

The Diocese of Banjul **NEWSLETTER**

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The Story of Fr. Jobe

Editorial

Money, Money, Money

The Booth-Lickers and Political Sycophants
Who Destroy Our Presidents

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Editorial
Hint

Money, Money, Money The Scourge of '30 Pieces of Silver' in The Gambia

The Booth-Lickers and Political Sycophants who destroy our Presidents

These men bow before the anonymous power of changing moods and current fashions. According to Pope Benedict XVI, "Judas is neither a master of evil nor the figure of a demoniacal power of darkness but rather a sycophant who bows before the anonymous power of changing moods and current fashions". And, it is precisely this anonymous power that crucified Jesus, and carried the same anonymous voices that once shouted to Him; 'Hosanna, Hosanna' and later cried "away with him! Crucify him!" This is the scenario we have been seeing in this country since its independence, where a bunch of bootlickers betray the people and the nation for a token, which in the main has contributed immensely to the very troubling socio-political and economic decay and dilemma we all face today as victims. From an analysis of the leadership failures witnessed in The Gambia from the era of our pioneer President, Sir Dawda Kairaba Jawara to President Yahya Jammeh, and now President Adama Barrow, there is a portrayal of a common denominator, and that is the role of professional mischief-makers and an anonymous power, who like Satan lure our leaders into bad leadership and eventually, turn around to crucify them for their failures.

One of the allegations against Sir Dawda's leadership was that, he was overly ambitious to retain power until death. Thus, his long-stay in power was attributed to this undemocratic disposition. But, the question is; was Sir Dawda really disposed

to over stay in office as President and refused to give chance to other people? On this issue, there are emerging facts that it was never in the least in Sir Dawda's agenda to stay in office for as long as he did. He never wished it. He was democratic in nature. But, then, why did it happen irrespective of this vivid democratic disposition? This is another issue and where the political jobbers, professional sycophants and the anonymous power and lovers of '30 pieces of silver' ruined his democratic stance and political integrity! It has been alleged that, on several occasions, Sir Dawda called cabinet meetings to air his decision to retire from the Presidency and politics as a whole. But, some of the political jobbers and anonymous power around him will vehemently discourage him and some even shed tears openly to prevent him from the noble cause he chose to pursue. Some of them even told him that he is the 'Gambian Messiah', and without him, the nation will be gone. The anonymous power.

But, at the end of the day, when Sir Dawda was overthrown by Yahya Jammeh and his cohorts, it was these same jobbers who in their persistent search for '30 pieces of silver' went to Yahya Jammeh and told him that Sir Dawda was corrupt and deserves the coup d'etat. They, at the same time, succeeded in convincing Yahya Jammeh to receive them into his government. These same people with their massive experience in evil political crafts, entered into Yahya Jammeh and taught him what he never knew. In fact, it has been proven that Yahya Jammeh on assumption of office had no intentions of staying long in power. His main ambition was according to a reliable source to drain the swamp created over the years by the anonymous power and hand over power as soon as possible. However, these jobbers with their anonymous power that ruined Sir Dawda and migrated to Jammeh's regime discreetly began to teach him (Jammeh) that which politics is all about. They convinced him to change from Military leader to civilian leader. They helped him set up his political party, APRC and to formulate the very tormenting 1997 Constitution of The Gambia which predisposed him towards the evils that characterized his regime as well as the eventual carnage he inflicted on Gambians.

Today, under President Adama Barrow, a new class of political jobbers, sycophants and a new order of the anonymous power have emerged. They learnt the art of the job from those who ruined Sir Dauda and destroyed the unsuspecting Yahya Jammeh. But, the difference is that, this new batch are worse in inflicting carnage on the nation and the people than their predecessors. This is the basis of the current Gambian dilemma. They collect peanuts ('thirty pieces of silver') to fill their insatiable belly to do their odd job at the detriment of the people. Though they know the truth, they are a bunch of self-serving people who feed on the crumbs from the President's dining table, from where they ill-advise him with ideas that will only satisfy their agrandissement with temporal monetary interest as their ultimate gain. They cut across all the ethnic diversities of The Gambia. We all know them because they are shameless and do not hide their faces. They sell their people, sell their friends and even sell their parents for 'thirty pieces of silver'.

Wisdom tells us that, whenever you commend, add your reasons for doing so; it is this that distinguishes the approbation of a man of sense from the flattery of sycophants and admiration of fools.

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Trending

LENT

2021



Travelling together towards Easter

IN the West, the most common method of disposing of the dead is cremation. In the fierce flames of the oven, a corpse is soon reduced to ashes. It's a sobering thought. As the poet T.S. Eliot wrote, 'I will show you fear in a handful of dust.'

The commercial value of a human body is negligible. We are just water and a few chemicals and minerals. Dead, our dust is worth even less. But as a creation of God, with an immortal soul, each of us is infinitely precious.

At the same time, our mortal life is finite. Whatever we think of this life - its joys, its sorrows, its triumphs, its disappointments, its comforts, its frustrations - it is certain that each one of us is going to die.

On Ash Wednesday, the first day of Lent, worshippers' foreheads are marked with ashes.

As the Priest imprints the ashes on each penitent, he may say, 'Remember that you are dust, and to dust you will return.'

The attitude of the atheist and the agnostic may be, 'Eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow we die.' But the Christian, too, lives each day as though it was his or her last. The Christian should make the most of every day, thanking God for his blessings and endeavouring to serve others.

Lent can usefully remind us that this life is a pilgrimage, a journey towards God.

The journey

Just as the ancient Hebrews journeyed for 40 years through the wilderness towards the Promised Land, so Christians spend 40 days preparing for Easter: the great feast of Eternal Life, the Day of Resurrection.

The whole of life - not just Lent - is a journey towards our death and resurrection. Thus, the body of a deceased person may be buried with the assertion, 'earth to earth, dust to dust, in the sure and certain hope of the resurrection to eternal life.'

St Paul, even after his conversion, experienced struggle and suffering. But he was adamant: 'I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things past, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus.' (Romans 8:8).

We accept the marking of ashes on our foreheads on Ash Wednesday as an intimation of our mortality. But the ashes are also a remembrance that we are sinners who do not sufficiently recognise each day as a precious gift of God, with heaven as our goal.

So, we should use the Lenten season to become more faithful pilgrims.

Sunday and weekday readings at Mass during Lent

The Sunday and weekday readings at Mass during Lent have been carefully chosen to help us prepare for Easter.

Sundays

- 1 The **Gospel** proclaimed each Sunday is the key reading.
- 2 The **Old Testament** readings have been chosen to harmonise with the Gospel.
- 3 The **Psalms** have been chosen to provide a prayerful response to the Old Testament readings.
- 4 The **Epistle** readings have been chosen 'to fit the Gospel and Old Testament readings... and provide a connection between them'.

This is the 'Year of St Luke', and five of the six Sunday Gospel readings come from Luke.

The First Sunday's reading concerns Christ's temptation in the wilderness, and **the Second Sunday** his transfiguration. **On the Third Sunday**, we hear of Christ's call to repentance, illustrated by the parable of the fig tree.

The Gospel readings on the two following Sundays concern forgiveness, exemplified by the parable of the prodigal son (**Fourth Sunday**) and Christ's forgiveness of the woman taken in adultery. **The Gospel on the Fifth Sunday** is a narrative, not from St Luke, but from St John.

Weekdays

The Gospel readings on the weekdays of Lent relate to the themes of this holy season, and the Old Testament readings have been chosen to relate to the Gospel.

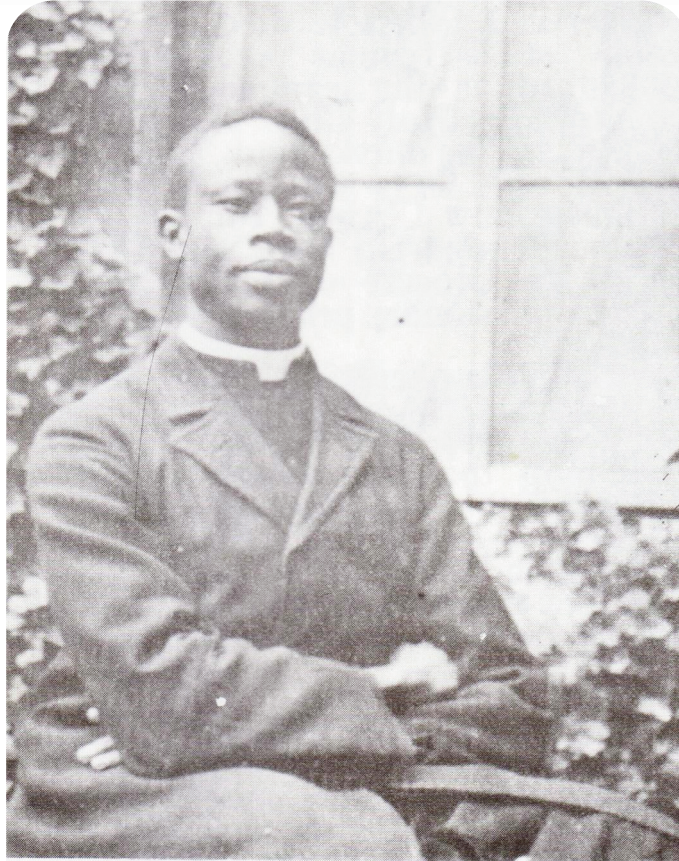
It is an excellent Lenten practice to take part in the weekday Mass as often as you can. If for good reason you cannot attend Mass, you should read the readings for each day for yourself.

