



The Diocese of Banjul **NEWSLETTER**

Incorporating The Catholic Newsletter

IT IS FINISHED!

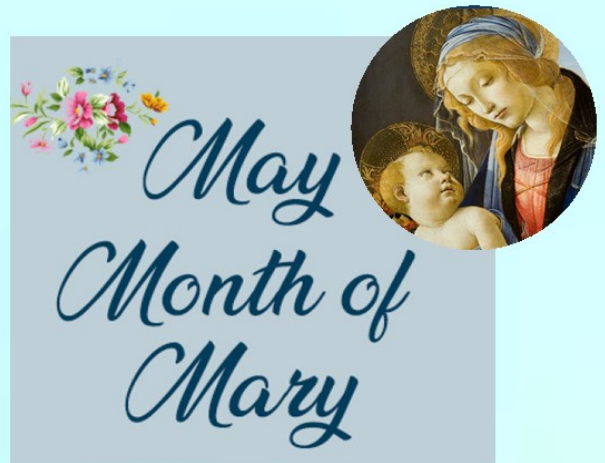
Jesus suffered this in real life for your sake. Now, what are you going to do?



THE POWER OF THE RESURRECTION



HE IS RISEN
Celebrate the Resurrection



DIOCESE OF BANJUL NEWSLETTER

Our Mission and Vision

We entertain, we encourage, and we enlighten. More so, Diocese of Banjul Newsletter gives you the tools you need to feed your faith life, nurture our society and relationships, care for your family, and bring the light of Christ to others. We connect with our readers through personal stories of triumphs and struggles, joys and challenges, and the lighter side of Christian living.

Diocese of Banjul Newsletter is a source of support and encouragement for our society, especially those who love their faith, those who struggle with their faith, and those who long to learn more about the richness of Catholic tradition. More so, we strive to build a healthy society for the welfare of all.

Diocese of Banjul Newsletter seeks the positive in the world and in our Church. It emphasizes those things that our society is doing right and well, as a means of inspiring and encouraging others to do the same. It is hope-filled, optimistic, and forward-looking. In the main, the newsletter moves our readers beyond inspiration and toward action, and gives them the information, tools, and resources they need to answer God's call to holiness and bring the light of Christ to others.



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AS IEC ANNOUNCES

***Politicians, On Your Marks, Get Set, Ready, Go!!!!!!
..... And Campaign of lies Begins***

It's another period of campaigns for various seats in the Parliament of our nation. Our politicians are on it again, since the last presidential election buzz. Now it is time for the parliamentary elections as the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) announced the lifting of the ban on electoral campaigns. Politicians are now everywhere in the streets, from the Kombos to the remote villages of Koina, canvassing for votes. But, the worrying thing in this show is the manner of hyper-tricks and lies they use to convince the electorate. More worrying is the shamelessness in their eyes, when they are telling these naked lies. Some are promising us financial miracles; some are even promising to bring our dead parents back to life, if elected into office. Some are even promising us that they will perform economic miracle that will make 1 GMD equal to 1 USD. Some are saying that they will provide employment to all our unemployed youth. In fact, we are hearing all manner of falsehoods and seeing varying displays of untruths in their desperation to win our votes. Most of us know that they are telling lies because this is not the first time they have made promises to us. Ok, just recently, in November, 2021, we were promised better life by those who won, and the question that begs for an answer is, are we having better life now? I will not say yes or no, but simply go to the market to buy food stuffs for your family and know where we are heading to; whether we are heading towards better life or towards an accursed hard life.

So, time has come again for them to defraud us of our votes and trust with open lies. Politicians use every conceivable means to win the hearts of potential voters. However, I believe there are three ultimate lies that they should avoid this time election. It is sad that majority of the politicians go from village to village telling the youths that

once elected, youths should expect white collar job from their victory. While this will be a zero, even, conservatively, 99.5% of the youths will not get a chance to work in those white collar jobs. Therefore, politicians should compose a systematic approach of dealing with unemployment issue, and it should not be necessarily white collar jobs as many are now promising us.

With this spate of over-promising and under-delivering of projects in our politics, there comes a time when we should call a spade a spade and not a big spoon. The politicians have tendency of promising thousands of development activities in villages but when it comes to delivering, majority are the laziest people. They should promise what they can deliver so that the voters could see inevitable change.

Mocking the poor! During elections time, most politicians use weird strategy of convincing voters to vote for them again after the last presidential elections. Most of them are now seen eating with the poor in the most remote huts or even launching electricity project in a leaking house. Where were such politician in last five years? Why is voter the best friend when election nears? It's time the voters open up their minds and understands that through voting, we can transform the world.

Misleading and dubious campaign promises and information during political campaigns is now widespread. It reduces the quality of public debate and manipulates voters. This undermines the legitimacy of results and contributes to the social divisiveness of voting. A new electoral law and greater citizen participation are needed to change this. But, why must these politicians contest with deception, misdirection, facts-bending, half-truths, and downright lies?

KAADU DUNDA GI - The Living Word

Every Sunday at 12:00hrs on, GRTS. Keep up-to-date with your Diocese! Visit: www.banjuldiocese.gm

REMEMBERING MR. JOHN GOMEZ *(Our Veteran Catechist)*

Died 11th February 2022

JOHN WAS A NATIVE OF TANENEH VILLAGE.



Cover Story

Just Imagine This Scenario!

Jesus suffered this in real life for your sake. Now, what are you going to do?

At the age of 33, Jesus was condemned to death. At the time, crucifixion was the "worst" death. Only the worst Criminals were condemned to be crucified. Yet, it was even more dreadful for Jesus, unlike other criminals condemned to death by crucifixion.

Jesus was to be nailed to the Cross by His hands and feet. Each nail was 6 to 8 inches long. The nails were driven into His wrist, not into His palms, as is commonly portrayed. There's a tendon in the wrist that extends to the shoulder. The Roman guards knew that when the nails were being hammered into the wrist, that tendon would be ripped, forcing Jesus to use His back muscles to support himself, so He could breathe. Both of His feet were nailed together. Thus, He was forced to support Himself on the single nail, that impaled His feet to the cross. Jesus could not support himself with His legs because of the pain, so, He was forced to alternate between arching His back and using his legs, just to continue to breathe. Imagine the struggle, the pain, the suffering, the courage!

Jesus endured this reality for over 3 hours. Yes, over 3 hours! Can you imagine this kind of suffering? A few minutes before He died, Jesus stopped bleeding. He was simply pouring water from his wounds. He had no more blood to bleed out.

From common images, we see wounds to His hands and feet and even the spear wounds to His side. But, do we realize His Wounds were actually made in his body? A hammer driving larger nails through the wrist, the feet overlapped, and an even larger nail hammered through the arches, then a Roman guard piercing His side with a spear. But, before the nails and the spear? Jesus was whipped and beaten. The whipping was so severe that it tore the flesh from His body. The beating was so horrific that His Face was torn and his beard ripped from His face. The Crown of thorns cut deeply into His scalp. No man would have survived this torture.

The human adult body contains about 3.5 liters (just less than a gallon) of blood. Jesus poured all 3.5 liters of his blood. He had three nails hammered into His members; a crown of thorns on His head and, beyond that, a Roman soldier stabbed a spear into His Chest. All these without mentioning the humiliation He suffered after carrying His own cross for almost 2 kilometers, while the crowd spat in His face and threw stones (the cross was almost 30 kg of weight, only for its higher part, where His hands were nailed).

Jesus had to endure this experience to open the Gates of Heaven, so that you can have free access to God. So that your sins could be "washed" away. All of them, with no exception!

As human beings, we have a terrible time relating to the pain and suffering of others, unless we too have been through a similar experience. It is not because we are



coldhearted, but because our hearts and minds want to avoid grief and pain; instead, we seek love and joy. One reason Jesus Christ had to become flesh and submit to temptation, suffering, and death was so, He could truly understand how they afflict human beings. It was those experiences that make Him a loving and merciful High Priest, Judge, and Advocate for us before God the Father.

And even though we have not experienced the complete sufferings of Christ, God has given us a Spirit that opens our hearts to understand that tremendous sacrifice.

