and peace; to address the problem of migrants, refugees and all who are still victims of slavery and human trafficking.

Furthermore;

8. We encourage the religious communities, under the umbrella of the Conference of Major Superiors of Africa and

Madagascar (COMSAM), to live true to their vocation and to bear witness to the Church's mission of evangelization; we urge missionary exchange among the different dioceses of the continent, particularly with those of North Africa and to maintain contact with the universal Church.

9. We recommend that the formation of priests should aim at helping them to develop a deeper personal intimate relationship with Christ, human and spiritual maturity, a sense of service and accountability and passion for the mission of the church.

10. We urge the laity, men and women, to become more deeply involved in the mission of transforming the society, drawing inspiration from the Gospel, the Catechism of the Catholic Church and the Social Teachings of the Church.

11. We encourage the particular Churches to engage in the formation, accompaniment and guidance of civil servants and politicians in their respective locations so as to fight against corruption, promote good governance and better management of human and natural resources.

12. We urge Christian communities to be more attentive to interpersonal relationships, to sharing, to the struggle against misery; to be involved in the pastoral care of health, both spiritual and physical; and to be committed to responding to integral ecological challenges of our time.

13. We urge researchers to intensify studies of African Traditional Religions, Islam, new religious movements, secret societies and problems posed by the belief in witchcraft.

14. We urge our institutions of formation to make SECAM better known.

15. May the expected Kampala Document be widely circulated and become a reference text for our mission.

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