Cover Story

The Story of Fr. Jobe

An Exposition of the Much-Talked-About Priesthood Career, Frustrations and Eventual Odyssey of Fr. Jobe.

There is a trending notion that, some of the events that marked Fr. Jobe's priesthood career haunted Gambian vocations for the priesthood for nearly forty years. In the cover story of this edition (of the Diocese of Banjul Newsletter), we unearth, within the limits of available information, the tenacity of this notion, and how it has to do with the Priesthood career, frustrations and eventual odyssey of Fr. Jobe. However, little has been written about the lives of the first indigenous Gambian Catholic Priests. Thus, this article borrowed largely from the facts researched and published by Martha Frederiks, Professor for the Study of World Christianity at Utrecht University, The Netherlands who worked in The Gambia between 1993 and 1999.



Fr. Jobe as a newly Ordained Priest in 1933

On October 14, 1934 he celebrated his first mass in The Gambia, called a red-letter day as noted in the Spiritan Journal 'de la communauté'. His ordination was very remarkable too as in the case of the first locally ordained Gambian Priest, Fr. Joseph Mendy. In fact, it is alleged that, he addressed the people in the vernacular on that day. One of his Irish colleagues, Fr. Whiteside, told the congregation: "Receive him with joy into your midst. He is of your soil, of your race, he understands your mentality, your language, your customs, better than any European priest can ever do."

The Irish Spiritan missionary Fr. John Meehan, who served as superior of the mission, asked him to be in charge of the Bathurst parish. He initially seemed to have hoped that Fr. Jobe would become the administrative superior, which would give him (Meehan) time for mission work. To

According to the available information sources, Thomas Gregory Jobe as he is officially referred to was a Gambian Roman Catholic priest who served the Gambian Roman Catholic Church for a period of ten years (1934-1944). He was born in Bathurst in 1906 into a Roman Catholic family. His father was a Wolof and his mother of mixed Wolof Portuguese descent. As early as June 1922 Fr. Jobe's name appeared in the Spiritan Journal 'de la communauté' because he, as a devoted Catholic youngster, had come first in the country's school exams, thus doing both the Catholic community and the Catholic education system proud. According to the Journal, he won a price of £4 and a picture of the British royal family for this achievement. Shortly afterwards, Jobe was admitted into the Minor Seminary in Ngasobil (Senegal) where he befriended Leopold Senghore, who later became the architect of the Négritude movement and Senegal's first president. After two years in Senegal, Jobe continued his theological training in France.

Fr. Jobe was ordained on October 11, 1933 in Paris by Bishop Le Hunsec, former Vicar Apostolic of the Senegambia.

familiarize Fr. Jobe with the mission extension work, Fr. Meehan took him on a tour through the country, first to the Kombos, which was part of the Bathurst parish and later also, up country, to Basse. In the late 1930s Jobe's name was mentioned in connection with evangelization work among the Jola who lived in Bathurst and surroundings. In 1938, a group of adult Jolas, whom Fr. Jobe had nurtured into the Christian faith were baptized.

However, ten years after his ordination, in 1944, Fr. Jobe fell out with the white authorities. It is related that, due to what oral tradition postulates racist conduct by one of his missionary colleagues, Fr. Jobe left The Gambia. After a brief period as Director of the Junior Seminary in Casamance, he retired from the active priesthood and pursued a secular career.

According to some sources, it was on January 18, 1944 that Fr. Jobe left the country for Senegal without saying goodbye. Later sources suggest that there had been tensions between him and Fr. Meehan, which came to a head in January 1944 and caused Fr. Jobe to leave the country. Oral tradition



Henri Vankesteren (Dutch) and John Egan (Irish) friends of Fr. Jobe at the Major Seminary in Paris 1930

intimates that racism played a prominent role in the strained relations between Fr. Jobe and Fr. Meehan.

After he left The Gambia, Fr. Jobe worked for two years (1944-1946) as the Director of the Minor Seminary in Carabane, in the Casamance region. In 1946, he left the active priesthood. After a period as a private tutor in Senegal, he left for France. In 1960, when Senegal became independent, President Senghore offered him Senegalese citizenship and invited him to work in Senegal, first as Senegal's representative to UNESCO in Paris, and later as the Ambassador for Senegal to Ghana and Italy. When Fr. Jobe retired, he settled in Ivory Coast.

In 1975, being still highly esteemed and respected by people, he was invited to return to The Gambia. He lived a quiet life at the residence of Moses Pascal George Senghore in Latri Kunda occasionally helping out with the formation of catechists until his death on January 30, 1995.

It has been a widely spread notion that, the case of Fr. Jobe had a long-lasting impact on the indigenous vocations in The Gambia. It has been alleged that, parents objected to their sons "being made slaves for the missionaries" and discouraged

plans to offer for the priesthood following what people deemed as the ill-treatment of Fr. Jobe. Thus, following the impact on vocations and because Fr. Jobe was still highly esteemed by the Gambian Roman Catholic community, several attempts were made by clergy in The Gambia to resolve the situation with Fr. Jobe, and to restore him to the priesthood. The first Bishop of Banjul, Michael Moloney once wrote to the Superior General of the Congregation of the Holy Ghost:

Since my appointment, I have been naturally preoccupied with trying to encourage African vocations, as was my predecessor. We both find ourselves against the same difficulty – the fact that our last man, Father Jobe, abandoned the obligations of the priesthood. There is no doubt but that he still holds a large place in the affections of the people here, and that there will be no keenness among them towards promoting vocations, if his position is not cleared up. I know how difficult it is, as Father Farrelly and others have already met him on a few occasions. May I respectfully suggest to you a further attempt from a different angle of approach. My suggestion may show more keenness than feasibility and you will be able to decide yourself. It is that you yourself or possibly the Archbishop LeHunsec (who was his former Vicar Apostolic) see him and explain to him that I personally and all the Fathers, and especially the people, would be delighted to see him restored to his former position and that I have written to you to that effect. That Rome has informed us that no form of reconciliation (public) will be insisted on, unless he has entered on any civil matrimonial contract, which would have legal complications. I am assured, on reliable authority, that nothing like this has taken place, and that his conduct has been in the circumstances, excellent. I foresee one big difficulty in the way of his return. It is the presence of Father Meehan.

I do not at all consider that Fr. Meehan had any major responsibility for Fr. Jobe's action, but the fact remains that in Fr. Jobe's mind and in the people's unfounded opinion, it was the clash between him and Father Meehan which prepared the way for the final bolt. If this proved to be the only obstacle, I would be prepared to ask Meehan to remain in Ireland. This would be a hard step but the return of Fr. Jobe would be so important for the future of the mission here, that I am sure Fr. Meehan would be prepared to make this additional sacrifice for The Gambia. (Moloney to Superior General, Bathurst, April 7, 1952, Box 4I11B, File IV letters 1951-1955).

On the letter, a comment is written: Fr. Jobe must shed some of his terrible pride first. Thus, no further action was taken to restore him to the Priesthood.

From the analysis of the scholar and researcher, Martha Frederiks, there seem to be a common threat that besieged the career of the earliest Gambian Priests, which was racism. It is therefore left to the reader to make his or her inference based on personal perspective or relative cum selective perception

Doctrines of
The Church

Why is 2021 The Year of St. Joseph

What does it mean to say that 2021 is the Year of St. Joseph? The Church observes the passage of time through the liturgical calendar - which includes feasts such as Easter and Christmas, and seasons such as Lent and Advent. In addition, however, popes can set aside time for the Church to reflect more deeply on a specific aspect of Catholic teaching or belief. Past years designated by recent popes include a Year of Faith, Year of the Eucharist, and Jubilee Year of Mercy.