Following the themes of the succeeding paragraphs, one will understand, case-by-case, and reflect upon the summation of all what Jesus endured, so that we can come to know Him in a very personal way, that continues to deepen, as the years go by, and we bear our own burdens.

Jesus was betrayed

"And while they were dwelling in Galilee, Jesus said to them; 'The Son of man is about to be betrayed into the hands of men'" (Matt. 17:22). To be betrayed is the most terrible act that can be done to someone, because the very act means that the love you had for that person was never reciprocated, and that the person despised your love. There is no greater cause of grief in any relationship or any act more devastating.

Jesus was secretly arrested at night, having committed no crime

"Then they [the High Priest and Sanhedrin] came and laid their hands on Jesus, and arrested Him.... At that point Jesus said to the crowd: Have you come out to take Me with swords and clubs, as against a robber?" (Matt. 26:50, 55). "But this has happened so that the saying might be fulfilled which is written in their law, 'They hated Me [Jesus] without a cause'" (John 15:25).

Jesus experienced shame and unjust persecution. Note that the arresting party was brazenly led by the High Priest and members of the Sanhedrin—who so hated Jesus.

Jesus was deserted by everyone

“Then all the disciples forsook him, and fled” (Matt. 26:56). Not only was Jesus arrested, but everyone abandoned Him in the worst hour of His life. He was completely at the mercy of His captors, who brutally arrested Him in the middle of the night. The terrified disciples watched from a distance as He was taken to the private home of Caiaphas, the High Priest. Jesus was abandoned by His closest friends whom He loved. This included John, who during Passover had been leaning on Jesus.

Jesus was falsely accused

“Now the chief priests and the elders and the whole Sanhedrin sought false evidence against Jesus, so that they might put Him to death.... Then at the last, two false witnesses... (Matt. 26:59, 61). Imagine being taken secretly before a judge and falsely accused of crimes, all the while knowing that your captors were doing all of this to murder you. As Jesus stood silently before the most powerful men in all of Judea, He saw the murderous hatred in their eyes that drove them to use whatever means necessary to fulfill their bloodlust.

Jesus was Spat upon and beaten

“Then they [the High Priest and Sanhedrin] spit in His face and hit Him with their fists; and some struck Him with rods, saying, ‘Prophesy to us, Christ. Who is the one that struck You?’ ” (Matt. 26:67-68). The beating was far worse than Matthew suggests. Isaiah 52:14 says, “Many were astonished at Him—for His body was so disfigured—even His form, beyond that of the sons of men.”

Jesus was not hit or beaten with a rod a couple of times, He was pummeled, over and over. Isaiah 50:6 adds that they literally pulled out the hair of His beard. And He did not turn aside when they spit in His face. The fist-pounding, clubbing, and hair pulling went on and on, because that’s what it took to disfigure His face so that even the people of that time, who had witnessed many such beatings, were shocked. His tormentors were filled with the bloodlust of hatred. Remember who did this: the High Priest and the council of elders (or Sanhedrin).

Jesus was rejected

“Then the governor answered and said to them, ‘Which of the two do you desire that I release to you?’ And they [the High Priest, Sanhedrin, and a multitude of people] said, ‘Barabbas.’ Pilate said to them, ‘What then shall I do with Jesus Who is called Christ?’ They all said to him, ‘Let Him be crucified!’” (Matt. 27:21-22).

The High Priest and Sanhedrin, in their hatred for Jesus, gathered a mob together and persuaded them to support their evil plot. These people were necessary to ensure that Pilate would heed their demands out of fear of causing a riot. Jesus watched silently, knowing of their deceit and that even the lowest citizens of Judea rejected Him—as He was about to give His life for theirs!

Jesus was scourged

“Then he released Barabbas to them; but after scourging Jesus, he delivered Him up so that He might be crucified” (Matt. 27:26).

The Bible doesn’t provide the details to fully grasp what they did to Jesus. Roman law prohibited the scourging of Roman citizens because it was so brutal. A description of a scourging reads: “For they say that the bystanders were struck with amazement when they saw them [the martyrs] lacerated with scourges, even to the innermost veins and arteries, so that the hidden inward parts of the body, both

their bowels and their members, were exposed to view” (Eusebius’ Ecclesiastical History; bk. IV, ch. 15, para. 4).

Jesus was mocked and despised

“And after plating a crown of thorns, they put it on His head, and a rod in His right hand; and bowing on their knees before Him, they mocked Him, and kept on saying, ‘Hail, King of the Jews!’ Then, after spitting on Him, they took the rod and struck Him on the head” (Matt. 27:29-30).

Such an act would be humiliating enough even without the abuse that also occurred. The wreath of thorns was not just “placed” upon Jesus’ head as if putting a crown on a king: The Greek implies it was done in a hostile manner. In other words, the wreath was shoved onto His head, driving the thorns through the flesh and down against His skull. This was further aggravated by hitting Him on the head with the rod, thus intensifying the pain. Furthermore, the rod (reed in the KJV) became, in this case, an instrument of torture. Jesus was not hit with a light reed or a switch, but a stick—strong and stout, so that it could be used as a cudgel, a weapon.

Remember, preceding all of this was the brutality of His arrest, the beating by the priests, and the flesh-tearing flagellum or scourging; and, still, it wasn’t over. Worst of all, it says in Psalms that it broke Jesus’ heart to hear their hateful words. “Reproach has broken my heart, and I am full of heaviness; and I looked for sympathy, but there was none; and for comforters, but I found none” (Psa. 69:20).

Jesus was nailed to the cross

“And when they crucified Him...” (Matt. 27:35). Once again, the narrative simplifies a most terrible and cruel act. Nails were driven through His wrists, just below the wrist bone, through the major nerve running to the hand. His ankles were also nailed against the cross, again penetrating major nerves. His hands and feet were about the only parts of His body that had not yet been injured, and it would have been unimaginably excruciating. Crucifixion is a brutally painful way to die. (For more on the agony of crucifixion, you can read about it on the Internet.)

Jesus was reviled and mocked

“Then those who were passing by reviled at Him, shaking their heads, and saying, ‘You Who would destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, save Yourself. If You are the Son of God, come down from the cross.’ And in the same way also, the chief priests were mocking, with the scribes and elders, saying ... ‘If He is the King of Israel, let Him come down now from the cross, and we will believe Him. He trusted in God; let Him deliver Him now, if He will have Him. For He said, “I am the Son of God” ’ ” (Matt. 27:39-43).

Notice that, once again, the High Priest and Sanhedrin led the mocking of Jesus and even arrogantly pronounced that God had rejected Him. As the Son of the Most-High God, they not only blasphemed Jesus, but His Father as well. Amazingly, while under such agony that few have experienced, Jesus did not revile back (I Pet. 2:23).

Incredibly, Jesus continues to be persecuted and suffers to this day, it isn’t the agony of a physical body, but a spiritual pain: “And after falling to the ground, he [Saul] heard a voice say to him, ‘Saul, Saul, why do you persecute Me?’ ” (Acts 9:4). “And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with him; and if one member is glorified, all the members rejoice with him. Now you are the body of Christ, and you are all individual members” (I Cor. 12:26-27 26).

When God's people are persecuted or suffer, Jesus, who is the Head of the body, feels the pain—especially if the suffering is inflicted by fellow brethren.

All of the betrayal, lies, persecution, injustice, shame, false accusations, beatings, torture, and agony came upon Jesus in the space of about eighteen hours. Any one of these would cause unimaginable pain and anguish. Jesus felt and endured pain that had been perfected in a merciless world—yet still committed no sin! Is it any wonder that He sweated blood while praying to God? It was then, at the time of Jesus' greatest physical affliction, that God laid the sins of the world—past, present, and future—upon an innocent Christ.

Jesus never committed a single sin, so imagine the

torture of the transgressions of billions of people coming upon Him all at once.

Some have suggested that Jesus didn't suffer any more than others have in the history of the world. Truly, if we have any insight whatsoever into that single Passover, there is no question that Jesus endured what no man ever has - and all for one reason: God's love for the world.

'Therefore, let all the house of Israel know with full assurance that God has made this same Jesus, Whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.' Now after hearing this, they were cut to the heart; and they said to Peter and the other apostles, 'Men and brethren, what shall we do?' (Acts 2:36-37).

