

LET YOUR LIGHT SHINE

A PASTORAL LETTER OF THE
CATHOLIC BISHOPS OF UGANDA

ON THE OCCASION OF
THE VISIT OF HIS HOLINESS
POPE JOHN PAUL II
1992

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**PASTORAL LETTER OF THE CATHOLIC BISHOPS
OF UGANDA ON THE OCCASION OF THE VISIT
OF HIS HOLINESS POPE JOHN PAUL II**

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ and
all people of God in Uganda,

We greet you in the Love of the Father,
the Peace of Christ and Joy of the Holy Spirit.

INTRODUCTION:

Theme

1. "Your light must shine in the sight of people; so that seeing your good works, they give praise to your Father in heaven" (Mt. 5: 16). This is the theme we have chosen for this message addressed to everyone of you on the occasion of the Pastoral Visit to Uganda of His Holiness Pope John Paul II in February, 1993. Such a historic event in the life of the Catholic Church and our entire Nation is indeed an excellent moment to reflect on our mission as Christians, renew our Christian commitment to the Faith we embraced, make a programme of action for the growth of our Church and society and let our light shine before all people and in all sectors of life.

Aim of Visit

2. The visit of the Pope to any country or place is by nature Pastoral. He comes to confirm *and* strengthen visit our Faith, to encourage us to remain faithful to the mission of Christ which is the mission of the Church and of every baptized Christian, and to challenge us to build a more loving and caring, just and united, humane and peaceful society.

Nature of Preparation

3. It is, therefore, necessary to prepare ourselves worthily and in an integral manner for this occasion in order to benefit spiritually from it and receive the gifts and blessings of God which come with it. Our message to you, therefore, aims at preparing you spiritually and pastorally to meet the Pope with hearts renewed, to receive his message with openness, love and commitment and to continue to fulfil the programme we are committing ourselves to after the Pope has gone, for the progress of our Church, the improvement of Christian life and the betterment of our country Uganda, and Africa as a whole.

**FIRST PART
THE VISIT OF POPE PAUL VI TO UGANDA IN 1969**

Uganda's Uniqueness

4. When the Pope visited Africa for the first time in history in 1969 he chose Uganda as a fitting and central place to confirm the Faith of the African Church. Several reasons prompted this choice. Uganda

had given the gift of Christian Martyrdom to the universal Church in 1885-1887 at the very start of evangelisation. Uganda had produced the first African priests in 1913 and the first black African Bishop in 1939 in the whole of Eastern, Central and Southern Africa in modern times. The Church in Uganda was showing evident signs of growth both in quality and quantity.

Aspects of growth

5. In 1969 the Pope found 12 Catholic dioceses in the country, now they are 16. There were then just about 600 local priests, now they are over 1000. There were then about 1700 religious women, now they are approaching 3000. The number of catechists has doubled, over 50 new parishes have been established since then, and the number of baptised Catholics has greatly increased.

Challenge of Vatican II

6. The Church in 1969 was only beginning to study and implement the decisions of Vatican II which brought tremendous changes in her life and mission. The quality of Christian life needed much improvement especially in lay leadership, Christian conviction and social involvement.

Political crisis

7. The Political and socio-economic situation in the country at the time was disturbing. A part of the country was barely emerging from the crisis of 1966. There was very restricted freedom of speech, association and assembly. A cloud of fear covered the Nation and tensions were visible in people's eyes. Poverty was being felt everywhere and the standard of living was low. Despite these negative elements the people of Uganda warmly welcomed the Pope, showed him extreme love and joy, shared the little they had with him and above all became strengthened in the faith and in their determination to build a better Nation.

Pope's special gifts

8. Among the visible gifts of Pope Paul's visit was the Inauguration of the Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar (SECAM) which from then has held 10 Plenary Sessions guiding the African Church in her mission on this continent. He laid the foundation stone for the shrine of the Uganda Martyrs at Namugongo, which now is a place of pilgrimage for African Christians. His donation constructed Pope Paul VI Memorial Community Centre at Lubaga which is used by all Ugandans in the struggle for integral development. Last but not least he ordained several African Bishops whose services the Church is still enjoying.

THE THREE MAJOR CHALLENGES PAUL VI LEFT US WITH

Challenge of self-reliance

9. "Be Missionaries to yourselves":

He challenged us to provide Bishops, Priests, Religious Catechists and Lay Leaders for our Church and even to go beyond the country to other needy areas of Africa. *It* was a call to Christian maturity, a call to

the mission of evangelisation and a call to become truly a local Church both in personnel and finances. This challenge has been responded to, to a certain extent, but it is still an area where every Christian must contribute to its worthy fulfilment.

Challenge of building an African Church

10. "You can and you must have an African Christianity":

In this call, the Pope challenged us to inculturate Christianity in our African values, as he had written to us two years previously in his letter *Africae Terrarum*. He called on us to study the documents of Vatican II and use them to build a Church that is truly Christian and truly African. This was a very significant challenge which, as we shall see later, is still a long way from being realised.