Thus, the Vatican announced that the period from December 8, 2020 - December 8, 2021 would be a year dedicated to St. Joseph, husband of Mary and earthly father of Jesus Christ. In making his declaration, Pope Francis noted that this year marks the 150th anniversary of the Saint's proclamation as Patron of the Universal Church by Pope Pius IX on Dec. 8, 1870. The Pope said the coronavirus pandemic has heightened his desire to reflect on St. Joseph, as so many people during the pandemic have made hidden sacrifices to protect others, just as St. Joseph quietly protected and cared for Mary and Jesus.

Pope Francis noted: "Each of us can discover in Joseph -- the man who goes unnoticed, a daily, discreet and hidden presence -- an intercessor, a support and a guide in times of trouble." He also said he wanted to highlight St. Joseph's role as a father who served his family with charity and humility, adding, "Our world today needs fathers."

'Even before Jesus was born, Joseph's tender compassion and forgiving heart were on full display!'

What special graces are available during this Year of St. Joseph?

As Catholics pray and reflect on the life of St. Joseph throughout the year, 2021, they also have opportunities to gain a plenary indulgence, or remission of all temporal punishment due to sin. An indulgence can be applied to oneself or to a soul in Purgatory. An indulgence requires a specific act defined by the Church, as well as sacramental confession, Eucharistic Communion, prayer for the Pope's intentions, and full detachment from sin.



Special indulgences during the Year of St. Joseph can be received through more than a dozen different prayers and actions, including praying for the unemployed, entrusting one's daily work to St. Joseph, performing a corporal or spiritual work of mercy, or meditating for at least 30 minutes on the Lord's Prayer.

But, why does the Church honor St. Joseph?

Catholics do not worship saints, but ask for their heavenly intercession before God and seek to imitate their virtues here on earth. The Catholic Church honors St. Joseph as the foster father of Jesus. He is invoked as the patron saint of the Universal Church. He is also the patron of workers, father, and a happy death.

ANNIVERSARIES

GAMBIAN CHRISTIAN ANNIVERSARIES: FEBRUARY & MARCH

91 YEARS AGO:

On 10th February 1930, the Catholic Boys' Secondary School was officially opened in Banjul, with Fr Harold Whiteside, an English priest, as its head.

Until the 1920s, Catholic education had been limited to primary schools. Following the establishment in 1921 by the Cluny Sisters of secondary education for girls, the need for secondary education for boys became urgent.

A second storey was added to the existing building in Hagan Street, providing accommodation for the secondary boys' classrooms.

10th February 1876: Departure for Senegal of Fr Jean Lacombe, who had spent 12 years in Gambia, 10 of them as Superior.

19th March 1886: Death at the age of 47 of Brother Florentine Matthews, who had taught in Banjul for 23 years.

24th March 1911: Death in Dakar from yellow fever of Brother André, who taught in the boys' school in Banjul with the Superior, Fr John Meehan.

15th March 1914: Consecration of the rebuilt church in Hagan Street by Bishop Hyacinth Jalabert.

11th March 1934: Fr Harold Whiteside celebrated the first Mass in Old Jeshwang in a hut used for catechism classes.

2nd February 1947: Ordination as Anglican deacon of the Revd John Colley Faye, who served on the Legislative Council and the Executive Council between 1947 and 1957.

18th February 1947: Opening of the Convent at Basse with Sr Lawrence and Sr Brigid in charge of the school.

6th February 1949: The Superior, Fr Matthew Farelly CSSp, celebrated the first Mass, outdoors, in Lamin.

20th February 1955: Marriage at St Cuthbert's Anglican Church, Basse, of David Jawara (later, President of The Gambia) and Augusta Hannah Mahoney.

8th March 1955: Opening of the Catholic primary school at Sambang, Upper River Division.

26th February 1959: Arrival of Fr Geoghehan and Fr Thomas Tarmey.

10th February 1960: Arrival of Fr Seán Little.

February 1962: Completion of the tower at the Cathedral.

16th March 1966: In response to liturgical reforms instituted by the Second Vatican Council, the high altar in the Cathedral was moved forward so that Mass could be celebrated facing the people.

March 1966: The Gambia Christian Council was founded made up of the three main-line churches – Anglican, Catholic and Methodist. Affiliate members include the YMCA, YWCA, the Baptist Mission, YWAM and over 50 evangelical churches.

February 1975: Fr Michael Flynn became Parish Priest at Star of the Sea Bakau. He was the first District Superior of the Holy Ghost Fathers to live in the priests' house at Bakau.

5th February 1976: The House of Representatives approved the new constitution of the St Anthony of Padua Society, thus making it a registered society. Its predecessor, the St. Anthony of Padua Friendly Society, had been founded

in 1907.

24th-27th February 1979: Bishop Moloney hosted the Bishops' Conference of The Gambia, Liberia & Sierra Leone.

27th March 1979: Alhaji Baboucarr Ousman Semega-Janneh presented his credentials to Pope John Paul II as The Gambia's first Ambassador to the Holy See.

29th February 1980: Archbishop Johannes Dyba presented his credentials to President Jawara as first Papal Nuncio to The Gambia.

4th February 1981: Funeral in Banjul, following her death in Britain, of Augusta Mahoney, former wife of Sir Dawda Jawara.

15th February 1981: It was announced that Fr Michael Cleary was to become Second Bishop of Banjul in succession to Bishop Michael Moloney (who had resigned owing to ill health the previous year).

25th March 1981: (Feast of the Annunciation) Consecration of Bishop Michael Cleary at St Augustine's High School, Banjul.

23rd February 1992: Visit of Pope John Paul II to The Gambia.

28th February 1996: Death in The Gambia of Fr James White.

27th March 1997: Opening of St Joseph's Church, Jarjil.

31st March 2001: Death in Britain of the last Governor and first Governor-General of The Gambia, Sir John Paul.

21st February 2003: Bishop Cleary returned from a visit to Rome.

10th March 2005: Félix Oudiane presented his credentials as Senegalese Ambassador to the Holy See.

2nd February 2006: Death in Ireland of Fr Myles Fay.

30th March 2008: Opening of the Diocesan Assembly.

2nd – 4th March 2009: A group of young Piarist priests from Senegal met at GPI as part of their formation permanente. The Piarists work in Dakar, Oussouye and Sokone.

6th March 2009: A talk on 'The Gambia, our homeland' was given at GPI by T.G.G. Senghore, regarded as historian of the Catholics in The Gambia.

18th February 2010: Death, aged 50, of Francis Kenneth Balucan, Head of St Therese's Upper Basic School, Kanifing.

8th March 2010: Death, aged 86, of Dr. Samuel Palmer. His funeral at St Mary's Anglican Cathedral four days later was attended by his close friend, Bishop Emeritus Michael Cleary, along with Bishop Ellison and other Catholic clergy.

6th February 2011: The youth group of the Christian Community of Latrikunda (CCLK) celebrated its 10th anniversary with a Mass of Thanksgiving at St Therese, Kanifing. The parent group of CCLK was formed in 1997.

4th March 2011: The Sisters of St. Joseph of Annecy celebrated their order's 50th year in The Gambia at a Mass in Holy Rosary, Lamin.

15th March 2011: Imam Baba Leigh of Kanifing addressed a meeting at GPI for priests, sisters and catechists.

During February 2012: Fr. Tommy Conray, Chaplain of Gorey Community School, Ireland, paid his tenth annual fortnight's visit to The Gambia, accompanied by a group of pupils.

3rd February 2013: Fr Pius Gidi (right) and his parishioners celebrated the 8th anniversary of Holy Cross Church, Brusubi.

1st March 2013: Fr Joseph Gough, Principal of St Augustine's High School Banjul in the late 70s and early 80s, finally left after a series of long annual visits, during which he had given substantial aid to sports endeavours in this country.

21st February 2014: Funeral at the Independence Stadium Bakau of the Most Revd Tilewa Johnson, Bishop of Gambia and Archbishop of the Anglican Province of West Africa who had died suddenly on 22nd January.

2nd March 2014: Celebration at Kunkujang - Mariama of the Golden Jubilee as priest of Fr John Sharpe, CSSp.

24th February - 2nd March 2014: Fr Peter S. Lopez, Director of GPI, attended a meeting in Rome of Signis, the Catholic lay organisation for professionals working in radio, television and other media.

19th March 2014: Bishop Ellison blessed the new premises at Lamin Weyoto of Holy Rosary Nursery School.

24th January, 2015: Rejoicing at Lamin and throughout the diocese marking the priestly ordination by Bishop Robert

Ellison of two young Gambian deacons, James Mendy and Tanislas Ndecky.

2nd February 2015: Death of John Sambou, oldest catechist of the diocese, who since 1983 had been working in Kuntaur and Kaur.

22nd February 2015: Bishop Robert Ellison attended the enthronement in the Cathedral of Notre Dame des Victoires, Dakar, of the newly-appointed Archbishop of Dakar, the Most Revd Benjamin Ndiaye, who had succeeded Cardinal Théodore Adrien Sarr.

