

The Diocese of Banjul NEWSLETTER

Incorporating The Catholic Newsletter

Opinion

There is Fire on the Mountain

Editorial

Public Enemy No. 1

Inside The Catholic Mass

The Mystery, Power, Spiritual and Temporal Blessings



Spiritual Power and Implications
of 3 O' Clock



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 are 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 journal 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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**Editorial
Hint**

Public Enemy No. 1

Nobody should turn Gambians into refugees again as it happened in 2016

War is an enemy to every human society because everywhere in the world, people, without exception, need peace to achieve development and progress. Therefore, anyone who is preparing to put this peaceful Gambian society into a state of war just because of an election that will be held for only one day is a public enemy No.1. Gambians do not need war in the conduct of the forthcoming December elections.

The rising spate of the social epidemics of moral recklessness and political irresponsibility being hatched by some of our politicians in their schemes to win the December Elections is embarrassing us. It has the tendency to cast aspersions on the integrity of our elections before the outside world.

We do not want war in this country. We luckily averted war in 2016 and we thank God for that. Thus, we utterly condemn any move by politicians who portray the forthcoming elections as a matter of war, life and death. The people should put down any politician who poses this manner of front. He or she is a public enemy no. 1.

Do not our political class have to mature? The New Gambia's political tradition requires politicians to possess certain virtues of character, and in consequence, the need to overcome vulgar vanity, a type of vanity where political power becomes purely personal self-intoxication, irresponsible partisanship and recklessness. It sows the seeds of unguarded and inflammatory public statements, unhealthy rivalry, 'ipso facto' societal retrogression and a consequent instability.

It is very absurd for our political leaders to be making unguarded utterances in the manner of touts and hooligans. Recently, one of them mindlessly said in a public forum, "We are ready for anything as far as the elections are concerned and when you are about to start a war, there are two things to bear in mind – death or shame." We call on

all Gambians, at home and abroad, the civil society, ECOWAS and the international community, in general, to condemn this dangerous political mindset. It is a malevolent precedence and smacks of a bad beginning for our forthcoming December elections. This is not the type of New Gambia we all fought for. A Gambia ridden with war? This is deeply worrying and thus begs for outright condemnation. It is already heating up the polity as well as making the feelings of most of the Gambian people rise to fever pitch.

What have we come to? What kind of a society are we emerging into? One can rightly perceive this manner of reckless utterance as a deliberate provocation of disorder in our society. Elections are not supposed to be a do or die affair, as politics is better played with the spirit of sportsmanship.

We are not in the animal kingdom. The Gambia is a human place. Actually, elections are meant to be peaceful and are not designed to be a cause for war. We have tasted a bit of the reign of chaos and terror and are witnesses to a slight of its bitter taste. Our elections are designed to be peaceful and must be allowed to be conducted peacefully. No one has any right to prepare for war just for winning an election in this peaceful nation.

"Do as I say, not as I do" is all too common among our political leaders. They behave like unaccountable royals who can ignore the edicts they impose on the masses. But, in the conventional leadership fashion, leadership is best conducted by example.

If any politician wants to win votes, it must be based on his or her past records, merit, public reputation, the programs and policies in place, as well as the application of rational skills and judgment, and not by use of force with or without arms. Any politician who goes beyond these bounds and applies the war approach in the conduct of our elections is a Public Enemy No. 1.



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Some Weekday Celebrations - June & July

Thursday, 4th June: St. Charles Lwanga

CHARLES (born 1865) worked at the court of King Mwanga II of Buganda in southern Uganda. The king forced himself immorally on the boys and young men who served him. In 1886, he insisted that Catholics and other Christians should abandon their faith. They refused and were martyred. Among the victims was St. Kizito, patron of the church at Bakoteh. We pray today for the priest and people of St. Charles Lwanga Parish, Fajikunda, and the priest and people of St Kizito's, Bakoteh.