Challenge to integral development

11. The call to fight poverty and promote human dignity:

The Pope based this call on the letter he had written in 1967 "*On the Development of Peoples*" and on the observation of poverty that he made during the visit. The Church was to put a priority on the mission of developing people and society as a whole. This mission could only be realised if human dignity was fully recognized and promoted by all and especially by the civil leaders of African nations. This challenge is still relevant today as we receive the second visit of the Pope to Uganda.

THE MAJOR STRUGGLES OF THE CHURCH AND SOCIETY IN UGANDA SINCE 1969

Suffering with faith

12. The two decades that followed the Papal visit were characterised by political unrest and dictatorship. Thousands of innocent Ugandans lost their lives. Thousands were forced into exile. Many were left widows and orphans. The essential infrastructures of society were destroyed or weakened. The economy was disorganised. Poverty and underdevelopment increased and not a few Ugandans lost hope of a better future. These national crises of dictatorship and utter disrespect of human rights and people's lives were confronted with some heroic Christian witness in which many lost their lives and property. Faith in God and His Church increased amid these great sufferings.

Evil of corruption

13. As poverty increased so did injustice, dishonesty and corruption. These evils ate deep into our society and destroyed the little that would have remained to sustain the people.

Prophetic Witness

14. During these years our major task as your leaders in faith was to give you hope that justice and peace would one day prevail. On several occasions in our pastoral letters and exhortations we identified the major evils we must fight, proposed means with which to fight and called on you all to be on the side of God in the struggle.

Special Centenaries

15. During those dark years, the Catholic Church celebrated the centenary of the Catholic faith in 1978-9 and of the Uganda Martyrs in 1985-6. These were occasions of great renewal in faith and in the commitment to preserve and spread the faith and work unceasingly for the reconstruction of our nation on the foundations of justice, peace and democracy.

The plague of AIDS

16. From the early 1980s Uganda has been confronted with a terrible disaster, that of the killer disease of Acquired Immune deficiency Syndrome (AIDS.) Within one decade it has killed very many of our people, leaving thousands of orphans without parental care. It is a challenge we must confront as a Church and nation with courage and renewed moral living.

Relative Peace

17. In January 1986 the present NRM administration came to power and introduced some relative peace and Peace stability. But, after a year, war broke out in the North-East which caused much suffering, deaths and displacement of people. As we write, however, peace has relatively returned to most areas with the exception of the Uganda-Rwanda border and Karamoja. We have a lot to reflect upon in our mission to the full realisation and promotion of peace within and without our national borders.

THE UGANDAN CHURCH AND SOCIETY IN 1992:

Missionary Awareness

18. Pope John Paul II finds Uganda with both positive and encouraging factors as well as negative and undesirable elements. He finds a Church that has grown and increased both in size and missionary awareness since 1969. Many sons and daughters of Uganda have embraced the missionary vocation and are working in a good number of countries as members of Missionary Congregations of priests, religious brothers and sisters. This is a welcome movement in response to the challenge of Pope Paul VI to become missionaries to ourselves. As we thank the Lord for this gift, we must be committed to supporting the missionaries we have sent elsewhere with our prayers and material assistance and become more increasingly missionary in our vision and mission.

Growing Faith

19. The Pope finds a Church that survived serious crisis and became stronger in the process. Christianity is dear to many. Christian conviction is increasing not only among adults but also among the Youth and Children. The Church is slowly but gradually becoming self-reliant in personnel, with missionaries working side by side with the local evangelisers.

20. The Pope finds a Church that is development-minded and which is doing all it can to conscientise people to think, plan and implement development.

New Pastoral Challenges

21. The Pope, however, finds a Church where some of its members are being tossed by the winds of religious fundamentalism and new religious movements and, within the Catholic Church itself, an infectious craze for visions. This phenomenon demands deeper Christian Catechesis and constant counselling.

Problem of dualism

22. He is finding a Church where several members still live in two conflicting worlds: one Christian, the other non-Christian. During times of crisis or death, sickness, misfortune and fear, they rely more on traditional practices and rituals than in the saving power of Christ. Christian Family life is often compromised by polygamy, unions which are not blessed in Church and separation of spouses.

Initial Inculturation

23. He finds a Church that has not yet fully inculturated Christianity within the African values. Several steps, however, have been taken. Local languages are being used for liturgy. The Bible has been and is being translated into several local languages. The liturgy is becoming more and more African. Theological reflection is being done within African values and realities. But much more remains to be done to meet the challenge of Paul VI in this regard.

Initial ecumenical initiatives

24. He finds a Church where ecumenical initiatives are taking place but very slowly. There is an ecumenical religious education syllabus, a Joint Christian Council, regular ecumenical meetings and prayers. There is, however, lack of enthusiasm for genuine ecumenism and lack of a deeper dialogue in view of the unity Christ prayed for.

A nation at the cross-roads

25. On the society level, the Pope finds a nation that is just picking up after decades of self-destruction. It is a nation at the threshold of a new era of hope. The making of the New Constitution, the priority put on development and economic recovery, the presence of relative peace and freedom are rays of hope.