13th March 2015: A farewell Mass for Bishop Emeritus Michael Cleary was offered by Bishop Ellison at St Therese's Church Kanifing.

21st March 2017: Death in Dublin of Fr Joseph Gough, who had served in The Gambia from 1972 to 1983. He was successively teacher and Principal of St Augustine's High School. In later years, he became an honorary Gambian citizen, raising funds for sports, and until 2013, visited this country regularly.

3rd February 2018 (St Blaise): Episcopal Ordination of the Most Revd Dr Gabriel Mendy CSSp as Fourth Bishop of Banjul at the Independence Stadium, Bakau,

SOME WEEKDAY CELEBRATIONS - FEBRUARY & MARCH

6TH FEBRUARY: *ST PAUL MIKI & HIS COMPANION MARTYRS*

PAUL Miki was born around 1562, educated by Jesuits, then joined the Society of Jesus. The Japanese government feared the influence of the Jesuits. Miki and others were imprisoned. He and fellow Catholic prisoners were forced to walk 966 kilometres from Kyoto to Nagasaki, the city with the most Christian converts. There, on 5th February 1597, Miki was crucified. From the cross, he assured his executioners that he forgave them. Alongside Paul Miki died two other Jesuits, and 23 others, known collectively as the Twenty-Six Martyrs of Japan, canonised by Pope Pius IX in 1862. (*In 1945, the Second World War was brought to a close when the USA dropped a nuclear bomb on Nagasaki.*)

8TH FEBRUARY: *ST JOSEPHINE BAKHITA, RELIGIOUS*

JOSEPHINE was born around 1869 in Darfur, Sudan. At the age of nine, she was kidnapped. Working as a slave for the mother of a general, she was flogged every day, and bore 144 scars throughout her life. In 1882, she was bought by the Italian consul, who took her to Italy. Bakhita came to know a totally different kind of 'master': Jesus Christ. 'I am definitively loved, and whatever happens to me, I am awaited by this Love.' In January 1890, she was baptised and confirmed and received her first Communion. In December 1896, she took vows in the Canossian Sisters, and thereafter, journeyed round Italy to promote the mission. She died in 1947, and was canonised in 2000.

11TH FEBRUARY: *OUR LADY OF LOURDES*

IN 1858, the Immaculate Virgin Mary appeared to Bernadette Soubirous near Lourdes in France. Through this poor girl, Mary called sinners to repentance, and there arose in the Church a marvellous spirit of prayer and charity, especially in helping the poor and the sick. This day is observed as World Day for the Sick.

22ND FEBRUARY: *THE CHAIR OF ST PETER*

THE FEAST of the Chair of St Peter has been kept in Rome since the 4th century. It invites us to give thanks for our unity with the Pope and with Catholics throughout the world, and to pray for the preservation and strengthening of this unity.

17TH MARCH: *ST PATRICK, BISHOP*

PATRICK was born in Wales in the 390s. He was taken as a slave to Ireland, but after six years, escaped to Gaul (presentday France). Having been ordained, he returned to Ireland, founding the Diocese of Armagh and spending the rest of his life preaching the Christian faith. He is the principal patron of Ireland.

19TH MARCH: *ST JOSEPH*

JOSEPH was the husband of the Virgin Mary, with whom he lived in chastity. He was descended from the House of David (Matthew 1:15; Luke 2:14). Joseph is described in many English translations of the Bible as a carpenter, though the original Greek calls him a teckton (craftsman). Because the family could only offer two doves at the presentation of the Child Jesus in the Temple (Luke 2: 22-39), Joseph is thought of as a poor man. He is revered as a model of poverty, chastity and obedience, patron of priests and religious, and as a model father and artisan.

25TH MARCH: *THE ANNUNCIATION OF THE LORD*

ST LUKE'S account of the angel Gabriel's visit to Mary (Luke 1:26-38) and her acceptance of God's role for her, 'Be it done unto me according to your word,' is unforgettable. Mary's acceptance was the prelude to Christ's birth, ministry, passion and resurrection. It prefigured Christ's own acceptance of the Father's will in the 'agony in the garden' (Luke 22:39-44).

(We pray especially for the late Bishop Emeritus Michael Cleary CSSp, episcopally ordained on this day in 1981 as Bishop of Banjul).

Diocesan News

First Christian Radio Station Inaugurated In The Gambia

Gambia Pastoral Institute (GPI)'S 'Radio Veritas' Launched, Goes on Air in a Grand Style



His Lordship Bishop, Most Rev. Dr. Gabriel Mendy, Bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Banjul blessing the new GPI's 'Radio Veritas'

On Wednesday, 20th January, 2021, the Catholic Diocese of Banjul marked another milestone in the history of the Diocese with the launching of the Gambia Pastoral Institute's 'Radio Veritas'. Below is the excerpt of the opening speech by Rev. Fr. Peter Lopez, the Director of Gambia Pastoral Institute outlining the profile, mission and mandate of 'Radio Veritas'.

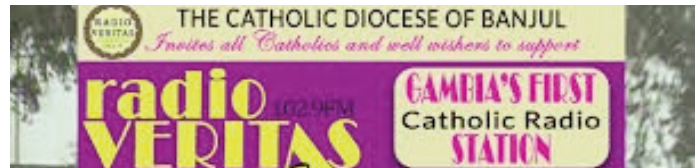
SPEECH DELIVERED BY REV. FR. PETER LOPEZ, DIRECTOR OF THE GAMBIA PASTORAL INSTITUTE (GPI) AT THE FORMAL OPENING CEREMONY OF 'RADIO VERITAS', ON THE 20TH OF JANUARY, 2021, AT THE GPI PREMISES

(Excerpts of the opening speech by Fr. Peter Lopez)

His Lordship Bishop, Most Rev. Dr. Gabriel Mendy, Bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Banjul, The Vicar-General of the Catholic Diocese of Banjul, Very Reverend Fr. Anthony Sonko, my brother-Priests, the Religious, Honourable minister James F. Gomez, Distinguished guests, Staff of The Gambia Pastoral Institute, my brothers and sisters-in-Christ, Ladies and gentlemen; you are all welcome to this very significant event.

My speech here today is about our epoch-making journey so far at GPI, as this occasion provides us a time for reflection and celebration. Indeed, and in truth, today, 20th January, 2021, marks a milestone in the Catholic Diocese of Banjul as well as the Gambian Christian community as a whole, as we mark the official opening of our first electronic media channel, Radio Veritas, to boost our evangelization efforts. It is also a significant landmark in the history of the Diocese of Banjul, in general, and the GPI in particular, as it is exactly 45 years since this great institution was founded and launched in support of the human, pastoral and spiritual growth of the local church.

The Gambia Pastoral Institute is a non-profit institute



which facilitates growth in awareness of our calling as a Church, as well as a means to move beyond our immediate catholic community to the mission of an ecumenism aimed at universal Christian unity and inter-faith relationship-building, while always remaining open to where the Holy Spirit is leading us. Radio Veritas, which we are formally launching today, is thus founded as a means to further this noble mission and mandate of GPI.

As we celebrate this milestone, I want to thank God for the strength, courage and guidance throughout my leadership of GPI thus far, as it has not been an easy one. As we continue to thank God, I also want to thank those who have remained instrumental in the achievement of the grand ambition of GPI and the ultimate establishment of Radio Veritas. Therefore, as we celebrate and continue to thank God, I want to remember the souls of Fr. Edward Grimes, who started the GPI as the first Director, and even after his departure from The Gambia remained supportive to the institute. I would also like to remember John Paul Nenu Gomez the carpenter, builder, welder and painter, who refurbished the beautiful studio that you will see very soon, but unfortunately did not live to see today. He died suddenly in October 2020. I would also like to remember the soul of Uncle George Gomez who was very instrumental in making sure that we have our own radio station and on several occasions went to see the Minister for Communications in this regard. He was the Vice-Chairman of the Diocesan Communications Commission until his demise. These men, until their deaths, were instrumental in the growth and development of GPI and Radio Veritas. May their souls, and the souls of the faithful departed, through the mercy of God rest in peace. I would also like to say a very big thank you to Mr. Patrick Mendy, the electrician, who did a wonderful job in the studio.