Easter Triduum



What exactly is the Paschal Triduum?

The Paschal Triduum is a single liturgical celebration that spans three days. It begins on the Thursday before Easter and ends the evening of Easter Sunday. "Isn't that four days?" you might ask yourself. The Church counts these days liturgically, so the "day" begins the evening before. (Remember, "evening came, and morning followed, the first day" from Genesis). Thus: Thursday evening to Friday evening (Day 1), Friday evening to Saturday evening (Day 2), Saturday evening to Sunday evening (Day 3).

Another unique element about the Paschal Triduum is that a single liturgy encompasses all three days. It is not three separate liturgies. This is best seen when all three days are celebrated physically in the same church.

At the end of the Mass on Holy Thursday, you'll notice there is no final blessing or dismissal. People are invited to pray quietly before the Blessed Sacrament and then leave when they are ready. The liturgy doesn't formally conclude; it simply pauses.

It picks up again on Good Friday with the Solemn Celebration of the Lord's Passion. You'll notice that this solemn liturgy doesn't have the usual, formal beginning we are used to: the entrance procession or greeting by the priest. Rather, the priest and ministers enter the sanctuary

when they are ready and, after prostrating before the altar, they simply pick up where they left off the evening before. Like Holy Thursday, the Good Friday liturgy doesn't have a formal dismissal; rather, the priest simply says a prayer over the people before departing. Another pause.

And although the Easter Vigil begins with the sign of the cross, it begins in a different location — outside, around a fire (although this year, because of Covid, adaptations may need to be made) without an opening song or procession. We pick up our prayer from where we left off the day before. And it is only at the end of the Easter Vigil Mass we hear the formal dismissal of the assembly, "Mass is ended," with the double alleluia. The Easter Vigil, which always is to begin after sunset on Saturday, takes place on the third day of the Triduum, so the vigil is considered the Easter Mass. Subsequent Masses are celebrated on Sunday for those unable to attend the vigil.



The Power of the Resurrection

The resurrection of Jesus from the dead is the be-all and the end-all of the Christian faith. If Jesus didn't rise from the dead, all bishops, priests, and Christian ministers should go home and get honest jobs, and all the Christian faithful should leave their churches immediately. As Paul himself put it: "If Jesus is not raised from the dead, our preaching is in vain and we are the most pitiable of men." It's no good, of course, trying to explain the resurrection away or rationalize it as a myth, a symbol, or an inner subjective experience. None of that does justice to the novelty and sheer strangeness of the Biblical message. It comes down finally to this: if Jesus was not raised from death, Christianity is a fraud and a joke; if he did rise from death, then Christianity is the fullness of God's revelation, and Jesus must be the absolute center of our lives. There is no third option.

I want to explore, very briefly, a handful of lessons that follow from the disquieting fact of the Resurrection. First, this world is not it. What I mean is that this world is not all that there is. We live our lives with the reasonable assumption that the natural world as we've come to know it through the sciences and discern it through common sense is the final framework of our lives and activities. Everything (quite literally, everything) takes place within the theater of our ordinary experience. And one of the most powerful and frightening features of the common-sense world is death. Every living thing dies and stays dead. Indeed, everything in the universe, scientists tell us, comes into being and then fades away permanently.

But what if this is not in fact the case? What if the laws of nature are not as iron-clad as we thought? What if death and dissolution did not have the final say? What if, through God's power and according to his providence, a "new heavens and a new earth" were being born? The resurrection of Jesus from the dead shows as definitively as possible that God is up to something greater than we had imagined or thought possible. And therefore we don't have to live as though death were our master and as though nihilism were the only coherent point of view. After he had encountered the risen Christ, Paul could even taunt death: "Where is your sting?" In light of the resurrection, we can, in fact, begin to see this world as a place of gestation, growth and maturation toward something higher, more permanent, more splendid.

Here's a second lesson derived from the resurrection: the tyrants know that their time is up. Remember that the cross was Rome's way of asserting its authority. Roman authorities declared that if you run afoul of our system, we will torture you to death in the most excruciating (*ex cruce*, from the cross) way possible and then we will leave your body to waste away be devoured by the beasts of the field. The threat of violence is how tyrants up and down the centuries have always asserted their authority. Might makes right. The crucified Jesus appeared to anyone who was witnessing the awful events on Calvary to be one more affirmation of this principle: Caesar always wins in the end. But when Jesus was raised from the dead through the power of the Holy Spirit, the first Christians knew that



Caesar's days were numbered. Jesus had taken the worst that the world could throw at him and he returned, alive and triumphant. They knew that the Lord of the world was no longer Caesar, but rather someone whom Caesar had killed but whom God had raised from death. This is why the risen Christ has been the inspiration for resistance movements up and down the centuries. In our own time we saw how deftly John Paul II wielded the power of the cross in Communist Poland. Though he had no nuclear weapons or tanks or mighty armies, John Paul had the power of the resurrection, and that proved strong enough to bring down one of the most imposing empires in the history of the world. Once again, the faculty lounge interpretation of resurrection as a subjective event or a mere symbol is exactly what the tyrants of the world want, for it poses no real threat to them.

The third great lesson of the resurrection is that the path of salvation has been opened to everyone. Paul told us that "though he was in the form of God, Jesus did not deem equality with God something to be grasped. Rather he emptied himself and took the form of slave...accepting even death, death on a cross." In a word, Jesus went all the way down, journeying into pain, despair, alienation, even godforsakenness. He went as far as you can go away from the Father. Why? In order to reach all of those who had wandered from God. Then, in light of the resurrection, the first Christians came to know that, even as we run as fast as we can away from the Father, all the way to godforsakenness, we are running into the arms of the Son. The opening up of the divine life allows everyone free access to the divine mercy. And this is why the Lord himself could say, "When the Son of Man is lifted up, he will draw all people to himself," and why Paul could assert in 1 Corinthians, "When everything is subjected to him, then the Son himself will also be subjected to the one who subjected everything to him, so that God may be all in all." The resurrection shows that Christ can gather back to the Father everyone whom he has embraced through his suffering love.

So on Easter Sunday, let us not domesticate the still stunning and disturbing message of resurrection. Rather, let us allow it to unnerve us, change us, set us on fire.



The author

THE NEED FOR THE SOCIO-POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC RE-AWAKENING OF THE GAMBIA IN THE FACE OF REGIONAL COMPETITION

The political economy of a country is pivotal to its economic dynamics as well as its social system. While politics and the process of politicking do not necessarily give rise to the social structure of a people, the institutional framework, process and outcome of this exercise do influence, to a very large extent, the course and outcome of achievable socio-political and economic status of the nation and its people. The primary expectation of electorates is to reap the benefits and dividends of democracy through their improved standard of living and sustainable socio-economic prosperity. Failure to deliver on these measurable indicators are bound to be unsettling and disconcerting. Although these obligations are always seen as the benchmark for every political leadership (including The Gambia), the practical reality of events has been one-dimensional. As the smallest country in mainland Africa and a haven of peace, the prospects of economic advancement and social prosperity are largely evident and supported by the regulatory environment. However, the prospect of their realisation in a country that was beleaguered by a chequered history of long-term leadership, including the political impasse of 2016 is paramount.

Given the spate of competitiveness in the region's socio-political and economic milieu, there is an apparent need for reawakening of the Gambia's polity. This may involve economic reforms; the enactment of policies that would bring the country to great limelight; the transmission of knowledge-based economy, cultural stability, and discourses of power. In this regard, Todaro, defines development as a multi-dimensional process involving the re-organisation and reorientation of the entire economic and social systems. To him, development is a physical reality and a state of mind in which the society has, through some combinations of social, economic and political processes, secured the way of obtaining a better life. According to Rogers, development, as a long participatory process of social change in the society whose objective, is the material and social progress for most of the population through a better understanding of their environment.