Women awareness

26. There is a strong movement of women demanding their rightful and just position in Church and Society. This movement is indeed a healthy one which, if guided and supported, is likely to bring great benefits to both Church and Nation.

Obstacles to liberation

27. There is, however, deep-rooted corruption which is escaping all remedy. There are anxieties that the relative peace enjoyed now may not be lasting. There is still dire poverty which prevents parents and

guardians from fulfilling their God-given responsibility to their children and entire families. There are still many people who have not come to value peace and justice. There is still ignorance of human dignity and human rights among many people. The unjust international economic system and the obligations of the external debt are strangling the nation and adversely affecting all aspects of social services on which society so much depends.

The challenge of AIDS

28. The Pope finds a population threatened by the plague of AIDS, many people already bed-ridden, many others already diagnosed and found HIV positive, others living under constant fear of contracting the disease. This situation which is affecting everybody in the country needs to be confronted in solidarity, with much love and care for the victims, with much generosity to the orphans and with much commitment to a renewed way of Christian moral living.

SECOND PART

AREAS OF PRIORITY WHERE OUR LIGHT MUST SHINE BEFORE ALL

Priorities of Mission

29. It is the duty of every Christian to shine to the world around him/her in all aspects, circumstances and times. There are, however, in each epoch, areas of priority to which all Christians of a given time and locality must be committed in a special manner. The areas we put before you appear to us to be the priority in our country and Church at this material time. They should form our programme of life and mission now and throughout this decade.

THE GREAT MISSION

Be Apostles

30. *"You are the light of the world. A city built on a hilltop cannot be hidden. No one lights a lamp to put it under a tub; they put it on a lamp-stand where it shines for everyone in the house. In the same way your light must shine in the sight of men, so that, seeing your good works they may give praise to your Father in heaven" (Mt. 5:14-16). "Go, therefore, make disciples of all the nations: baptise them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teach them to observe all the commands I gave you" (ibid. 25:19-20).*

This is the *great mission* which brought Jesus to the world and for which he gathered around himself Apostles and disciples and for which he founded the religious community of believers, the Church.

It is a mission of the church as a whole, each local Church and every individual baptised Christian: adult or young, man or woman, lay or clergy.

We are all sent as apostles to expound the teaching of Christ. There are many people in our country who have heard about Christ but who need our encouragement and exemplary life to make the final decision to embrace baptism. There are many people who wish and desire to embrace Christianity but extremely few are offering to prepare them within their own situations and circumstances.

This is primary evangelisation which is part of our fundamental mission to make all people Christ's disciples.

The other mission joined to this is directed to the nominal Christians, the lukewarm and the lapsed. There are many baptized Christians in our country who have abandoned the practice of Christian faith. These belong to several categories and should be approached in different ways to be brought back to the Faith. This is the mission of consolidating the faith and acting as each other's keeper. The best way to ensure your own salvation is in working unceasingly for the salvation of others.

We are called upon to renew our commitment to being apostles to others, both Christians and non-Christians. We have to find new ways and methods of reaching out to all people so that the mission each one received in Baptism and Confirmation and which is nourished in the Eucharist may be fulfilled.

THE MISSION TO LIBERATE

Be agents of liberation

31. At the outset of his public ministry Jesus proclaimed his programme and gave his manifesto in the words of the prophet Isaiah: "The Spirit of the Lord has been given to me for he has anointed me. He has sent me to bring the good news to the poor, to proclaim liberty to captives and to the blind new sight, to set the down-trodden free, to proclaim the Lord's year of favour (Lk. 4:18).

This is the mission to liberate in which all the baptised equally share. Jesus fulfilled that mission during the years of his public life. It was through this mission that he was recognised and proclaimed as the Messiah. This remains an essential mission of the Church at all times. The entire biblical message is centred on this theme of God's intervention to liberate his people from slavery and give them the freedom of the children of God.

In our country and the entire African continent there are many people who are captives of enslaving circumstances. They cry out for liberation and we have to assist them to be free. There are many people who are blind because of ignorance, unable to see what is just, true and human. They need knowledge and new sight. There are many downtrodden people, the oppressed, the old, the sick, the disabled and the voiceless. These need to be set free through our liberative action and dynamic solidarity with them. Everywhere we have a mission to proclaim God's forgiveness and His power over all evil and His second coming to make all creation new.

We have to commit ourselves to this mission to liberate all people and in an integral manner. Whatever enslaves a person is against God's design and it is the responsibility of each one to assist and bring about the liberation desired by our Eternal Father.

THE MISSION OF SHARING AND CARING

Have preferential love for the needy

32. "Come, you whom my Father has blessed, take for your heritage the Kingdom prepared for you since the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me a drink, I was a stranger and you made me welcome, naked and you clothed me, sick and you visited me, in prison and you came to see me" (Mt. 25: 34-36).