Ladies and gentlemen, over the past years we have been dreaming of our own Christian radio and today, we can heartily and happily say that God has answered our prayers. However, worthy of great recognition during this auspicious occasion is the remarkable role of our Shepherd, the Bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Banjul, Most Rev. Dr. Gabriel Mendy CSSp, whose passion for the project has been both supportive and phenomenal; supporting us at GPI both morally and financially, as we pursue the historic project of Radio Veritas, and which ultimately, aided us immensely to arrive at this point of celebrating our success. In fact, the list of people to be acknowledged in the Radio Veritas project is long; we deeply appreciate the massive efforts of the Diocesan Communications Commission who met in GPI many Friday evenings for the planning and application for a Christian radio station. Sometimes, we had to meet the Minister of Communications to push for our application approval. In fact, my dear guests, one striking issue about the



Rev. Fr. Peter Lopez, Director of GPI, delivering the opening speech at the launching of 'Radio Veritas'.

establishment of Radio Veritas is that, the resources used to establish it were largely raised locally, and for this, we owe unreserved gratitude to the Parish Pastoral Councils, Church groups, individuals, as well as the Gambian Christians abroad who contributed in making Radio Veritas a reality, in a special way. We are also grateful, in a special way, to Honorable James F. Gomez and Mr. Mbye Nying for their immense support in a myriad of ways during the radio project development period. I remember those days we met just to look at where to raise funds for the Radio. Furthermore, we are also thanking enormously, the Catholic Relief Services (CRS), through the support of Mrs. Joanna Mendy, for providing all the studio equipment for the Radio. I believe that all of us are aware that CRS has always been there for us for the past years; and not just for the church community alone, but the Gambian society as a whole. But, ladies and gentlemen, this story of the journey to where we are today will not be complete if I do not recognize the effort and contributions from my selfless, dynamic and dedicated TEAM of colleagues at the GPI. All of the achievements and challenges have been with the extraordinary show of cooperation and support they provide on a daily basis. The success of the Radio Veritas project reflects it and deeply proves my assertion correct. And to my TEAM, I want to say thank you to you all for being both a reliable and solid part of Radio Veritas building project from the beginning. WE ARE INDEED A FAMILY!!! . I recognize the efforts of all former



Dr. Vivian Khumba signing as one of the invitees to enter the hall.

Fr. Gabisi and a host of invitees to the programme, seated.



department, especially Brother Senan, and in a very special way, Fr. Sean Devereux.

My dear guests, it is important to note that, this new addition of Radio Veritas to our existing information machinery amounts to an avenue for further empowerment of Gambian Christians, as it is an instrument that will make our collective voice stronger. As we all know, the radio is proven to be a unique and effective tool for empowering marginalized people, communities and societies alike, as well as a vital tool for national economic, social and political development. Hence, being a radio for the Christian community in The Gambia, it will be driven by the community it serves – the Catholic Diocese of Banjul in unison with the Gambia Christian Council. Principally, it will serve us by providing a mechanism for facilitating the telling of our own relative stories, to share experiences, and in a media-rich world, to become active creators and contributors. Most importantly, it will speak the voice of the Christians in The Gambia, by speaking the voice of every parish, parishioners, the authority of both the local and universal church, as well as the local Christian Church establishments.

Therefore, ladies and gentlemen, the noteworthy uniqueness of Radio Veritas, amongst other factors, is about the vast diversity of its stakeholdership. I want to reiterate that in as much as Radio Veritas is run by the Gambia Pastoral Institute, its stakeholder does not consist only of the community of the Catholic Diocese of Banjul that established it, but it also embraces the Christian community of The Gambia as a whole. Thus, the needs and aspirations of the Gambian Christian community will be strongly reflected in planning, implementing and incorporation of programs of the radio station. My dear guests, as I mentioned earlier, the journey to where we are today has not been an easy one, as it was marked by extraordinary challenges that also took some extraordinary courage and leadership to carry on. Thus, the achievement that we celebrate today is rooted in our unified focus and the strength gained from the initial difficulties, and from which we learnt that challenges should be viewed from a positive angle.

Before I conclude, I want to thank all those who are not here today, but who have been an extraordinary source of inspiration in our realization of the Radio Veritas ambition. My dear guests, ladies and gentlemen, I assure you that we shall keep our doors open and will be willing to assist all that may need our support, as well as being open to your contributions and allied support. This is what will make us grow in strength and aid us in making an impact on the media landscape of this great nation, The Gambia.

Indeed, and in truth, I salute your efforts, and I look forward to your earnest cooperation and relationships that will be marked by sustained achievements for the progress of Radio Veritas in the future. We are deeply grateful to you. I thank you all, and let us celebrate this success together.

**LONG LIVE
RADIO VERITAS!!!**

Mrs. Anna Gomez, wife of the Late John Nenu Gomez, receiving Certificate of Appreciation on his behalf.



HIS LORDSHIP, MOST REV. DR. GABRIEL MENDY CSSp, BISHOP OF THE CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF BANJUL

NEW YEAR'S MESSAGE 2021

THEME: RELYING ON GOD'S GUIDANCE – IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF ST. JOSEPH

On 8th December, 2020, our Holy Father, Pope Francis promulgated the Apostolic Letter *Patris Corde*, that is, 'With A Father's Heart' to mark the one hundred and fiftieth anniversary of Pope Pius IX's proclamation of St. Joseph as the Patron Saint of the Universal Church in 1870. He then declared a Special Year to St. Joseph from 8th December, 2020 to 8th December, 2021 to celebrate this anniversary of St. Joseph's patronage to the whole Catholic Church. The members of the Church were, consequently, invited by the Pope to devote themselves to St. Joseph as their model and source of inspiration during this year. This Special Year of St. Joseph will, therefore, be observed and celebrated in all the parishes and Deaneries of the Diocese of Banjul throughout the New Year of 2021 we have now started with the Feast of Mary, Mother of God. So my New Year's message to the priests, religious, seminarians, lay faithful, and all Gambians concerns St. Joseph and his trust and dependence on God in his vocation and journey of faith and our obligation to imitate his noble example. The caption of my New Year's Message would, therefore, be "Relying on God's Guidance – In the Footsteps of St. Joseph." This will enable us to focus on St. Joseph's lifestyle, confidence, and hope in God throughout this New Year. We will also know and cherish him more as a person of virtue and integrity we can imitate than just a vague and unpopular figure in the story of the birth of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

As the husband of Mary and the foster Father of the Child Jesus, St. Joseph was confronted with at least five (5) major choice decisions in the Gospels of St. Matthew and St. Luke. He wanted to divorce Mary privately when he discovered in Mt. 1:18-25 that she was with child. But the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and persuaded him to take Mary home as his wife because the child she conceived was through the power of the Holy Spirit. So he decided to do what the angel told him when he woke up and he accepted Mary as his wife. He was deeply concerned about his reputation and integrity in the society when he realized that Mary was pregnant with child before they lived together. But he never did what many would have done in his position. Instead, he decided to take Mary as his wife following the angel's instruction. He was then confronted with Herod's evil intention to kill the Child Jesus when he was born in Mt. 2:13-



15. Again, he was instructed by the angel of the Lord in a dream to escape into Egypt with Mary and Jesus and remain there until he is informed about their safety. He once again accepted the angel's warning and readily escaped into Egypt with his family as migrants and refugees in obedience to God and for the sake of his family even though it was a difficult, uncomfortable, and uncertain experience for him.

The next major decisions for St. Joseph were after Herod's death. The angel of the Lord instructed him in Mt. 2:20 - 22 to rise and return to the land of Israel and he rose and took the child Jesus and his Mother, Mary. But when he learnt that Herod's son, Archelaus succeeded his father as King of Judea, he was afraid. He was then warned by the angel in a dream and he decided to go to the district of Galilee instead and settled in Nazareth. His plans to return to his ancestral home of Bethlehem in Judea incidentally changed out of fear and he opted to follow the angel's advice and settled at Nazareth in Galilee. He did not, in that sense, take any risk that exposed his family to danger. Nor did he insist on his own intention to live in his original home district of Judea at the expense of Mary and Jesus. But he was concerned afterwards about the

whereabouts of the Child Jesus in Nazareth when they returned from the feast of the Passover in Jerusalem and discovered that he was missing. Both Mary and Joseph decided in Lk. 2:44-49 to look for him among their relatives. But when they did not see him, we are told, they returned to Jerusalem and after three days, they found him in the Temple among the teachers of the Law. He was then told how they were anxiously looking for him everywhere. St. Joseph never rested or lost hope in his search for his foster child, Jesus until he and Mary discovered him in the Temple where he was sitting among the doctors of the Law and asking them sound questions.

In these moments of decision, St. Joseph was ready and willing to listen and follow God's guidance and message that was revealed to him through the angel. He did not, therefore, rely on his own experience, understanding, and judgment on these occasions. He relied more on God's guidance and instruction in his decisions and actions and obeyed what God's angel commanded him to do. His role and conduct in the life of Jesus and Mary was, therefore, in accordance with God's will because he was open and obedient to God in the crucial moments of his life. He was God's obedient servant who had no reason whatsoever to doubt or ignore God's guidance through his angel even in times of uncertainty and danger. His humble and faithful obedience to God was what, Pope Francis said, influenced the Child Jesus. He said in p.5 of his Apostolic Letter *Patris Corde* that "during the hidden years in Nazareth, Jesus learned at the school of Joseph to do the will of the Father. That will was to be his daily food (Jn. 4:34). Even at the most difficult moment of his life, in Gethsemane, Jesus chose to do the Father's will rather than his own will." St. Joseph was, therefore, an admirable and worthy model of obedience and humility to even Jesus, the Son of God and Savior of humanity.