Monday, 22nd June:

St John Fisher & St. Thomas More

JOHN FISHER was a Catholic bishop, who, at the reformation in England refused to take the oath of allegiance to King Henry VIII as head of the Church of England. Thomas More, a learned man, who as Chancellor of England, had been very close to the king, also refused. Both men were beheaded in 1535.

Monday, 29th June:

Solemnity of St. Peter & St. Paul (See page 16)

We celebrate the feast of two great saints through whose boundless faith in Christ the early Church was established.

Friday, 3rd July: St. Thomas, Apostle

THOMAS was one of the 12 apostles. Thomas, although frightened, went with Jesus to Bethany when news came that Lazarus was sick (John 11: 16). At the Last Supper, when Jesus told the Twelve, 'I am going to prepare a place for you,' Thomas said, 'Lord, we do not know where you are going; and how can we know the way?' Jesus replied, 'I am the way, the truth and the life.' (John 14-2-6). Thomas earned the nickname 'Doubting Thomas' because he would not believe that the other apostles had seen the risen Christ. But when Jesus appeared and showed Thomas his wounded side, Thomas exclaimed, 'My Lord and my God!' (John 20: 26-29).

Saturday, 11th July: St. Benedict

BENEDICT - the 'Father of Western Monasticism' - was born into a noble family around 480. While studying in Rome, he was much influenced by the teachings of St. Jerome and St Augustine. He retired to live a hermit's life, and his sanctity attracted other solitaries. Benedict eventual-

ly established 12 monastic communities. At Mount Cassino, where he became Abbot, he established a wise and humane Rule based on vows of poverty, chastity and obedience.

Wednesday, 22nd July: St. Mary Magdalene

MARY came from Magdala, a village in Galilee. Jesus rescued her from possession by seven devils (Luke 8: 2). Mary watched from afar when Jesus was crucified (Mark 15: 10). Weeping at his tomb, she asked the risen Christ (whom she took to be the gardener) what had happened to the body of her Lord. Jesus said, 'Mary', and she at once recognised him (John 20: 11-18).

Saturday, 25th July: St. James, Apostle

JAMES and his brother John were sons of Zebedee, a Galilean fisherman. They were among the first to be called by Jesus. Together with Peter, they witnessed the raising of Jairus' daughter. They saw Christ transfigured and his agony in Gethsemane. James and John were rebuked by Jesus when they asked to sit by his throne when he came into his kingdom (Mark 10: 39). James was beheaded on the order of Herod Agrippa (Acts 12: 1-3). He is called 'the Great' to distinguish him from another apostle, James 'the Less', who became bishop in Jerusalem. The Catholic school at Kity 2 is named in honour of St. James.

Saturday, 31st July: St. Ignatius Loyola

BORN into the Spanish nobility in 1491, Ignatius became a soldier. He was converted whilst recovering from wounds. After a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, he studied in Spain and France. In 1537, he was ordained, and with Frances Xavier and others he established the Jesuit Order. Two years later, the Pope approved the Order, and Ignatius was Jesuit General until his death in Rome in 1556, by when the Jesuits had branches in Italy, Spain, India and Brazil. The Jesuits were the most important force in the Catholic Counter-Reformation and a bulwark of the papacy. Ignatius laid the foundations of Jesuit schools, and his 'Spiritual Exercises' are still widely read and valued.

Omnes Sancti et Sanctae Dei, intercedite pro nobis.

All holy men and women of God, intercede for us.

The Pope's Prayer Intentions

JUNE: The Beauty of Marriage

Let us pray for young people who are preparing for marriage with the support of a Christian community: may they grow in love, with generosity, faithfulness and patience.

JULY: Social Friendship

We pray that, in social, economic and political situations of conflict, we may be courageous and passionate architects of dialogue and friendship.

Inside The Catholic Mass

Cover Story

The Mystery, Power, Spiritual and Temporal Blessings



Never take the Holy Mass for granted, for strange events take place when you attend Mass. St. Pio of Pietrelcina once stated, “It would be easier for the world to survive without the sun than to do so without the Holy Mass.” One awesome thing is very clear about the Mass; the angels are always present at the Eucharistic Sacrifice.