The economic condition in The Gambia arises from globalization via colonialism by the Europeans. Despite this, The Gambia should still fight the global disease and target its economic growth to balance the globalization cycle and raise its people's quality of living. The theory of modernisation argues that some conditions (technical advances, education of quality and production efficiency) as this progression are missing in developing countries. Thus, they need to acquire adequate capital to sustain economic growth that benefits a wide variety and not to a fortunate few in the country. This theory is best used to understand the relationship between globalization, unemployment and democratic development in The Gambia, because modernisation assumes that most traditional societies are shedding off their traditionality and

moving into the modern and Western ethos, which is an element of globalization. Modernisation and globalization are closely linked in terms of advanced technology, individualism, egalitarianism, and so on. The driving force of globalization is Information Technology, which is also found in modernisation.

Undoubtedly, in Africa, Nigeria and South Africa are playing the role of a regional hegemony, serving as the hubs for most of the regional development initiatives. Also, they have invested much in the promotion of security and good governance in Africa. Apart from their economic strength, both Nigeria and South Africa have considerably adequate military capacity to play the role of a regional power. Regional powers generally pursue foreign policies that are more globally oriented. Both countries exhibit potentials and actual capabilities that are defined and measured in terms of their political and socio-economic visions about their trans-national environments, aspirations for leadership role, political legitimacy, military strength, resource endowment, and the political willingness to implement those visions. While neither Nigeria nor South Africa may readily be considered as regional hegemonies in the strict and conventional usage of the word 'hegemon', however, the two countries have been operationalising their visions of hegemonic power in both their respective sub-regions and at the continental level.

What must smaller countries like The Gambia do in the face of stiff competition? It needs a pragmatic development agenda. A successful development agenda requires inclusive partnerships - at the global, regional, national and local levels, built upon principles and values, and upon a shared vision and shared goals placing her people at the centre. The Gambia relies on what one refers to as Official Development Assistance (ODA) to encourage growth and trade. Though, aid levels are falling and donor countries have not lived up to their pledge to ramp up development finance. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the global economy was projected to contract sharply, by 3 per cent, in 2020, experiencing its worst recession since the Great Depression. Strong international cooperation is needed now more than ever to ensure that countries have the means to recover from the pandemic, build back better and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

As a matter of necessity, The Gambia should improve its human capital. The term human capital refers to the economic value of a worker's experience and skills. Human capital includes assets like education, training, intelligence, skills, health, and other things employers value such as loyalty and punctuality. The Human Capital Project is a global effort to accelerate more and better investments in people for greater equity and economic growth. Investing in people through nutrition, health care, quality education, jobs and skills helps develop human capital, and this is key to ending extreme poverty and creating more inclusive societies. In this regard, The Gambian government owes

an avowed duty to train her citizens to become competitive in global labour market. As noted in the World Development Report (WDR) 2019: The Changing Nature of Work, the frontier for skills is moving rapidly, bringing both opportunities and risks. There is mounting evidence that unless countries strengthen their human capital, they cannot achieve sustained, inclusive economic growth, will not have a workforce prepared for the more highly skilled jobs of the future, and will not compete effectively in the global economy.

National prosperity is created, not inherited. It does not grow out of a country's natural endowments, its labour pool, its interest rates, or its currency's value, as classical economics insists. A nation's competitiveness depends on the capacity of its industry to innovate and upgrade. Companies gain advantage against the world's best competitors because of pressure and challenge. They benefit from having strong domestic rivals, aggressive home-based suppliers, and demanding local customers.

In a world of increasing global competition, nations have become more, not less, important. As the basis of competition has shifted more and more to the creation and assimilation of knowledge, the role of the nation has grown. Competitive advantage is created and sustained through a highly localized process. Differences in national values, culture, economic structures, institutions, and histories all contribute to competitive success. There are striking differences in the patterns of competitiveness in every country; no nation can or will be competitive in every or even most industries. Ultimately, nations succeed in particular industries because their home environment is the most forward-looking, dynamic, and challenging.

The Gambia government should attract global investors to the country by creating the enabling socio-political and economic environment. Foreign Direct Investments (FDI) are playing an important role in the economic background of the Transition Economies. They are a catalyst of the economic growth and of the technological development, when domestic savings cannot. Many countries have benefited from capital inflows in the form of FDI. For example, Dubai-based Port Operator (DP) World has commenced construction of a \$1.13bn deep-water port in Ndayane, Senegal, which is situated approximately 50km from the capital, Dakar.

FDI creates new jobs and more opportunities as investors build new companies in foreign countries. This can lead to an increase in income, massive employment and more purchasing power to locals, which in turn leads to an overall boost in targeted economies.

The DP gigantic project when completed will lead to Dakar, Senegal being the shop keeper of Africa, which will in turn facilitate re-export trade. Re-exportation, also called entrepot trade, is a form of international trade in which a country exports goods which it previously imported without altering them. The growth of re-exports of intermediate goods during this period suggests that these economies are playing an increasingly important role in global value chains (GVCs) by acting as hubs in regional supply chains. Exports are incredibly important to modern economies because they offer people and firms many more markets for their goods. One of the core functions of diplomacy and foreign policy between governments is to foster economic trade, encouraging exports and imports for the benefit of all trading parties.

Over time, Senegal has proved to be politically stable; having been one of the African countries that have not experienced a military coup d'état. One strongly believes that this stability has attracted numerous investors to the

country. The Gambia can as well ensure that the country is relatively stable to attract FDI and investors. The importance of political stability in business investment cannot be overemphasized. Economic growth and political stability are deeply interconnected. On the one hand, the uncertainty associated with an unstable political environment may reduce investment and the pace of economic development. An added benefit of political stability is that it helps the country to attain a long-lasting development, as it enables the investors, tax-payers, bankers to have a predictable economic policy to follow.

Quality and pragmatic education plays an important role to the economic development of any country. Education is the key to economic development. Education raises people's productivity and creativity and promotes entrepreneurship and technological advances. In addition, it plays a very crucial role in securing economic and social progress and improving income distribution. Education in every sense is one of the fundamental factors of development. No country can achieve sustainable economic development without substantial investment in human capital. Education enriches people's understanding of themselves and world. It improves the quality of their lives and leads to broad social benefits to individuals and society. In this regard, we as a country have to strengthen and improve our educational services and delivery, that meet international standards.

No doubt, The Gambia will largely benefit from the Dubai Port (DP) project on going in Senegal when completed. At least, it will increase the volume of trade between the two countries. More significantly, it will impact on Gambia's tourism. Tourism boosts the revenue of the economy, creates thousands of jobs, develops the infrastructure of a country, and plants a sense of cultural exchange between foreigners and citizens. The number of jobs created by tourism in many different areas is significant. What can be done, in the meanwhile, is to improve on tourism facilities and be ready witted when the fallout begins to creep in.

As a matter of a necessity, the river can be dredged and deepened to enable water-borne transportation to flow easy. The River Gambia is one of the most navigable of African rivers; its chief value, therefore, has been its transportation function. When the DP project is completed, River Gambia can be used to transport massive goods to the country. The Gambia is one of the finest waterways in Africa and the only western African river that is easily accessible to oceangoing shipping. This is a great advantage!

Overall, in order to key in into the next level of our socio-political and economic development in the face of regional competition, we need visionary leaders who can turn around our polity into an enviable position. The economic development of any country is highly dependent on good leadership. Leadership plays a key role in sustainable economic growth as it involves providing opportunities for growth and progressive developments. Therefore, good leadership becomes a visible aspect through, for instance, well developed infrastructure and the ability of a country to provide basic amenities especially to the most vulnerable. According to Michael Schuman in *The Miracle- The Epic Story of Asia's Quest for Wealth*, Asia's phenomenal economic growth is attributed to inspiring leaders who were the backbone of the early stages of each Asian economy.

In conclusion, this write-up examined the need for the Socio-Political and Economic Re-awakening of The Gambia in the face of regional competition. The Gambia's economy and the tendency for its growth, in the face of

several socio-political and economic challenges facing the country, which have hampered the rate of economic development in the Society's socio-economic development process, which covers ways and means of ensuring the well-being and self-actualisation of the generality of the citizens, requires viable and implementable policies. Studies with empirical facts have demonstrated that the state and governance are important catalysts to socio-economic development. It has been opined that good governance and visionary leadership remain a veritable platform for engineering socio-political and economic development in any nation, including The Gambia. It is important to note also that, achieving sustained socio-economic development will demand solving some of The Gambia's notable lapses in the build-up to development. To make sustained progress, good governance must be wedded with transparency and accountability and improved

economic management, as well as investments in education, health and critical infrastructure. This will lead to increased investor trust at both the local and international levels. Transparency and accountability will raise the profile of our country and lead to improved economic growth, expansion of businesses, growth of linkages for our SMEs and consequently increased job creation. As it is presently, we need socio-political and economic re-awakening in order to occupy our rightful place in the scheme of things within the regional level. We will only secure a prosperous, peaceful and liveable Gambia if we harness socio-political and economic growth and development to social solidarity across and between generations.