In dedicating this year to St. Joseph and solemnly declaring it a Special Year, Pope Francis is inviting us to equally walk in the footsteps of St. Joseph and imitate his reliance on God's guidance, humility, and obedience to God's will. We will also be in similar situations of disappointment, isolation, and uncertainty like St. Joseph, the husband of Mary and foster father of Jesus. We are, consequently, encouraged by the Pope to follow the example of St. Joseph and be willing to listen, rely on God's guidance, and humbly obey his instruction or command that he reveals to us. Some of us will eventually experience or be involved in problems or matters we cannot understand just like St. Joseph could not understand the cause of Mary's pregnancy. Others will encounter threats and dangers in their lives from evil forces and powers like Herod who wanted to destroy sacred and innocent life for his own selfish interest and ambition. We may also have to get out of our comfort zone or go out of our way for the good and welfare of others like Joseph and Mary spent more than three days anxiously looking for Jesus. If we find ourselves in such situations, we should, likewise, be open to God's guidance like St. Joseph and accomplish his demands on us without seeking God's assurance because St. Joseph never had any sign of assurance from God.

In his vocation and struggles in life, St. Joseph can be perceived as a victim of circumstances, poverty, and oppression. He was always the one who was tasked and sometimes under pressure to sacrifice his position and

comfort. The same too can happen to us and we see ourselves as victims of evil forces against us but that was not the case with St. Joseph. In his Apostolic Letter *Patris Corde* p. 5, Pope Francis observed that we may have "the impression that the world is at the mercy of the strong and mighty, but the 'good news' of the Gospel consists in showing that, for all the arrogance and violence of worldly powers, God always finds a way to carry out his saving plan. So our lives may at times seem to be at the mercy of the powerful, but the Gospel shows us what counts. God always finds a way to save us, provided we show the same creative courage as the carpenter of Nazareth, who was able to turn a problem into a possibility by trusting always in divine providence." This statement is quite relevant and noteworthy. It should inspire and motivate us to overcome our own problems, uncertainties, and challenges in life following in the footsteps of St. Joseph. God was his source of direction, enlightenment, and hope in all his trials and adversities. He was, therefore, successful in making the right decisions to overcome the problems and difficulties he experienced. So the fact that St. Joseph suffered, lived a quiet and private life, and was not extensively mentioned in the Gospels should not make him appear a victim or less important for us. He is still a noble and appealing person of integrity, character, and honor in his own right because he fully succeeded in fulfilling his vocation and role as the foster father of Jesus in accordance with God's will.

When St. Joseph was in Nazareth, he lived and worked as a carpenter, in order to, earn his living and support his family through the labour of his hands. He fully devoted himself to his occupation as a carpenter regardless of his status as the foster father of Jesus, the Son of God. Precisely, because he cherished his God-given talent as a carpenter and he had a sense of dignity and duty for his work in the family and community in which he lived. He was equally honored by Pope Pius XII in 1955 as the Patron Saint of workers in addition to his initial title as the Patron Saint of the Universal Church. So for us to fully and effectively walk in the footsteps of St. Joseph and imitate his noble example during this New Year that is dedicated to him, we equally need to have a sense of duty and responsibility and be fully committed to our daily tasks and various works in life. The importance of our occupation and our dedication to work in this New Year that is declared a Special Year to St. Joseph is reiterated and reaffirmed by Pope Francis. He said in p. 9 of *Patris Corde* that "in our own day, when unemployment has once again become a burning social issue ... there is a renewed need to appreciate the importance of dignified work of which St. Joseph is an exemplary patron. [For] work is a means of participating in the work of salvation, an opportunity to hasten the coming of the Kingdom, to develop our talents and abilities, and to put them into the service of society and fraternal communion." If we are seriously committed in this New Year to our occupation and work, we will indeed be walking in the footsteps of St. Joseph. We will also become co-creators with God in transforming and developing ourselves, our families, and human society through the labour of our hands.

As we celebrate the anniversary of the declaration of St. Joseph as the Patron Saint of the Universal Church, let us commend ourselves to him and seek his spiritual assistance by imploring his intercession in these words of prayer: "St.

Joseph, wise ruler of God's earthly household. You are nearest of all people to the heart of Jesus. Be still a father, lovingly providing for us his brethren. Saint strong and manly, chosen by the Father, as the trusted Guardian of the eternal Son, guide us as once you guided Wisdom's footsteps with sure direction. Husband of Mary, loving and beloved, teach us the joy of love so pure and holy, and warm our hearts with love for God's own Mother by your example. Saint of the dying blest with Mary's presence. In death you rested in the arms of Jesus. So at our ending, Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, come to assist us.

Amen! On that note, I wish the priests, religious, seminarians, lay faithful, believers in Christ, members of the Muslim community, believers of other faiths, and Gambians at home and abroad, a healthy, peaceful, successful, joyful, blessed, and favourable New Year for us all.

Your Servant in Christ,

+*Most Rev. Dr. Gabriel Mendy C.S.Sp.*
Catholic Bishop of the Diocese of Banjul, The Gambia.

OBITUARY

IN MEMORY OF THOMAS GREGORY GEORGE SENGHORE (TGG)

*A big tree has fallen! A great son of the soil has passed on!
How shall we mourn this loss?*

Thomas Gregory George Senghore *popularly known by his acronym 'TGG'*, was born and raised in Banjul, of a renowned Catholic family, son of Gregory Michael Senghore and Caroline Sigga Senghore of blessed memory. His church baptism was by his later mentor, Father Thomas Gregory Jobe. He married Martha Joko Thomas, who has predeceased him (*daughter of John Thomas and Mama Kainde Wilson, both of blessed memory*). Tom is survived by seven children, an older sister, Marianne Senghore Drammeh and a younger sister named Tisbay Senghore Gabbidon. He was, as is usually said of persons of his caliber, a gentleman and a scholar, a dedicated public servant, a devoted member of the church. This quite succinctly sums up the man and attests to his credentials captioned above.

TGG, even if he had other childhood interests was much more known as a studious scholar, one of distinction for that matter. He attended St. Augustine's High School from where he graduated in the early fifties with 2nd division pass in the Cambridge School Leaving Certificate Exams, a rare accomplishment in those years. Thereafter, he gained admission to Fourah Bay College, Sierra Leone, where he earned his first tertiary academic qualification, a B.Sc (Honours) degree in Economics. Subsequently setting eyes on a public service career, he pursued and acquired a Diploma in Public Administration in the United Kingdom. He joined The Gambia Civil Service in the sixties as a Graduate Executive Officer and rose quite rapidly through the administrative cadres to the rank of Permanent Secretary after holding positions of Divisional Commissioner, Macarthy Island Division (now CRR), and postings to middle and top management in various Government Ministries notably the Ministry of Works and Communications. His final administrative posting was to the Ministry of Finance and Trade from where he was subsequently appointed Governor of the Central Bank of The Gambia, a position he held up to his premature retirement from active service in 1988.

What characterized an illustrious tenure in public service was uncompromising discipline, dedication, hard work, proficiency, loyalty and straightforwardness. He was clearly down to earth and modest: many would remember him riding his pedal bicycle



to work, from Leman Street to the Quadrangle and back, in spite of his high managerial office and ready availability of a fleet of Government vehicles...an example perhaps of modesty or on the need to use public resources judiciously and economically(?). His watchword seemed to be 'CONTENTMENT' as taught in the holy books. Despite his leadership position in financial institutions, he was more willing to garb himself in poverty than enrich himself with the funds around him.

Talk went around in some quarters: "Tom bugul darra:kee bugul darra", (Tom does not want to prosper; this fellow does not know how to benefit himself) but such sentiments never got to change him: he was who he was, even if he had to retire on account of it. For his role in the public service, he was (deservedly) honoured as Commander of the Republic of The Gambia (CRG) and Justice of the Peace (JP). Such was his legacy and it is hoped that the young generation of public servants today, would emulate his example. We thank him.