If we understand the value of the Mass, we would certainly participate in it actively and regularly. As Catholics, we know that the Holy Mass is the center of our faith and the source of divine life. Hence, the Church teaches us to participate in the Holy Mass regularly, on Sundays and on Holydays of obligation, and also on weekdays, whenever possible. St. Leonard of Port Maurice observes as follows: “What graces, gifts and virtues the Holy Mass calls down; repentance for sin, victory over temptation, holy inspirations which dispose us to shake off tepidity, the grace of final perseverance, upon which depends our salvation, temporal blessings, such as peace, abundance and health ...”

The Mass is, actually, a sacramental participation in the liturgy of heaven, the cult officially rendered to the Trinity by the full host of the spiritual creation. The presence of the angels introduces the Eucharist into heaven itself. They help to surround it with a sacred mystery.

“The angels surround the priest,” writes St. John Chrysostom. He wrote, “The whole sanctuary and the space before the altar is filled with the heavenly Powers who come to honor Him who is present upon the altar. And elsewhere: Think now of what kind of choir you are going to enter. Although vested with a body, you have been judged worthy to join the Powers of heaven in singing the praises of Him who is Lord of all. Behold the royal table. The angels serve at it. The Lord Himself is present.”

In fact, many Popes, Saints and Mystics have established that, it is most true that he who attends Holy Mass shall be freed from many evils and from many dangers, both seen and unseen. The angels surround and help the priest when he is celebrating Mass. Therefore, he who devoutly hears Holy Mass will receive a great vigor to enable him to resist mortal sin, and there shall be pardon to him for all venial sins, which

he may have committed up to that hour. It is also noteworthy that, he or she who attends Mass with all possible devotion shall be freed from sudden death, which is the most terrible stroke launched by the Divine Justice against sinners. Behold a wonderful preservative against sudden death.

Jesus offers Himself

The Holy Mass is, first of all, a holy celebration, because it is Christ who acts in the person of a priest. Jesus Christ offers himself for us, as he offered on the Cross. Hence, we say that Mass is the same sacrifice of Jesus Christ, offered on the altar in an unbloody manner. Just like Jesus offered his body and blood on the Cross, he offers for us on the altar. The difference is that Jesus offered himself visibly on the Cross, but on our altar, He offers himself invisibly and in an unbloody manner, hidden under the appearance of bread and wine. So, when you are present at Mass, you kneel amidst a multitude of holy angels, who are present at the adorable Sacrifice with reverential awe.

Faith matters

A Catholic who says that he/she loves Christ would not fail to love the Mass. To love the Mass does not mean just being present and nothing more; it means to be present with faith and devotion and to take part actively in the Mass, realizing that it is the Sacrifice of the Cross being renewed on the altar.

Participation in the Mass involves basically our faith. Without faith, all that one would see on the altar is just bread and wine; just gestures, symbols and nothing more. It is only through faith we acknowledge that, at the consecration of the bread and wine, they are changed into the body and blood of Jesus Christ. If one would come for Mass without faith, the person would easily feel bored or get distracted. Without faith, one would fail to understand what Christ’s death on the Cross means for us. Hence, faith is the most required disposition when we come to participate in the Mass.

Purposes of the Mass

The purposes of the Mass are similar to the purposes for which Jesus offered Himself on the Cross. They are:

- to give glory to God;
- to thank him;
- to make up for the sins;
- to pray for favor to fulfill our intentions.

The first purpose is to give glory to God, our creator, on whom we depend for everything. Acknowledging Him as The Lord, God, we need to praise and glorify Him.

What we have, what we do and what we are, everything is because of God's immense love, mercy, and kindness: our life, family, all the spiritual gifts for our eternal life, namely, sanctifying grace, faith, the sacraments and the gift of His mother. Therefore, it is good to thank God for all the natural and supernatural gifts. The person who is too proud to say "thank you" is not only ungrateful, but is bound to end up being unhappy.

The Bible teaches us that Jesus Christ, though He was without sin, He died like a sinner because He took upon himself our sins and made reparation for them on the Cross.