The author has extensive experience in International Development and Development Cooperation.

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The advertisement features a collage of food items. On the left, there is a whole raw chicken. In the center, a plate of fried rice with vegetables and meat is shown. To the right, a large onion is cut in half, revealing its layers. In the background, a sack of rice is visible with the word 'RICE' printed on it. The top left corner contains the logo for 'karlilu.com', which consists of a stylized 'K' inside a green circular shape. Below the logo, the text 'karlilu.com' is written in a large, bold, black font, and 'FOOD SERVICE' is written in a smaller, green font below it. At the bottom of the image, a green banner contains the text 'Get them on karlilu.com' in white.

ORDINATION OF REVS ANDREW BANGURA, SAWYER MBOKEY AND VICTOR KARGBO



Rev.
Sawyer
Mbokey

March 25th, 2022 marked both the solemnity of the Annunciation of the Lord Jesus Christ and the ordination to the diaconate of Revs. Andrew Bangura, Sawyer Mbokey, and Victor Kargbo.

The Bishop called to ordain them was Bishop Henry Aruna of the Diocese of Kenema. He urged the deacons to be like Mary, full of faith, humility and patience in waiting on God's divine will making a great message of the solemnity.

Andrew and Victor are from Makeni Diocese in Sierra Leone and Sawyer Mbokey from Brikama, The Gambia.

The pictures show the ceremony of the day which was graced by the High Commissioner to Serra Leone, Alieu K. Jammeh.



ANNUAL DIOCESAN PRIESTS RETREAT 2022



The annual retreat for priests of the Diocese of Banjul took place at the GPI from the 20th to 25th of March, 2022.

Almost all the priests were in attendance. The retreat preacher was Monsignor Daniel Kamara of the Diocese of Makeni, (*pictured right*).

The retreat was very refreshing and the retreat preacher gave a very fruitful and meaningful retreat, touching on the areas that matter most in the lives of Priests.

At the end of the five days, the priests were delighted, confessing that it was a very good retreat, which will be remembered in years to come.



Monsignor Daniel Kamara



40 Atlantic Road, Fajara.
Telephone: 4498000

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- Nutrition,
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- *THUS ENHANCING HUMAN DEVELOPMENT***

THE DIOCESE OF BANJUL NEWSLETTER

2022 APPEAL FOR SUPPORT

We have a small favor to ask. Many people are beginning to turn to the Diocese of Banjul Newsletter for vital, independent, and quality journalism. Therefore, readers around the world now need to support us financially. Thus, as 2022 begins, there's a New Year resolution we would like you to consider. We would like to invite you to join the myriad of readers who have taken the step to support us financially – keeping us open to all, and fiercely independent. In 2021, this support assisted in sustaining our work in diverse spheres. It enabled diligent, fact-checked, authoritative journalism to thrive in an era of falsehood, sensation, hype and breathtaking misinformation and misconception. In 2022, we will be no less active.

With no shareholders or billionaire owner, we can set our own agenda and provide trustworthy journalism that's free from commercial and political influence, offering a counterweight to the spread of misinformation. When it's never mattered more, we can investigate and challenge without fear or favour. Unlike many others, Banjul Newsletter journalism is available for everyone to read, regardless of what they can afford to pay. We do this because we believe in information equality. While others commoditize information, we seek to democratize it. Greater numbers of people can keep track of societal issues, understand their impact, and become inspired to take meaningful action. If there were ever a time to join us, it is now.

Every contribution, however big or small, powers our journalism and sustains our future. Support the Banjul Newsletter for as little as any amount. If you can, please consider supporting us with a regular amount each month. Thank you.

Weekday Celebration

April & May

**7TH APRIL*****ST. JEAN-BAPTIST DE LA SALLE, PRIEST***

Born in Rheims, France, in 1631, Jean-Baptiste devoted himself to establishing schools for the poor. He founded the religious congregation, the Salesians. He endured many hardships, dying in Rouen in 1719.

25TH APRIL***ST. MARK, EVANGELIST***

The Gospel attributed to St. Mark is the shortest of the four Gospels, and probably the first to be written. John Mark was a cousin of St. Barnabas. It was at his mother's house in Jerusalem that the disciples assembled (Acts 12:12). Mark travelled with Barnabas and Paul to Cyprus (Acts 12:25; 13:13; 15:26-39). He left them there, but later helped Paul when he was in prison in Rome. Tradition says that Mark's Gospel was based on Peter's reminiscences.

29TH APRIL***ST. CATHERINE OF SIENA, DOCTOR OF THE CHURCH***

Catherine was born in Siena, Tuscany (now part of Italy). In 1363, she joined the Dominican Order, becoming known for her asceticism. Her writings include four treatises on religious mysticism. She wrote: 'Be what God meant you to be, and you will set the world on fire!' Catherine died on 29th April 1389 and was canonised in 1461.

2ND MAY***ST. ATHANASIUS, DOCTOR OF THE CHURCH***

Athanasius was born in 293 at Alexandria, Egypt. In 325 he took part in the first Council of the Church in Nicæa (now Iznik) in Turkey. The council condemned Arianism, a heresy which denied Christ's divinity. In 328, Athanasius was appointed Patriarch of Alexandria, but in 336, theological disputes led to his banishment. He repeatedly returned from exile and resumed his office. But in 356, he was banished by the Emperor Constantine, and withdrew to Upper Egypt, where he wrote theological works. Constantine's death in 361 gave Athanasius a respite; but renewed controversy forced him to flee into the Theban desert. At the time of his death in 373, Athanasius was again in possession of his diocese.

The creed named after Athanasius was not written by him. It defines the Persons of the Trinity as revealed by the Holy Spirit, and is accepted by Catholics, Orthodox, Anglicans and most Protestants.

3RD MAY***ST. PHILIP & ST. JAMES, APOSTLES***

Philip was one of the twelve apostles, fellow-countryman of Andrew and Peter, whose home was in Bethsaida, a

fishing-village by the Lake of Galilee. In the early Church, he was one of the 'seven men of good repute' appointed to care for widows (Acts 6:1-5). When persecution broke out after the death of Stephen, Philip went down to Samaria as a preacher and healer (Acts 8:5-13). He converted and baptised an Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8:26-39). Later, Paul and his companions, on their way to Jerusalem, stayed with Philip at Cæsarea (Acts 21:8).

James is mentioned in the Gospels only in passing, but appears in Acts and the letters of Paul as a leader of the early Church. As leader of the Christian community in Jerusalem, he gave judgment on whether Gentiles had to be circumcised before they could be received into the Church. (Acts 15:1-19). Note that this James is not to be confused with the other apostle named as James, son of Zebedee and brother of John, often called James the Great, whose feast day is Tuesday, 25th July.

26TH MAY***ST. PHILIP NERI, PRIEST***

Philip Neri, known as the 'Second Apostle of Rome', was born in 1515. He was ordained at the age of 35. Gathering young people together for spiritual exercises, he found himself leading a group of priests who wished to live together, not bound by vows, but united in charity, in an institution called the Oratory. Philip was the friend of popes, noted for his preaching, modesty and humour. He died in 1595 and was canonised in 1622. Since then, other oratories have been founded.

7TH MAY***ST. AUGUSTINE OF CANTERBURY***

Augustine was born in 6th-century Rome, and became a Benedictine friar. Pope Gregory I sent Augustine and forty missionaries to England. They arrived in 597. Augustine converted King Ethelbert of Kent and many of his subjects. On the Pope's instructions, he purified many pagan temples, consecrated 13 other bishops, and became the first Archbishop of Canterbury. He died in 604. We pray today for the Governors, Principal, staff and students of St. Augustine's Senior Secondary School.