It is with those words that Jesus described what will happen on the day of Judgement when God will separate the good from the evil ones. It is the *same* message portrayed in the story of the good Samaritan (Lk. 10: 29-37). Whatever we do to the least of our brothers and sisters we do to Jesus Christ Himself.

In our country, our continent and in the entire world, there are very many needy people. Hunger and famine claim thousands and thousands of lives every day. There are so many poor people lacking the essentials of life. There are so many widows and orphans needing love and care. There are many lonely people, the sick, the old who need our companionship. There are millions of refugees and displaced people whom we need to welcome as brothers and sisters. There are so many prisoners, often mistreated, tortured and denied their dignity and many of them innocently held, whom we have to assist and care for.

Our African culture emphasises the value of sharing, generosity and hospitality. These are virtues that are at the core of Christian life and mission.

St James is very emphatic on this need to assist the needy and to share with them the little we have. "Take the case, my brothers, of someone who has never done a single good act but claims that he has faith. Will that faith save him? If one of the brothers or one of the sisters is in need of clothes and has not enough food to live on, and one of you says to them: "I wish you well, keep yourself warm and eat plenty", without giving them these bare necessities of life, then what good is that? Faith is like that: if good works do not go with it, it is quite dead" (James 2:15-16).

This mission of sharing with the needy, uplifting the suffering and having a preferential love and care for them has been much emphasised in all recent social teaching of the Church. We have insisted on it in our Pastoral Letters and Catechesis. The suffering our country has gone through has given us ample opportunity to practise charity and sharing. Nevertheless our mission is still weak in this matter. There are many people unwilling to share. There are many needy people uncared for. Some appeals for assistance go unheeded. We need a new commitment to this mission. We need not only to give relief but also to address the root-causes of this lack and imbalance in the necessities of life. We need to work in solidarity with the needy in order to transform their inhuman situations. This mission applies in a special way today to the victims and orphans of our past wars, and of AIDS and the insecurity and drought. Everyone needs to live a life worthy of a human being. The quality of Christianity is best measured by the concern of Christians for the needy and helpless.

THE MISSION TO LIFE

Protect and promote life

33. "I have come so that they may have life and have it to the full" (John 10:10). This was and still is the mission of Christ, of his Church and of every baptised Promote person: to give spiritual life to man. That life is the greatest gift of God to man. We must seek, foster and promote it in ourselves and in other people through prayer, the reception of the Sacraments and through reading, studying and reflecting on God's Word in the Bible.

Besides the spiritual life, God has given us our physical life. This is equally man's greatest treasure from God and we must protect, respect and promote human life. Whatever is for life and promotes life, should be pursued. Whatever is anti-life must be avoided. We need to protect the life of the unborn child, the life of the young ones, the life of everyone. All our programmes should be geared to this increase of life to the full. In our Christian preaching and living we must aim at attaining life to the full. In our material work we must strive to protect and promote the physical life of all. In our education and health ministries we must aim at improving the quality of life for all. As a Church we must fight all enemies of life to ensure that we live Christ's life to the full.

Among the enemies of life the following need to be fought against in a special way. Famine, drought and unclean water kill many people each year, make many people sick and cripple many children. We need to work unceasingly to grow more food and nourishing food. We need to develop ways of storing food for the bad times. We need as a nation and Church to commit ourselves to providing clean water for all people. This can be achieved once we fight the habit of laziness, know how to place the right priorities in our plans and strongly protect the environment which can ensure rains, good fresh air throughout the country.

The other enemy of life is disrespect of human life. The decades of chaos produced a mentality among some which disregards human life. Murders are carried out constantly. Children are battered to death by some parents or guardians. "Do not kill" is the commandment of God. Taking someone's life is one of the most hideous sins that cry out to the Lord. We must work with all our energy to spread the Good News of respect for human life.

Another enemy which weakens and may completely kill spiritual life, is disregard for the spiritual gifts which alone sustain our inner life. A person who neglects prayer life, sacramental life, the nourishment of God's Word, becomes spiritually weak until he becomes spiritually dead. We must cultivate prayer life, have recourse regularly to the Sacrament of reconciliation and the Eucharist and constantly read, study and pray God's word. In so doing our light will shine before all and we shall be promoting life to the full.

THE MISSION OF JUSTICE AND PEACE, FORGIVENESS AND RECONCILIATION

Be committed to justice

34. "Thus says the Lord: Do Justice and Righteousness, and deliver from the hand of the oppressor the one who has been robbed. And do no wrong and violence to the alien, the orphan and the widow; nor shed innocent blood" (Jeremiah 22: 3-4).