Hence, the third purpose of the Mass is to make up for our sins and those of the deceased. When we come to Mass with real sorrow for our personal sins, we can draw strength from the love of God.

The fourth purpose is to make petitions for our needs. God is the giver of all gifts. Being the most loving Father, He gives us the best. Just as Jesus has taught us to ask, so that we will receive, we make prayerful petition for our various needs.

Graces derived from assisting at Holy Mass

Do not take the Mass for granted, because a lot of mysterious things take place when you are at Mass. The Mass is Calvary continued, and every Mass is worth as much as the sacrifice of Our Lord's life, sufferings and death. Thus, the following graces are noteworthy:

- The Holy Mass is the most powerful atonement for your sins.
- At the hour of death, the Holy Masses you have heard devoutly will be your greatest consolation. Every Mass will go with you to Judgment and will plead for pardon for you.
- By every Mass, you can diminish the temporal punishment due to your sins, more or less, according to your fervor.
- By devoutly assisting at Holy Mass, you render the greatest homage possible to the Sacred Humanity of Our Lord.
- Through participating in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, Our Lord Jesus Christ forgives many of your sinful negligences and omissions.
- He forgives you all the venial sins which you are determined to avoid. He forgives you all your unknown sins which you never confessed. The power of Satan over you is diminished.
- By piously hearing Holy Mass you afford the Souls in Purgatory the greatest possible relief.
- Through Holy Mass you are preserved from many dangers and misfortunes which would otherwise have befallen you.
- You shorten your Purgatory by every Mass.
- Through the Holy Mass, you are blessed in your temporal goods and affairs.
- When you hear Holy Mass devoutly, offering it to Almighty God in honor of any particular Saint or Angel,

thanking God for the favors bestowed on him, etc., you afford that Saint or Angel a new degree of honor, joy and happiness, and draw his special love and protection on yourself.

- Every time you assist at Holy Mass, besides other intentions, you should offer it in honor of the Saint of the day.

- In Holy Mass, in obedience to Christ's command, "Do this in remembrance of me," we of the Church offer perfect praise to the heavenly Father, and sanctify the world and ourselves by the power that flows from the priestly office of our eternal High Priest, Jesus Christ.

- The benefits of even one Holy Mass are infinite and include the whole world. The blood of the new and everlasting covenant was "shed for you and for all."

- Every Mass wins for you a higher degree of glory in Heaven.

- You receive the priest's blessing which Our Lord ratifies in Heaven.

In every Mass that is offered, the Church remembers before God "those who take part in this offering, those here present and all your people, and all who seek you with a sincere heart." In a special way, those who have Holy Mass offered and those for whom a Mass is offered, partake of the grace of the Eucharistic sacrifice. The Church, which offers Mass each day, includes not only the faithful on earth, but the saints in heaven, as well as the suffering souls still awaiting entrance into heaven.

It is a pious and praiseworthy custom for the faithful to have Masses offered for their particular intentions, and especially for departed friends and loved ones. It is a laudable Catholic practice, when requesting Mass for a special intention, to make an offering both for the support of the priest who will celebrate the Mass, and to provide for the needs of the altar, as well as, the materials required for the Holy Sacrifice. In fact, it is very sad that so many non-Catholic Christians consider the Mass to be an abomination. It is just the opposite. It is the one-time sacrifice of Jesus on the Cross-recreated, through time and space, in an unbloody fashion, just like Jesus did during the Last Supper.

All this happens at Holy Mass

A wise, elderly priest once celebrated an early morning Mass. Later that day, someone asked him, "How many attended Mass this morning?" and he answered, "There were thousands there—but I only saw three of them." In other words, in addition to the three early-birds in attendance, the priest was including the thousands of souls from purgatory allowed by God to be present at this Mass, along with a multitude of invisible, but very real angels and saints, especially Our Lady, St. Joseph, and St. Michael, the Archangel. We don't see everything that's going on at Mass, and we would be overwhelmed and amazed if we could. Many deceased persons being cleansed and healed in purgatory are allowed to be present, especially if the Mass is being offered for them, and especially if they had a great devotion to the Eucharist during their lives.