31ST MAY***VISITATION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY***

This day marks the end of the Month of Mary. We celebrate the visit of Mary to her cousin Elizabeth, as related in Luke 1:39-56. In Elizabeth's house, Mary exclaimed the Magnificat - the hymn the universal Church says or sings at Vespers every day.

The Pope's Prayer Intentions

April - For health care workers

We pray for health care workers who serve the sick and the elderly, especially in the poorest countries; may they be adequately supported by governments and local communities.

May - For faith-filled young people

We pray for all young people, called to live life to the fullest; may they see in Mary's life the way to listen, the depth of discernment, the courage that faith generates, and the dedication to service.

MAY IS THE MONTH OF MARY

HOLY MARY
MOTHER OF GOD,
PRAY FOR US

For centuries, Catholics and Orthodox have dedicated the month of May to Mary, the mother of Jesus. We believe that she deserves this honor because God himself honored her by choosing her to become the mother of our Redeemer.

We believe that she is the greatest saint, and we have always prayed to her for her intercession "now and at the hour of our death," as the Hail Mary prayer states.

Our devotion to Mary, though, is one of the things that many Protestants don't understand. Catholics have been accused of adoring Mary, of putting her on the same level as Jesus. If this were true, it would be heretical. We don't adore Mary, who was only a human, not a goddess.

However, we Catholics don't understand why Protestants don't have a greater devotion to Mary, especially Protestants who claim to follow Scripture alone. Luke's Gospel quotes Mary in her Magnificat as saying, "From now on all ages will call me blessed. The Mighty One has done great things for me" (Lk 1:48-49). So why wouldn't all Christians be quick to call her blessed and venerate her?

Mary's role is to lead us to her Son, to deepen our devotion to Jesus as the Christ, our Savior.

The Catholic Church has four basic dogmas about Mary:

First, she is the mother of God. The Council of Ephesus in 431 solemnly established that Jesus had two natures, a divine and a human, but he was only one person, and Mary was the mother of that person. As St. Cyril of Alexandria said at that council, "That anyone could doubt the right of the holy Virgin to be called the mother of God fills me with astonishment. Surely she must be the mother of God if our Lord Jesus Christ is God, and she gave birth to him!"

Second, Mary remained a virgin all her life. Both Luke's Gospel (Lk 1:35) and Matthew's Gospel (Mt 1:20) tell us that Mary conceived Jesus through the power of the Holy Spirit, while remaining a virgin. As for the siblings of Jesus referred to in Scripture, Catholics believe either that they were cousins or, along with the Orthodox, that they were Joseph's children by a previous marriage. In this view, Joseph was an older widower who agreed to care for her.

Third, Mary was conceived without original sin. This doctrine is called the Immaculate Conception and should not be confused with the doctrine of the virgin birth. It means that, when Mary was conceived by her parents, she was preserved from the sin that, according to Christian doctrine, we are all born with.

This doctrine, not formally defined until 1854, states that Mary had a "preservative redemption" in anticipation of the foreseen merits of Jesus. The only biblical basis for this doctrine is the angel Gabriel's address to Mary, "Hail, full of grace," or in modern translations, "Hail, highly favored one" (Lk 1:28). If Mary was full of grace, according to Catholic teaching it meant that she did not have original sin on her soul.

Fourth, Mary was assumed, body and soul, into heaven. This doctrine, called the Assumption, was not defined as dogma until 1950, but the feast of the Assumption was being celebrated as early as the sixth century. In Jerusalem, the most imposing building on Mount Zion is the Basilica of the Dormition, marking the site where it is believed that Mary died. Mary's Tomb, empty of course, is near the Garden of Gethsemane. It is a crypt that is all that is left of a Byzantine basilica built in the fourth century. It is from here that she would have been assumed into heaven.

We also believe that Mary has appeared to various people throughout history. Technically speaking, we don't have to believe in these appearances, but we know the careful way the Church studies each such occurrence before it approves it. The most important of these appearances have been at Guadalupe, Lourdes, Fatima and Knock.

There are numerous devotions for the Blessed Virgin, but the most important is the rosary, a devotion that has been around since the 12th century.

... Holy Mary, mother of God, prayer for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death, Amen.

Gambian Christian



Anniversaries

April & May

23rd April, 1816: Captain Alexander Grant purchased Banjul Island from the King of the Kombos, and renamed it St. Mary's Island. Grant Street in Banjul was named after him.

18th April, 1848: The first Mass was celebrated in a room in Banjul which served as a chapel.

18th April 1849: For 2,500 French francs, Bishop Aloysius Kobès of Dakar bought the property in Daniel Goddard Street where the Cathedral now stands.

2nd May, 1849: Bishop Kobès blessed the foundation stone of the first Catholic chapel.

14th April, 1850: Four Sisters of the Immaculate Conception arrived from France to open a school for girls.

1st May, 1931: Bishop Augustin Grimault visited Banjul to confirm 30 young people.

4th May, 1935: Arrival of Sr. Albert Byrne SJC, who served in The Gambia until her death in Banjul on 16th July, 2001, aged 90.

15th April, 1936: Fr. Harold Whiteside celebrated the first Mass at Old Jeshwang.

9th April, 1948: Opening of the first St. Therese's Church Kanifing, now the parochial hall.

15th April, 1951: The Catholic Mission was raised to the status of Prefecture-Apostolic.

22nd May, 1954: Fr. Meehan's Golden Jubilee was celebrated. The actual date of his ordination was 28th October, 1904, but the celebration was brought forward because of his declining health. He died on 15th September, 1954.

8th April, 1958: Completion of Bwiam mission house, supervised by Fr. Reginald Gillooly.

3rd April, 1959: Opening of Njongon Primary School.

24th April, 1960: Bishop Moloney blessed Star of the Sea Bakau.

2nd April, 1962: Bishop Moloney blessed a bell at the Cathedral.

9th April, 1966: Following Vatican II, Bishop Moloney set up three commissions: liturgy, headed by Fr. Hugh Fagan; ecumenism, Fr. Michael Flynn; and the laity, Fr. Seán Little.

9th April, 1972: Archbishop Francis Carroll of Monrovia consecrated the new St. Therese's Church at Kanifing. The consecration coincided with the Bishops' Conference of The Gambia and Sierra Leone, hosted by Bishop Moloney.

4th April, 1980: Bishop Moloney announced his resignation due to ill health.

5th April, 1983: The Cluny Sisters celebrated 100 years in The Gambia at the opening of the convent at Darsilami, with Sisters Elizabeth, Josephine and Philomena taking up residence.

13th April, 1985: At Bakau Stadium, Bishop Cleary ordained Anthony Gabisi and Peter Gomez as priests and David Jimoh Jarju and Edward Gomez as deacons.

12th April, 1986: Ordination of Fr. Edward Gomez.

26th April, 1986: Ordination of Fr. David Jimoh Jarju.

21st April, 1989: The renovated church at Bwiam was rededicated to Our Lady of Fatima.

17th April, 1993: Opening of St. James Kanchungkou.

23rd April, 1995: Bishop Cleary blessed Holy Rosary, Lamin.

5th April, 1997: Opening of St. Matthew, Barra.

10th April, 1999: Ordination by Bishop Cleary of Fr. Joseph Karbo and Fr. Michael Ndecky.

21st April, 2001: Opening of St. Peter & St. Paul, Albreda.

14th May, 2006, Feast of St. Matthias: Episcopal Ordination at Bakau of the Most Rev. Robert Ellison CSSp.

1st April, 2007, Palm Sunday: Bishop Ellison opened the Chapel of Perpetual Adoration at St. Therese's, Kanifing.

28th April, 2007: Bishop Emeritus Michael Cleary opened the Anne-Marie Javouhey Academy, Brusubi.

29th April, 2007: Opening of St. Teresa of Calcutta, Mariamakunda.

12th May, 2007: The Cluny Sisters celebrated the 200th anniversary of the founding of their Order.

11th-23rd April, 2008: Bishop Ellison attended the Pastoral Council for Inter-Religious Dialogue in Nairobi.