The mission of establishing Justice and Peace is central to Christianity and in the life of every baptised person. Jesus came to establish a Kingdom of Justice and Peace, truth and righteousness. The Synod of Bishops which was held in 1971 on *Justice in the World* had this to say:

"Action on behalf of Justice and participation in the transformation of the world fully appear to us as a constitutive dimension of the preaching of the Gospel, or in other words, of the Church's mission for the redemption of the human race and its liberation from every oppressive situation". (Renewing the Church, Ed. David J O'Brien, p.391)

If the Church in Uganda and Africa as a whole is to continue being credible and to command the respect and influence it deserves, all its followers must make a clear and active option for justice for all people. Church members are expected to analyse critically the root causes of dictatorship, militarism, the phenomenon of refugees and displaced people on our continent. They should analyse the causes of conflicts and wars, of institutionalised injustices in the political and socio-economic structures and the presence of gross corruption and abuse of power. They should reflect on the ever-widening gap between the very rich few and the dire poverty of the great majority of people.

Justice should be studied in all sectors of life, including the Church herself. All Christians must be involved in this mission of detecting injustices in order to find common means of eliminating them from our Church and society.

Commitment to justice can never be in mere words or attitudes. It must appear through concrete action. Christians should identify themselves with the victims of injustice in order to assist them in solidarity to establish justice. Fear that breeds silence amid gross injustices must be fought against. Before injustice, a Christian should never accept unworthy compromises. The Christian Community together with its leaders must always be the voice of the voiceless. It is only thus that our light will shine before all people.

Become effective peacemakers

35. "Blessed are the peacemakers, they shall be sons (and daughters) of God" (Mt. 5:9). Peace is a gift of God. It is the fruit of justice. Where justice is, peace flows like a river. Peace is a prerequisite for stability and development. Peace is what enables every person to use all his/her potentials for God and fellow people. Peace never simply comes, it has to be worked for. Peace never simply stays, it has to be consciously cultivated, nurtured and promoted. Peace needs a strong culture among all people who love it and do all they can to protect it.

In our nation we have had a few brief moments of peace. But they disappeared leaving little trace behind them. The first years of independence came with relative peace which was totally destroyed by the crisis of 1966. After much suffering in the seventies, the "Liberation War" of 1979 raised hopes of peace at last. But that peace was like a shadow, it came quickly and disappeared. As we have said before, the year 1986 brought new hopes of peace, but soon that peace was destroyed by fighting. Now we have relative peace in most parts of the country. It is the responsibility of every Christian and Ugandan of goodwill to preserve the peace we have and to work for its promotion throughout the country. It is in doing this that our light will shine before all and we will deserve to be called children of God.

Forgive and reconcile

36. With the mission of establishing justice and peace, goes the mission of sincere forgiveness and genuine reconciliation. "Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us" (Mt. 6:12). These are the words we pray daily in the Lord's Prayer. They are powerful words.

Christ clearly gave us a measure for securing our own forgiveness. That measure is the manner in which we forgive others and truly reconcile with those who have offended us.

"An eye for an eye" was the standard in the pre-Christian world. This morality is what Christ strongly condemns, giving us a new morality:

"But I say this to you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you; in this way you will be sons of your Father in heaven " (Mt. 5:44).

For our society to achieve lasting peace we need to insist on the mission of all the baptised and of persons of goodwill to forgive and reconcile with one another. Revenge breeds revenge and destroys the light of Christ in people. Revenge can never be a Christian response to an injury.

For many years now there have been accusations and counter-accusations against this or that group for atrocities or injustice inflicted. The time has come for us all as a nation to forgive one another and be reconciled, and start a new era of togetherness and solidarity. We must stop living in the past and put our energy on the present time, and work unceasingly for a better future. From our past let us learn the lessons, both positive and negative, which will help us to avoid the mistakes of the past and build on the positive values of mutual acceptance, enrichment and tolerance. If we succeed in this noble endeavour, our light will shine before all.

THE MISSION TO PROMOTE HUMAN DIGNITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Respect, Human, Dignity

37. "God created man in the image of Himself, in the image of God he created Him, male and female he created them" (Genesis 1: 27).

This is the source of the honour and dignity of every man and woman irrespective of their age, condition, religion or tribe. This is the foundation of our mission as Christians to respect and promote human dignity.

The human person is the crown of God's creation.

"You have made him little less than a god. You crowned him with glory and splendour, made him lord over the work of your hands, set all things under his feet" (Psalm 8:5-6).

Human dignity has been badly abused and disrespected in our country and on the African Continent for many decades. That is why in our submission to the Uganda Constitutional Commission we had this to say:

"We believe Jesus Christ redeemed all people, making each one of us share in his divinity. We believe every person was created with the gift of rationality and freedom which must be respected by whatever power that be. There is an entire Catholic Social Teaching on the dignity of persons, their freedoms and rights. This is the teaching we proclaim to all people, Christian and non-Christian alike. It is from this teaching that nations have drawn and continue to draw rights and freedoms of people throughout the ages.

Since our political independence we have constantly insisted on the respect of human dignity and human rights in all our joint Pastoral Letters and in the letters of individual Bishops. We have protested openly and in the strongest terms possible whenever and wherever human dignity and human rights have been abused by people in leadership positions, the security forces and by ordinary people.

We believe the foundation of any healthy, just and democratic nation is the respect of human dignity and human rights of all people living in it" (Bishops' Memorandum to Uganda Constitutional Commission, pp. 14-15).