A justifiable question here would be what the driving force has been behind such a life of moral rectitude and humility; and my own humble opinion would be: a total trust in God and in his religious beliefs. Tom will always be remembered for his strong devotion and service to the church, which he also

consistently supported and defended. Such steadfast disposition, in my belief, must have helped earn him important recognitions from the Vatican, including the insignia PRO.ECC (VAT).(pro Ecclesia) His love for church was apparent, marked by regular attendance at mass and other church services and functions, going to the sacraments, providing support for the church (financial, material, advisory) when and where he could. He loved church hymns, many of which formed part of his collection of audio/video tapes too vast to quantify, and which he also made available for the appreciation of clergy and laity alike. His favorite church music was Gregorian: all other forms of church music came a distant 2nd place. Was it because of the Latin, or that his name was Gregory; My guess would have been because of the Latin. Tom loved his Latin and never lost a good opportunity to render a line or two in his speeches. They were always impressive and fitting, and added some kind of opulence to the rendition. I remember after he discovered my interest in classics he would always greet me in Latin when we met, starting with my name and surname before introducing discussion on early Latin poets. I was always left impressed, yet confounded.

Tom was strongly attracted to religious sites; and more than once, had visited the same monastery at Keur Moussa, the old Seminary at Ngasobil, the shrine of our Lady Queen of Peace at Popongine and Kunkujang Mariama respectively. In spite of this variety of vocations and avocations, he never forgot or lost touch with his Serer roots and cultural heritage. In that regard, he frequently joined congregations in Joal , Senegal (Joal Palmarine, Fajouth, Fundioune,...) whenever he had the opportunity to visit. He knew the history of all the sites he visited, the name and biography of each Abbe (Priest).

In February 1990, when a high-level delegation of Liberian and Sierra Leonean Archbishops and Bishops visited The Gambia for an inter-territorial Bishops conference, led then by His Excellency the Papal Pro-Nuncio Archbishop Panciroli, TGG addressed that conference in the name of his organization (the Fraternal Order of Saints Peter and Paul, now Knights of Saints Peter and Paul) in what could have been one of his best speeches ever, on the position and immediate ecumenical needs of the Catholic Church, in The Gambia in spite of the church's growing contribution to the socio-economic development of The Gambia, with particular reference to the education sector. His



message, apart from being cogent, was quite relevant at a time when the hierarchy's attention to Gambian issues was losing momentum. It was well received and followed up with positive reaction that yielded material results for The Gambia, through subsequent interventions by sub-regional and regional Catholic organizations, and greater attention to the issues concerning justice and peace and the church's position in a growing era of secularization. I have hinted earlier that Tom was an erudite scholar, his erudition matched only by unmatched eloquence.

When His Holiness Pope John Paul II visited The Gambia in February of 1992, TGG was at the forefront in the planning and execution of the programme of the visit, together with organizational committee members of Saints Peter and Paul Confraternity. The visit was widely acknowledged as a great success as all activities were properly put in place, and the visit achieved its objectives, despite the fact that it was the first time a pontiff visited The Gambia, on relatively short notice for the local organizers. Tom had made lots of remarkable impromptu interventions at Committee level.

One of his last initiatives of service to church and community was the establishment of the Order of Saints Peter and Paul in 1988, which has as its cardinal objectives, the provision of educational support to needy young students, counseling for both youth in employment and those looking for career paths. Members of the Order would provide social services in the general community, especially to those marginalized groups, the youth, the aged and distressed, with little or no visible means of financial support, engaging in various educational and social activities that help to promote social cohesion and harmony within the wider Gambian community. These were his noble and laudable goals set at the level of the new organization. But at his personal level, he also set goals to achieve more immediate results. Accordingly, many a needy-student bill he privately settled, many a school student did he sponsor, but always quietly, confidentially, from the silence of a generous heart.

We see, therefore, that TGG's life portrayed the words of his spiritual teacher, St. Ignatius Loyola, to which words he expressed total commitment throughout his life.

They read :

***"Give and not heed the cost,
Fight and not heed the wounds,
Toil and not ask for rest,
Labour and not ask for any reward
Save that of knowing that we do the will
of God" And now that a great life has in fact
ended, oh how shall we mourn this loss?***



I shall return to TGG his own very words in his tribute on the 1st anniversary of the passing of his hero, the venerable church warden Pa Rene Antoine Blain of blessed memory, as follows:

*“Man of God, patriot and philanthropist
Countless were your acts of kindness
You lived the gospel as the master taught it,
You set an example for us to emulate.
To Abraham’s bosom we consign you
To Mary’s immaculate heart we entrust you:
Under the mantle of her maternal care
May you find peace, joy and rest.
Adieu! Adieu! Adieu!
Truly your memory remains evergreen
Your deeds stand out bold and indelible
Sleep in the Lord Thou good and faithful servant”*

*And as we return this great tribute of his,
may we also bid him Adieu in song:
Sleep on beloved, sleep and take your rest
Lay down thy head upon thy Savior’s breast
We love thee well, but Jesus loves you best
Goodnight! Goodnight! Goodnight
(Sleep and take your rest)
Goodnight! Goodnight! Goodnight!*

*Lord, may the soul of your servant
Thomas Gregory George Senghore
and the souls of all the faithful departed through
the mercy of God rest in Peace.
Amen.*

LATE EMELIA RACHEL LEWIS

Remembered as an active member of the St. Mary's Anglican Cathedral - Banjul

Emelia Rachel Lewis, commonly known as Okeke was born on 16th July 1954 in Banjul, then Bathurst, to Mrs Dorcas Jones-Parker and Mr. Charles Lewis, both of blessed memory.

After her initial schooling at the Wesley Primary School, Emelia attended the Crab Island Junior Secondary School where she completed her secondary education.

Upon leaving school, she worked with Ministry of Health starting at the Royal Victoria Hospital, now Edward Francis Teaching Hospital as a nurse and was later posted to Yorro Bawol Health Centre, Upper River Region. She was amongst the first team of nursing staff that opened the station.

She later worked at the Gambia Family Planning Association as a Clinic Assistant until her early retirement from active service.

The heart and soul of Emelia is best described as ready, willing, and able, coupled with her pleasant and sociable disposition. She never took lightly to being disrespected and would stand-up firmly to anyone taking advantage over the innocent and defenseless.

She had that rare ability to candidly tell you her piece of mind on an issue of disagreement and the next moment is prepared to run an errand for you. She bore no grudge and had a clean heart.

A staunch member of the AYPAs in the late 60s and early 70s, Emelia had a visible presence in all its activities; whether it is on the dance floor, or stage for drama concerts when she would memorize her part in the play on day one of rehearsals or helping



with singing during devotions; she memorized most of the hymns. Truly, Emelia has not been an easy act to follow.

In her Church life, she was not only regular at Sunday services but was in the pew well before the start of the service. She was amongst the first group of female choristers who sat in the choir stall of the then St. Mary’s pro-Cathedral with Mr. Shonu Bidwell as choirmaster.

Emelia was a very active member of the Cathedral Mothers Union and was a prospective waiting to be enrolled into full membership before her passing.

Emelia, in her witness for Christ as part of the laity, would always ensure that the Litany for the mid-day Lenten devotion was conducted and that St. Mary’s Parish is always well organized when they are assigned the role of leading the Lenten Good Friday procession of witness in the streets of Banjul. Alas she is gone. Who will now step up to fill her roles?

Emelia was a keen, active and long-time member and volunteer of the Francis DeGaulle Njie Foundation (FDFN) since its inception in 2006. She played a prominent role in the FDFN major activities. As a family Foundation, Emelia was proud to be associated with its achievements and growth. She will be fondly missed by the entire FDFN membership.

Emelia lived a full, fruitful life to which we give God the glory! She was called from labour to reward on 30th November 2020. She is survived by her children Leonce Tunde, Beauty and George Gabriel, grandchildren, three sisters, three brothers and several cousins, nephews, and aunts.

COMING UP IN OUR NEXT EDITION

Blessed Sacrament found intact after explosion at a parish Church in which a recently ordained Catholic Priest and others died.

THE POPE'S PRAYER INTENTIONS

FEBRUARY: VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

We pray for women who are victims of violence, that they may be protected by society and have their sufferings considered and heeded.

MARCH: SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION

Let us pray that we may experience the sacrament of reconciliation with renewed depth, to taste the infinite mercy of God.