25th May, 2008: Death, in Dakar, of Mgr. Pierre Sagna CSSp, Bishop Emeritus of St. Louis du Sénégal, who had spent his retirement at Holy Cross, Brusubi.

20th April, 2009: Launching of the Network of Catholic Women's Associations.

11th May, 2009: Br. Marcelin, Principal of the Lycée Sacré Coeur Ziguinchor, visited St. Peter's Senior Secondary School, Lamin, with 11 teachers and 84 pupils.

24th May, 2009: The Methodist Mission achieved autonomy from the parent mission in Britain.

2nd May, 2009: President Jammeh made Bishop Ellison an honorary Commander of the Order of the Republic of The Gambia (CRG).

10th May, 2015: Sr. Marie J. Mendy, the only Gambian Sister of the School Sisters, of Notre Dame, made her perpetual profession.

End of May, 2015: After serving in The Gambia since 1967, Fr. Michael Casey CSSp returned finally to Ireland.

25th March, 2017: The Gambia Christian Council held a thanksgiving service at Bakau Stadium attended by thousands of Christians of all denominations.

17th - 19th April, 2017: The Diocesan Finance Committee held its first Annual General Meeting. "Key stakeholders discussed how the Bishop's office could 'better partner' with them.

17th - 20th May, 2017: A prayer walk was held from Koina to Banjul for the salvation of souls across The Gambia.

The Diocese of Banjul Newsletter
Wishes All Our Readers
A Faithful Holy Week
& A Joyful Easter.



April and May

*Saviour of the world, by your Cross and
Resurrection you have set us free.*

Our Sunday Readings

3th April, 2022
Fifth Sunday of Lent, Year C

1st Reading: Isaiah 43:16-21
Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 126:1-2, 2-3, 4-5, 6
2nd Reading: Philippians 3:8-14
Verse before the Gospel: Joel 2:12-13
Gospel: John 8:1-11

Homily Theme: Jesus and the woman caught committing adultery – John 8:1-11

Reflection: This passage comes from the story of the woman caught in adultery when she is dragged before Jesus to see if He would support her stoning. His response is perfect and, in the end, she is left alone to encounter the tender mercy of Jesus. In this story, the woman is brought before Jesus with a harsh judgment. Emotions are high and these emotions clearly cloud the rational thinking of those who are ready to stone her. Jesus cuts through this irrationality by a profound statement. “Let the one among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her.” Again, he bent down and wrote on the ground. And in response, they went away one by one, beginning with the elders. So, he was left alone with the woman before him.

10th April, 2022
Palm Sunday of the Lords Passion, Year C

Procession: Luke 19:28-40
1st Reading: Isaiah 50:4-7
Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 22:8-9,17-18,19-20,23-24
2nd Reading: Philippians 2:6-11
Verse before the Gospel: Philippians 2:8-9
Gospel: Luke 22:14 - 23:56

Homily Theme: Palm Sunday: Jesus enters Jerusalem in jubilation for His Passion and Cross.

Reflection: “Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Blessed is the kingdom of our father David that is to come! Hosanna in the highest!” Mark 11:9 - Jesus was treated as He should have been treated. People were excited to see Him and there was much excitement. But this excitement quickly turned to shock and horror, as we enter more deeply into today’s readings. The Gospel culminates with Jesus hanging on the Cross crying out “Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?” “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” And with that, “Jesus gave a loud cry and breathed his last.” At that moment the entire congregation kneels in silence as we ponder the reality of Christ’s death. Why would He do such a thing? Why would He choose suffering and death? Because in the Father’s perfect wisdom, this suffering and death was for a

greater purpose. God chose to confound the wisdom of the world by using His own suffering and Crucifixion as the perfect means of our holiness. In this act, He transformed the greatest evil into the greatest good. God is more powerful than death itself and God has the final victory even when all seems lost.

17th April, 2022
Easter Sunday, The resurrection of the Lord (Mass during the day)

1st Reading: Acts 10:34A, 37-43
Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 118:1-2, 16-17, 22-23
2nd Reading: Colossians 3:1-4 or 1 Corinthians 5:6B-8
Alleluia: 1 Corinthians 5:7B-8A
Gospel: John 20:1-9

Homily Theme: Jesus Christ resurrects from the dead, Let us celebrate the Risen Lord.

Reflection: At the Easter Vigil, the Exultet is sung as Mass begins in darkness, illumined only by candles throughout the church. The Exultet is a beautiful hymn of rejoicing in Christ’s triumph over sin and death. One part states: O truly necessary sin of Adam, destroyed completely by the Death of Christ! O happy fault that earned for us so great, so glorious a Redeemer!

This line stands out because it calls the sin of Adam “necessary” and refers to it as “O happy fault.” At first, this may seem strange. Why is it that we refer to the sin of Adam, Original Sin, as “necessary” and “happy.” The answer is Easter. It’s because God, in His perfect wisdom and love, took sin and the consequence of sin (death) and used them as the means of the salvation of the world. That’s what Easter is all about! By allowing the sins of the world to persecute Him and crucify Him, and then, turning that suffering and death into the very means of salvation. Jesus destroyed sin, by destroying the consequences of sin which is death. Death loses in the Resurrection! Jesus, Resurrection takes away the effects of all sin for those who cling to Him.

Easter is a time when we must do just that. We must “cling” to our resurrected Lord! We must cling to Jesus who is alive and well. We must cling to His Resurrection and strive to share in it.

24th April, 2022
Divine Mercy Sunday, Second Sunday of Easter, Year C

1st Reading: Acts 5:12-16
Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 118:2-4, 13-15, 22-24
2nd Reading: Revelation 1:9-11A, 12-13, 17-19
Alleluia: John 20:29

Gospel: John 20:19-31

Homily Theme: Blessed are those who have not seen and have believed – John 20:27-29

Reflection: Thomas, just like all of us would have done, didn't believe that Jesus had resurrected. But Jesus was not angry or mad at him for his disbelief, infact, He had to come again a second time so as to reveal Himself to Thomas. This underscores the very important task that Jesus wants us to undertake even with our human weakness. Jesus will still use us to spread His Gospel to the whole world. After realizing that Jesus resurrected and is alive, Thomas said to Jesus, "My Lord and my God." These words transformed Thomas from a dis-believer to a believer in the risen Christ. So, the pronouncement we make from our hearts through the mouth are very strong. Let us today say like Thomas, 'My Lord and my God' in every difficult situation where we find ourselves doubting the power of Jesus Christ. Jesus will always reveal Himself to us both in our strongest and weakest points in our day to day life.

1st May, 2022
Third Sunday of Easter, Year C

1st Reading: Acts 5:27-32, 40B-41

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 30:2, 4, 5-6, 11-12, 13

2nd Reading: Revelation 5:11-14

Gospel: John 21:1-19 or John 21:1-14

Homily Theme: Put into deep water and lower your nets – John 21:1-14, Luke 5:1-11

Reflection: After he had finished speaking, He said to Simon, "Put out into deep water and lower your nets for a catch." Simon said in reply, "Master, we have worked hard all night and have caught nothing, but at your command I will lower the nets." When they had done this, they caught a great number of fish and their nets were tearing. This passage is not only about the physical miracle of catching fish; rather, it's much more about the mission of evangelizing souls and accomplishing the mission of God. And the symbolism of putting out into the deep water tells us that we must be all in and fully committed, if we are to evangelize and spread the Word of God, as we are called to do. When we listen to God and act on His word, committing ourselves to His will in a radical and deep way, He will produce an abundant catch of souls. This "catch" will come in an unexpected way at an unexpected time and will clearly be the work of God. But, think about what would have happened if Simon would have laughed and told Jesus, "Sorry, Lord, I'm done fishing for the day. Maybe tomorrow." If Simon would have acted this way, he would never have been blessed with this abundant catch. The same is true with us. If we fail to listen to the voice of God in our lives, and fail to heed His radical commands, we will not be used in the way He desires to use us.

8th May, 2022
Fourth Sunday of Easter, Year C

1st Reading: Acts 13:14, 43-52

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 100:1-2, 3, 5

2nd Reading: Revelation 7:9, 14B-17

Alleluia: John 10:14

Gospel: John 10:27-30

Homily Theme: The sheep hear His voice as He calls them by name – John 10:1-30

Reflection: The Gospel above gives us insight into this internal struggle in that it contrasts the voice of the shepherd with the voice of a stranger. The sheep are easily taught and conditioned.