We call on people of goodwill and on Christians in particular to undertake this mission most seriously in order to protect and promote the sublime dignity God has given to every human being. Whatever undermines, weakens or attempts to destroy that dignity should be fearlessly confronted in order to defend the essence of our being human persons.

Defend and promote human dignity

38. Our Mission as Christians to defend and promote human rights and freedoms draws from the above emphasis we place on human dignity. We should always respect the rights of others and defend them, but in a special way defend the rights of women, children, the family, the prisoners and the minorities among us. They are the groups which have been often marginalized and which may often be voiceless. We have clearly spelt out the human rights of all and of the various categories which ought to be the basis of our solidarity and development (Bishops' Memorandum to the Constitutional Commission, pp. 15-24).

We call upon all Christian leaders to educate people in their human rights and in the duties that correspond to those rights. Knowledge of human rights and awareness to protect them and demand them when unjustly suppressed, is the sure guarantee of stability, democracy and development in our country.

THE MISSION OF GENUINE ECUMENISM, REUGIOUS DIALOGUE AND COOPERATION

Work for Christian Unity

39. "I pray not only for these, but for those who through their words believe in me. May they all be one" (Jn. 17:20).

This prayer of Jesus shortly before his Passion and death is an invitation and command to his followers to do the same. Jesus came to unite the human race and to call all his followers into one fold. Unity, however, has been absent from Christ's followers since the very early centuries. In our times, however, especially since Vatican II, this call to unity of Christians has been very much emphasised. It is the mission of Catholics to pray for unity, desired by our Lord. It is our mission to seriously study the causes of divisions among Christians. We are called upon to change our old attitudes and acquire attitudes which promote love and sustain efforts for this unity.

Respect and promote religious cooperation

40. Religious dialogue in Uganda and Africa as a whole ought to extend to the followers of Islam. Study of Islam should be promoted among Catholic leaders so that a basis for dialogue may be attained. Again here stress should be put on the things we share in common: the Almighty God, the Patriarchs and Prophets, the belief in the resurrection of the body and the last judgement and the realities of heaven and hell. It is only through sincere dialogue that mutual understanding and respect can be achieved and peaceful co-existence promoted.

There is a lot we can do in cooperation with non-Christians. This includes cooperation in the economic, social and political activities; cooperation in the educational and medical activities, cooperation in the promotion of justice and peace, unity and solidarity. It is through such genuine cooperation in such fields that our light can shine before all to the praise of our Father in Heaven.

**THE MISSION OF INTEGRAL DEVELOPMENT
TO ELIMINATE POVERTY, DISEASE,
IGNORANCE AND EXPLOITATION**

Be committed to integral Development

41. For a long time analysts of the African situation have been asking the crucial question: which way is Africa to develop? The Church as leaven in the world to transform society in an integral manner cannot afford not to answer that question, for on how well it is answered will depend the future of Africa, Uganda included. It is the duty of Christians to analyse society and detect where development has been faulty. It is their duty to search for suitable solutions to our problems of backwardness.

As a Church we must advocate an integral vision of development. This is the only development that can liberate men and women and prepare them for a worthy future. Integral development must be planned, it has to cater for the whole person, all persons in all conditions of life. It must aim at improving both the quality of life and of the goods and services used for the welfare of people. It should promote a balanced person, community and society.

As Church our mission is to advance education for integral development. Through our national and diocesan departments of development we should fight to eliminate the endemic problems of poverty, disease, ignorance and exploitation. We must challenge all people to fight laziness and value work. It is our mission to show through examples of development programmes and projects how development should be planned and implemented by the people and for the benefit of the people. We should

extensively use the social teaching of the Church, especially in the following Encyclicals: *Populorum Progressio*, *Octogesima Adven:ens*, *Human Work*, *Social Concern*, *Centesimus Ann us*, and in the Pastoral Constitution *the Church in the Modern World* of Vatican II, to expound the Christian principles for human development. This mission of integral development should be taken as a priority in this second century of Christianity in Uganda. We should imitate the example of Jesus Christ who cured the sick of their various diseases, taught the ignorant and gave them new knowledge and liberated those who were enslaved by the evil spirits.

THE MISSION OF INCULTURATING CHRISTIANITY

Make Christianity Truly African

42. This as we have shown earlier on was one of the major challenges that Pope Paul VI left us with in 1969. It is a task that has been repeated very often by Pope John Paul II, the Symposium of Truly Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar (SECAM), the regular Synod of Bishops in Rome, and by our Association of Member Episcopal Conference of Eastern Africa (AMECEA).

This Mission of inculturating the Christian Faith has its origin and example in the unique event of the Incarnation of Christ who become one of us and fully shared in the human nature and experience in order to uplift us to his heavenly Father. Christianity is not married exclusively to any one culture. It is beyond all limits of culture and time so that it may be translated into each culture and time and be relevant to each people.