The Diocese of Banjul **NEWSLETTER**

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Sunday Reflections

Suscipe, quæsimus, Domine, sacrificia tuis instituta præceptis
 Accept, O Lord, we pray, the sacrifices instituted by your commands

Reflections, readings and prayers for the Sundays in FEBRUARY and MARCH



February 7th, 2021 Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time Year B

1st Reading: Job 7:1-4, 6-7
Responsorial Psalm: Psalms 147:1-2, 3-4, 5-6
2nd Reading: 1 Corinthians 9:16-19, 22-23
Alleluia: Matthew 8:17
Gospel: Mark 1:29-39

“Is not our life on earth drudgery?” Let's face it. Try as we might to always look at the bright side of life, each and every one of us have times in our lives when we would answer Job's question with a resounding "yes." The burdens of life are real. Setbacks in life are painful. Headaches - and heartache - are a part of being human. We need to be honest. We need to name and address those areas of our lives in which we feel weighed down and burdened. However, wallowing in or dwelling upon the negative can be far more dangerous and debilitating to our spiritual, emotional, psychological, social and mental health than the troubles themselves. The evil one is pleased with sadness because he himself is melancholic and will be so for all eternity. Hence, Satan desires that everyone should be like himself." Hence the expression, misery loves company. In the face of life's burdens and difficulties, let us do our level best to deprive the evil one of our company, and walk in the company of prayerful, positive and proactive people.

February 14th, 2021 Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time Year B

1st Reading: Leviticus 13:1-2, 44-46
Responsorial Psalm: Psalms 32:1-2, 5, 11
2nd Reading: 1 Corinthians 10:31-11:1
Alleluia: Luke 7:16
Gospel: Mark 1:40-45

In today's Gospel, the man with leprosy took the initiative, approaching Jesus and asking for healing. In doing so, the leper violated the religious customs of the day by approaching a person who was clean. His request to Jesus can be interpreted as a courageous and daring act. The confidence of the leper in Jesus' ability to heal him is evident in the words of his request. But his words can also be read as a challenge to Jesus, asking just how far Jesus was willing to extend himself in order to heal someone. While healing the man, Jesus touched him, which also violated established social norms. This is an important sign of the depth of Jesus' compassion for the man and an important statement about Jesus' interpretation of the Law of Moses. Although Jesus touched the leper, he did not break completely with the Law of Moses. He instructed the man not to tell anyone about the cure and told him to present himself to the

priests as prescribed by the Law of Moses. The first instruction sounds nearly impossible to honor. Certainly, the man would want to share the good news of his healing, and his quick improvement would require an explanation. The second instruction honors the Law of Moses.

February 21st, 2021 First Sunday of Lent Year B

1st Reading: Genesis 9:8-15
Responsorial Psalm: Psalms 25:4-5, 6-7, 8-9
2nd Reading: 1 Peter 3:18-22
Verse before the Gospel: Matthew 4:4B
Gospel: Mark 1:12-15

Our entering into the mystery of the dying and rising of Jesus Christ first took place for us in our baptism. The Church community looks forward to its own dying and rising again with Christ in the renewal of its baptism during the Three Days. Each parish community, each family, each intentional Christian community, is born again as community in Christ at Easter time. Baptism is the great sign of God's everlasting love for us. Baptism suggests the primary image that gives meaning to the season of Lent. The Church will enter again into the bath of discipline, leading to the joy of Easter. The Church community longs with an eager heart for the refreshing waters of springtime and rebirth. As disciples of Jesus Christ, we are a people who willingly live under the discipline of the cross. We do not run from the cross of Christ. We embrace it with fear and trembling, but eagerly, with the conviction that we will become more like Jesus, our master, when we submit to its discipline and its saving power. The Gospel according to Mark is addressed to disciples. That is who we are.

February 28th, 2021 Second Sunday of Lent Year B

1st Reading: Genesis 22:1-2, 9A, 10-13, 15-18
Responsorial Psalm: Psalms 116:10, 15, 16-17, 18-19
2nd Reading: Romans 8:31B-34
Verse before the Gospel: Matthew 17:5
Gospel: Mark 9:2-10

On the second Sunday of Lent in each Lectionary cycle, the Gospel reading proclaims the story of Jesus' Transfiguration. This event is reported in each of the Synoptic Gospels—Matthew, Mark, and Luke. This year, in Lectionary Cycle B, we hear Mark's report of this event.

The context for Mark's Transfiguration story is similar to that found in both Matthew's and Luke's Gospel. The

Transfiguration occurs after Peter's confession that Jesus is the Messiah and Jesus' prediction about his passion. After this, in each of these Gospels, there is also a discussion of the cost of discipleship. In his Transfiguration, we see an anticipation of the glory of Jesus' Resurrection. In each of the reports of the Transfiguration, Jesus instructs the disciples to keep secret what they have seen until after the Son of Man has risen from the dead. The disciples' confusion continues as they wonder what Jesus means by rising from the dead. The disciples cannot possibly understand Jesus' Transfiguration until they also witness his passion and death. We hear the story of Jesus' Transfiguration early in Lent, but we have the benefit of hindsight. In our hearing of it, we anticipate Jesus' Resurrection, even as we prepare to remember Jesus' passion and death.

March 7th, 2021 *Third Sunday of Lent* Year B

1st Reading: Exodus 20:1-17
Or Exodus 20:1-3, 7-8, 12-17
Responsorial Psalm: Psalms 19:8, 9, 10, 11
2nd Reading: 1 Corinthians 1:22-25
Verse before the Gospel: John 3:16
Gospel: John 2:13-25

In today's Gospel, we read about how Jesus overturned the tables of the merchants and the moneychangers in the Temple at Jerusalem. In order to understand the relevance of Jesus' action, we must learn more about the activities that were going on in the temple area. Worship at the Temple in Jerusalem included animal sacrifice, and merchants sold animals to worshippers. Moneychangers exchanged Roman coins, which bore the image of the Roman emperor, for the temple coins that were needed to pay the temple tax.

During Lent we reflect upon the meaning of this sign for us and for our world. We might take this opportunity to consider the quality of our prayer and worship. In our prayers we seek to deepen our relationship with the person of Christ. In our worship with the community, we gather to experience anew the passion, death, and Resurrection of Jesus and its significance in our lives. Christ promises to be present with us when we gather for prayer.

March 14th, 2021 *Fourth Sunday of Lent* Year B

1st Reading: 2 Chronicles 36:14-16, 19-23
Responsorial Psalm: Psalms 137:1-2, 3, 4-5, 6
2nd Reading: Ephesians 2:4-10
Verse before the Gospel: John 3:16
Gospel: John 3:14-21

In the part of the conversation with Nicodemus in today's Gospel, Jesus referred to an incident reported in the Old Testament. When the Israelites grumbled against the Lord during their sojourn in the desert, God sent venomous serpents to punish them for their complaints. The Israelites repented and asked Moses to pray for them. The Lord heard Moses' prayer and instructed him to make a bronze serpent and mount it on a pole. All who had

been bitten by a serpent and then looked upon the bronze serpent were cured. By recalling this story, Jesus alludes to the salvation that would be accomplished through his death and Resurrection.

In John's reflection, we find an observation about human sinfulness. Jesus is the light that has come into the world, but people preferred the darkness. We wish to keep our sins hidden, even from God. Jesus has come into the world to reveal our sins so that they may be forgiven. This is the Good News; it is the reason for our rejoicing in this season of Lent and throughout our lives.

March 21st, 2021 *Fifth Sunday of Lent* Year B

1st Reading: Jeremiah 31:31-34
Responsorial Psalm: Psalms 51:3-4, 12-13, 14-15
2nd Reading: Hebrews 5:7-9
Verse before the Gospel: John 12:26
Gospel: John 12:20-33

Today's Gospel reading is taken from the Gospel of John. Jesus has just raised Lazarus from the dead—an important sign in John's Gospel, which inspired many people to believe in Jesus. This event also marks the turning point in Jesus' conflict with the Jewish authorities. John's Gospel tells us that the Sanhedrin met after this event and made plans to kill Jesus. In the 12th chapter of John's Gospel, Jesus is anointed at Bethany and enters Jerusalem in triumph. We again see evidence of the significance of the raising of Lazarus to this event; John reports that the crowds also gathered to see Lazarus. In the Gospel, we also hear Jesus speak about the cosmic framework against which we are to understand his passion, death, and Resurrection. Through his death and Resurrection, Jesus conquered Satan, the ruler of this world. In this way, the world is judged, but the judgment is not condemnation. Instead, through Jesus' dying and rising, salvation is brought to the world.

Palm Sunday March 28th, 2021 Year B

At The Procession With Palms –
Gospel: Mark 11:1-10 or John 12:12-16

At The Mass – 1st Reading: Isaiah 50:4-7
Responsorial Psalm: Psalms 22:8-9, 17-18, 19-20, 23-24
2nd Reading: Philippians 2:6-11
Verse before the Gospel: Philippians 2:8-9
Gospel: Mark 14:1-15:47 or Mark 15:1-39

The common people thought Jesus was there to begin a rebellion against Rome, but the Passion story reminds us that His victory is not in conquering cities, but conquering souls. During Holy Week, we prayerfully remember the events of Jesus' passion and death. As we meditate on the cross, we ask again and anew, what it means to make the statement of faith that Jesus, in his obedient suffering and dying, revealed himself to us as God's Son.



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