Far more often than we realize, persons in Heaven, especially the loved ones of those present in the congregation, are here with us in church, filling the pews and worshipping the Lord. At the Offertory, when the gifts of bread and wine are brought forward, an invisible offertory procession is also taking place. The guardian angels of every person present in

church are bringing forth gifts of love and trust and self-surrender—except some of these angels are empty-handed, because the human beings entrusted to their care are only physically present in church, with their hearts and attention elsewhere. How sad these empty-handed angels appear. All these things are happening, unseen by us, because of the Divine Presence of Jesus Himself. He is robed in glory and seated on a heavenly throne above and behind the altar, and then—at the moment of consecration, when the bread and wine are changed into His Body and Blood—He comes down and stands in place of the priest, with holy light and fire radiating outward and filling the church. At the 'Lamb of God', He appears as the perfect Lamb who was slain for our salvation—and then, at the moment of Holy Communion, He appears as the Christ Child, held by the Virgin Mary. As each person comes forth to receive, He either reaches out to embrace those who approach Him in a state of grace, or shudders in horror at having to let Himself be consumed by someone in a state of serious sin. During the silent time of prayer, following Communion—a moment when Jesus wants us to be intimately aware of our union with Him - He is either pleased, when we take the time to thank Him, or saddened, when we devote all our prayer to asking favors of Him, without first expressing our gratitude to Him for coming to us in this great Sacrament.

According to many visionaries and prophets, all these things happen at every Mass; something impossible if Holy Communion were merely bread and wine. Our active participation in the Mass is the closest we can come to Heaven while still on earth, for the Eucharist truly is Christ's Body and Blood, and a foretaste of the new life awaiting us.

Only the Catholic Church truly have the Eucharist, for only they have the line of apostolic succession stretching all the way back to the apostles, who were ordained by Jesus Himself. This means, the communion services of other

Christian denominations, regardless of what their ministers and people think, merely involve bread and wine; even worse, Catholics who leave the Church for another religion are depriving themselves of the True Bread from Heaven, and are, despite what they may feel, making it harder for themselves to accept the gift of salvation and fulfill their mission in life. St. Paul speaks of how, through the Eucharist, we are to proclaim the death of the Lord until He comes, and only the Catholic Church is able to do this in the fullest way possible. The bread and wine brought forth by Melchizedek, and the bread and fish multiplied by Jesus, were forerunners or signs of what the Lord miraculously accomplishes at every Catholic Mass. He shares Himself with us in a holy, wondrous, and infinite way and it is our responsibility never to take this gift for granted.

Therefore, the Church is prudent and wise to observe the Solemnity of Corpus Christi every year, for we can all benefit from being reminded of the wondrous Mystery and tremendous Gift that has been entrusted to us. The Eucharist is not imaginary or symbolic, but actually is the Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity of Christ, and it's not supposed to be received in a routine or half-hearted way, and certainly, never while in a state of serious sin. Instead, we must approach the altar with as much love, gratitude, and awareness as possible, for this is how we open our hearts to Jesus our Savior, and prepare ourselves for that day when He will welcome us into His Kingdom.

St. Leonard of Port Maurice wrote, "I believe that were it not for the Holy Mass, at this moment, the world would be in the abyss, unable to bear up under the mighty load of its iniquities. Mass is the potent prop that holds the world on its base. And, yet, with the holy Sacrifice of the Mass, viewed according to its intrinsic preciousness and value, satisfaction may be made completely for committed sin ... Not that the Sacrifice of the Mass by any means cancels our sins



immediately, and of itself, as does the Sacrament of Penance, but it cancels them immediately, calling down various aids of interior impulse, of holy aspiration, and of actual grace, all tending toward a worthy repentance of our sins, either at the time of the Mass, itself or at some other fitting time."