Since Vatican II some aspects of Christianity have been inculturated. Some of our languages here have the entire Bible translated into them. Our Liturgy is more and more becoming African. This, however, is only the beginning. In order to eliminate the "dualism" of many of our Christians who continue to live in two worlds, we need to concentrate more on this mission and see how we can fully utilise all our positive cultural values for the better spreading and deepening of the Christian Faith.

It is only when Christianity becomes part and parcel of our lives and culture that we can be assured of its permanency. Then it can never lack full-time personnel to administer to others, it can never be regarded as foreign. We call upon all Church leaders and educators to put more emphasis on this task. Let us develop catechetical, religious education methods which respect the principles of culture and which can give the Christian message more vivid meaning related to our own situation. Our pastoral methods and theological research can greatly be enriched by the African values and contemporary relevance.

THE MISSION OF STRENGTHENING THE DOMESTIC CHURCH, THE FAMILY

Value and Promote Christian families

43. The family is indeed the Domestic Church and the most important unit of the Christian community. Christian evangelisation is concentrated on the family. It is, however, also true that it is in the family that Christianity has found its greatest obstacles to authentic Gospel living. Success of Christianity is judged

by the quality of the Christian families it has formed. As Christians we need to re-assess the status of our Christian families. We need to examine the good in them and improve on it.

We need to examine the problems that confront them and strive to eliminate them. To do this meaningfully, we need to view families in their various categories: Nomadic and agricultural families, monogamous and polygamous families, families of the disadvantaged such as refugees, migrant workers etc., single parent families and so on. It is only through such analysis or categorising that proper remedies can be found for creating truly Christian families that can deserve the title of domestic Church.

We call upon Church leaders at every level to strengthen family catechesis and to develop pre-marriage courses that can assist the youth to form stable Christian families. Christian families should evangelise each other and reach out to evangelise society as a whole. Parents in the families should play the active role of the common priesthood they share through the Sacraments of Initiation. Family prayer life should be strengthened. The Christian family must become the model school for children. In this way the light of Christian families will shine before all people.

THE MISSION OF PROMOTING MATURE, RESPONSIBLE AND ACTIVE CHRISTIAN LEADERS AT ALL LEVELS

Be active leaders

44. The Catholic Church in Uganda was founded on the strong lay leadership of the Christian Martyrs and their Active successors. This strong lay leadership, however, has tended to weaken with time. Vatican II came with a strong emphasis on lay leadership. We have stressed this point in many of our Pastoral Letters. It is now time to renew this lay leadership at every level. The Church has a powerful source of energy among the laity. It is the laity, the Religious and the clergy that make up the Church. We are all people of God (*Laos*) with a common mission to fulfil. We therefore repeat our call to the laity to assume their rightful place in the Church, to actively participate in decision-making at the various levels of the Church, in the planning and implementation of the plans and policies. We encourage the establishment of all organs, structures and organisations, from the small Christian community to the national level, which involve the laity in the active realization of the common mission. We call upon the laity, the Religious and the Clergy to organise courses and studies which can form lay leaders for their various ministries in the Church and Society.

Support women awareness and search for basic equality

45. Among the laity, women deserve special attention. One pioneer missionary remarked at the close of the Women last century that nothing can change in Africa without the acceptance and cooperation of women. Similar observations have been made many times since. The African woman holds the key to change, to improvement, to acceptance of Christianity and to the progress of African. Women in Uganda are a powerful source of energy which the Church and society have not sufficiently tapped.

We are grateful to God for the new and strong awareness among women which has come into our country. Women demand their human dignity, their God-given equality, their equal opportunity to

participate in society. We support this movement and appeal to all women in Uganda to be united in their struggle for basic equality and for their rightful role in Church and Society.

In our memorandum to the Uganda Constitutional Commission, we recommended the following to enhance the equality of women. The same recommendations we now offer to all our Christians and people of goodwill:

- 1.** The basic equality of women and men should be explicitly recognised in the Constitution. Females and males have equal rights, dignity and duties.
- 2.** Monogamous marriage (one husband one wife) is the only form that gives equality to women. It should therefore, be firmly promoted by the laws of the country.
- 3.** Girls have equal rights to those of boys to education and training for their specific role in society. There should be no discrimination in this field.
- 4.** The problem of dowry, which has been highly commercialised and abused to the disadvantage of women and men alike, should be addressed by the laws of Uganda and especially by each and every Christian. The ideal situation should be for parents and relatives to freely forego the demand for dowry. Dowry dehumanises women, impoverishes the husband to be, and gives a bad name to our country.
- 5.** The new Constitution should incorporate women's rights in political, economic, civil, social and educational fields as they are spelt out in all recent United Nations Charters and Conventions.
- 6.** The new Constitution must dissolve all discriminatory laws on the basis of sex and on other grounds.
- 7.** The laws of inheritance, succession and separation, and the penalties against adultery, rape and wife-beating need a revision with the active participation of women, religious and cultural leaders and members of the legal profession.
- 8.** The Constitutional equality of women shall supersede all discriminatory cultural practices.
- 9.** The educational system and general education should emphasise the equality of women before God and before the law in order to re-shape the attitudes of men in this country.