They learn the voice of their shepherd because it was common practice for shepherds to regularly speak to their sheep. Once the sheep became used to the shepherd's voice, they would turn and follow him when he called. So it is with us. We will follow the voice of that which we are most familiar. Whatever it is that we immerse ourselves in each and every day will grow on us and draw us, even unknowingly, to follow.

This begs the question, "What are you most familiar with?" Ideally, we spend sufficient time in God's Word, learning His language, tone and voice. Ideally, we dedicate some portion of our day, every day, to silent contemplation of God. As we do this, we build a habit of hearing Him speak and we become comfortable with and comforted by His voice.

15th May, 2022
Fifth Sunday of Easter, Year C

1st Reading: Acts 14:21-27

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 145:8-9, 10-11, 12-13

2nd Reading: Revelation 21:1-5A

Alleluia: John 13:34

Gospel: John 13:31-33A, 34-35

Homily Theme: The Son of Man is glorified and God is glorified in Him – John 13:31-35

Reflection: Jesus said, "Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in Him. If God is glorified in Him, God will also glorify Him in himself, and God will glorify Him at once. This is a powerful lesson for us all. First, it's essential that we look at Jesus' glorification through His betrayal, suffering and death. But, we must also strive to see the potential that our own sufferings have, when united to the Savior of the World. How do you react when another sins against you? How would you have, reacted to Judas betraying your love? This is a very difficult question to face, in honesty, and it is even harder to live the response that Jesus lived. The truth is that, every time we are mistreated by another, we are given an opportunity to glorify God and further the Kingdom of Heaven by forgiving, uniting our suffering with Christ's, and offering mercy. This is much easier to speak about than to live.

22nd May, 2022
Sixth Sunday of Easter, Year C

1st Reading: Acts 15:1-2, 22-29

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 67:2-3, 5, 6, 8

2nd Reading: Revelation 21:10-14, 22-23

Alleluia: John 14:23

Gospel: John 14:23-29

Homily Theme: Peace I leave with you, my peace I give to you – John 14:27

Reflection: What a wonderful reminder that we all need to hear on a regular basis? “Do not let your heart be troubled.” And “Do not let your heart be afraid.” How often do you follow that advice? Interestingly, it’s actually more than advice. It’s a command of love from our Lord. He wants to be clear and wants us to know that a fearful and troubled heart is not of Him. Spend some time today reflecting upon that which burdens you the most in life. What is it that weighs heavily upon you? It is this, more than anything else, that Jesus wants to enter into and lift for you. He wants you free, so that you can experience the joy that He has to offer you in life.

Prayer: Lord, I want to be free. I want to experience the joy You have in store for me. When the burdens of life weigh me down, help me to turn to You in my need. Jesus, I trust in You. **Amen.**

29th May, 2022
Seventh Sunday of Easter, Year C

1st Reading: Acts 7:55-60
Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 97:1-2, 6-7, 9
2nd Reading: Revelation 22:12-14, 16-17, 20
Alleluia: John 14:18
Gospel: John 17:20-26

Homily Theme: Father, I wish that where I am my people also may be with me – John 17:20-26

Reflection: Jesus loves us very much. His prayer for us to God is that we may be with Him wherever He is. It is His wish that we all who believe in Him, may enjoy eternal life with Him, on the last day. Christ wants us to believe in Him and also believe that He was sent to earth by God the Father, to redeem mankind from our sins. Let us today continue to love God in the Holy Trinity, as they already love us. Let Jesus Christ’s prayer for us come to fruition, when we join the communion of Angels and Saints in glorifying God in His majesty.



We stand before You, Holy Spirit, as we gather together in Your name.

†

With You alone to guide us, make Yourself at home in our hearts; Teach us the way we must go and how we are to pursue it.

†

We are weak and sinful; do not let us promote disorder. Do not let ignorance lead us down the wrong path, nor partiality influence our actions.

†

Let us find in You our unity so that we may journey together to eternal life and not stray from the way of truth and what is right.

†

All this we ask of You, who are at work in every place and time, in the communion of the Father and the Son, forever and ever.

AMEN.

INTRODUCING THE DIOCESAN SYNOD COMMITTEE MEMBERS FORMED BY HIS LORDSHIP BISHOP GABRIEL MENDY CSSp

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22ND ANNIVERSARY OF THE FEAST OF DIVINE MERCY

This year's Divine Mercy Sunday will mark the 22nd anniversary of the official designation of the Sunday after Easter as the feast of Divine Mercy. Many Catholics are beginning to be aware of this feast.



Unfortunately, because of the coronavirus pandemic, the observance of the feast this year will have to be muted considerably. However, our parishes are doing what they can under the circumstances.

We believe that Jesus himself asked for this feast during appearances to a Polish nun, Sister Faustina Kowalska, beginning in 1931, but it wasn't accomplished until April 30, 2000. That was the date the Second Sunday of Easter fell in 2000. On that day, St. Pope John Paul II both canonized Sister Faustina and ordered that the feast be officially included in the Church's liturgical calendar.

St. John Paul II continued to promote Divine Mercy Sunday the rest of his life. In 2002, he granted plenary indulgences to those who participate in prayers in honor of the Divine Mercy.

He also died on the vigil of Divine Mercy Sunday in 2005, was beatified on Divine Mercy Sunday in 2011, and was canonized—along with Pope John XXIII—on Divine Mercy Sunday in 2014.

It seems that people to whom Jesus or Mary have appeared to and asked for favors always have a difficult time getting that accomplished. We think of St. Juan Diego at Guadalupe, or St. Bernadette at Lourdes, or the three children at Fatima. This was true, too, in the case of Sister Faustina.

She had her first vision of Jesus when she was 19, when she was at a dance. He instructed her to go to Warsaw, Poland, and join a convent. She tried to do that, but was continually turned down because, as she was told once, "We don't accept maids here," referring to her obvious poverty. But she was eventually accepted by a convent, provided that she could pay for her religious habit.

On Feb. 22, 1931, while she was in her cell in Plock, Poland, Jesus appeared to her dressed as he is in the painting of the Divine Mercy we see in our churches. He instructed Faustina to paint his image as he appeared, with the message, "Jesus, I trust in you." Then, he said, he wanted that image to be venerated throughout the world,

and he promised, "The soul that will venerate this image will not perish."

Not knowing how to paint, it took her three years to persuade an artist to paint the image under her assistance. By that time, she was assigned to Vilnius, then in Poland but now in Lithuania.

In Vilnius, she met Father Michael Sopocko, who became her confessor. She told him about her visions. Obviously doubtful, he insisted that she have a complete psychiatric evaluation by psychiatrist Hele Maciejewska. Sister Faustina was declared of sound mind.

Father Sopocko then supported her efforts and secured artist Eugene Kazimierowski to paint the image of Divine Mercy. He also instructed Sister Faustina to keep a diary of the conversations she had with Jesus, which she did and which has come down to us. Devotion to Divine Mercy began to spread in Poland.

Sister Faustina became ill in 1936, probably with tuberculosis. She died on Oct. 5, 1938, at age 33. She is now buried in Krakow's Basilica of Divine Mercy. Now it was up to Father Sopocko to spread the devotion.

World War II intervened and Father Sopocko went into hiding from the Nazis for two years. During that time, he wrote the constitution for a new Congregation of the Sisters of the Divine Mercy. But it wasn't until the Polish Archbishop Karol Wojtyla became Pope John Paul II that devotion to the Divine Mercy really began to spread in the universal Church.

We encourage our readers to learn to pray the Divine Mercy Chaplet, which is said on a rosary. This prayer opens each decade: "Eternal Father, I offer you the Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of your dearly beloved Son, Our Lord, Jesus Christ, in atonement for our sins and those of the whole world."

Then this prayer is repeated 10 times in succession for each decade: "For the sake of his sorrowful passion, have mercy on us and on the whole world. As we mark Divine Mercy Sunday, may we all learn to pray the Divine Mercy Chaplet and make it a continual part of our lives of faith."