We appeal to all Ugandans to respect women, to deal with them in justice and to join hands with them in the struggle for equality of opportunities.

Professionals play your rightful role

46. Uganda professionals and intellectuals have a special mission to fulfil in the Church and society. They are a rich source of energy for our society. We encourage them to play their rightful role in Church and society. They should use their talents and training for the good of all. They should be involved in decision-making, planning and implementation both within the Church and in Society. We encourage their various initiatives for the common good.

Youth transform the Church and Society

47. The Youth: In our contemporary world the youth are an indispensable dynamic resource of energy for the transformation of Church and Society in Africa. They are a people with a dream and destiny. They have worthy aspirations which they wish to see realised. Their sense of urgency to see a better world, free from war, poverty, unemployment and oppression is often contradicted by the realities around them. They crave for education to achieve the goals they have set in life.

They strive, whenever guided, to create a better world and Church. As Church we are committed to the youth. The youth should at all times actively contribute to Church and Society. They should be active evangelisers of fellow youth. They should lead the way in the mission of extending God's Kingdom of love, justice and peace. All efforts in educating the youth to fulfil their mission and to discover their talents and to become more committed to Christ and to the good of humanity should be supported at every level of Church organisation.

THE CHILDREN AS EFFECTIVE EVANGELISERS

Respect Children

48. Christian children have an important role to play in evangelisation. They are active evangelisers in the family, village, school and wherever they may be. Once given relevant religious education, children can help to transform the adults and society as a whole. We need to value children, to respect their dignity, to protect and promote their rights and to allow them to evangelise us. The future entirely depends on the way we, as Church, educate the children and instil in them the sense of responsibility and mission from a very tender age. Once children are well motivated and guided, their light shines out before us all.

Urgency of moral renewal

49. As we address this message to you, the country is experiencing a bitter reality of death caused by the killer-disease, AIDS. We did write, two years ago, a pastoral letter on this grave danger. Aids has claimed so many Ugandans within these ten years since it was first detected. It is threatening to claim more lives.

As Christians, we must confront it with a Christian solution. We must alter, change, renew our moral living and avoid all that leads to fornication, adultery and promiscuity.

We should assist one another to live a life pleasing to God. We should avoid all situations and circumstances which lead to compromised sexual behaviour.

At the same time we are called upon to show great love and care for the victims of AIDS. We should give them moral courage, feel with them and assist them in their sufferings and direct their minds to the Loving Father of all. As a community we must effectively find ways and means to care for the orphans left behind. In so doing our light will shine before all.

PLAN OF ACTION – CONCLUSION

Study and put into action

50. Plan of Action:

We call upon the priests, religious, catechists, teachers, lay leaders, small Christian communities and parents to be in the forefront in the realisation of Action the priorities we have set before you. These areas of our mission today need to be put into concrete action at every level of the Church. In order to do that, the challenges must be studied more deeply with the community. The community should be helped to find the plan of action for each challenge.

We request Church leaders in each language group to translate this message into the language of their people so that all get to know it. We call upon the various categories of Christians to study our mission In Church and Society today and make a plan of action.

This programme, as we said at the beginning, will continue to be followed long after the Pope's visit is concluded. It is a programme to guide us during the remaining years of the 1990s. Every effort should be taken to make it a success.

Be committed to this programme

51. Conclusion:

The Pope's visit to Uganda should be used as a rare opportunity for every Christian to examine himself/herself on the mission received in to this baptism. It is an occasion to renew our faith and determination to be active Christians, with a mission to realise. Renewed by Christian reflection and the Pope's exhortation, we shall be ready to shine before all as we daily commit ourselves to the programme set before us.

May God's abundant blessing descend upon you, as you act on the above reflection for your own spiritual growth and for building up in others the Kingdom of God - "a Kingdom of truth and life, a Kingdom of holiness and grace, a Kingdom of Justice, Love and Peace".

- + Emmanuel Wamala, Archbishop of Kampala.
- + Adrian K. Ddungu, Masaka.
- + Barnabas Halem'Imana, Kabale.
- + Joseph Willigers, Jinja.
- + James Odongo, Tororo.
- + Paul Kalanda, Fort-Portal.
- + Erasmus Wandera, Soroti.
- + Joseph Mukwaya, Kiyinda-Mityana.
- + Frederick Drandua, Arua
- + Martin Luluga, Gulu.
- + Joseph Oyanga, Lira.
- + Egidio Nkaijanabwo, Kasese.
- + Deogratias Muganwa Byabazaire, Hoima.
- + Paul Bakyenga, Mbarara.

- + Henry Ssentongo, Moroto.
- + Denis Kiwanuka, Kotido.
- + Mathias Ssekamaanya, Auxiliary, Kampala
- + Serapio Magambo, Emeritus.
- + Edward Baharagate, Emeritus.
- + John Baptist Kakubi, Emeritus.

THE CATHOLIC BISHOPS OF UGANDA

18th October 1992, Mission Sunday