As St. Leonard of Port Maurice further notes in having Masses said for the suffering souls in Purgatory: "the holy Mass not only shortens their pains but also extends great immediate relief to those poor souls ... the charity you exercise toward poor souls under purification will all rebound to your own good. In having Masses said for your own soul: "... get celebrated all the Masses possible in your circumstances not only for the souls departed but for your own. Do this for two motives: first, to obtain a good and holy death - it being the invariable opinion of theologians that there is no more efficacious means for attaining so holy a purpose. Another motive is that, you may yourself issue quickly from Purgatory and fly away into eternal glory, there being no means more adapted for obtaining from God a grace so precious as that of going direct to Heaven, or at least a short detention on the way, than Indulgences duly gained, and the holy Sacrifice."

St. John Vianney, Patron Saint of Parish Priests, once said, "When we receive Holy Communion, we experience something extraordinary - a joy, a fragrance, a well-being that thrills the whole body and causes it to exalt." He revealed that, "If we really understood the Mass, we would die of joy." He further noted, "There is nothing so great as the Eucharist. If God had something more precious, He would have given it to us." Also, according to him, "When we have been to Holy Communion, the balm of love envelops the soul as the flower envelops the bee."

In Revelation of Christ to St. Gertrude the Great, it was revealed that, for each Mass we hear with devotion, Our Lord sends a saint to comfort us at death. Also, in the case of the Revelation of Christ to St. Mechtilde, it was made known that, he who is in the habit of devoutly hearing holy Mass shall in death be consoled by the presence of the angels and saints, his advocates, who shall bravely defend him from all the snares of infernal spirits.

St. Michael and the Angels at Mass

It is said that St. Michael presides over the worship of adoration rendered to the Most High and offers to God the prayers of the faithful symbolized by incense whose smoke rises towards Heaven. In fact, the liturgy presents St. Michael to us as the incense-bearer, standing beside the altar as our intercessor and the bearer of the Church's prayers before the throne of God. "An Angel of the Lord stood near the altar of the temple, having a golden censer in his hand, and there was given to him much incense, and the smoke of the perfumes ascended before God."

At the beginning of Holy Mass [the Traditional Roman or Latin Mass], his name is mentioned in the confession of faults made by the priest at the foot of the altar, and by the faithful in turn. At the offertory, in Solemn High Mass, the priest implores the blessing of the Almighty upon the oblation through the intercession of St. Michael. And during the Canon of the Mass [The Canon was obliterated in the Novus Ordo, as were several other beautiful orations, for which either nothing was supplied at all or banal prose was added.], after the Consecration, the priest prays God to command that the

oblation be borne by the hands of His holy Angel to His altar on high. The Angel here referred to is doubtless the Archangel Michael. With loving solicitude he watches over the Precious Blood, that no accident may occur, and also over all the tiny particles which may fall from the consecrated Hosts at the time of Holy Communion, that they may not be lost or desecrated.

But St. Michael is not alone present at the Holy Sacrifice of the Altar. Christian tradition assures us that innumerable Angels also assist at Mass. St. John Chrysostom, among others, states that "When Mass is being celebrated, the Sanctuary is filled with countless Angels who adore the Divine Victim immolated on the altar." Besides the guardian Angels of the faithful who are present, thousands of Heavenly spirits assist at Mass, reverently worshipping their Lord and God. With what sentiments of profound veneration do they not adore the Precious Blood being shed anew upon the altar! It is the self-same Blood that was shed on Calvary, but with this difference, that then It fell upon the ground and stones, whereas in Holy Mass, It is applied to the souls of those present. The efficacy of the Mass is so wonderful, God's mercy and generosity are then so unlimited that there is no moment so propitious to ask for favors as when Jesus is born on the altar. The Angels know this full well and come in throngs to adore their Divine Master and make their petitions at this hour of mercy. What an example for us! Whenever we attend Holy Mass, therefore, let us unite with St. Michael and the holy Angels, "and place our offerings and petitions in their pure hands, to be presented to the Most High, that He may receive them graciously and pardon our lack of devotion for the sake of the devotion of the celestial spirits with whom we associate ourselves. It was revealed to St. Mechtilde that three thousand Angels from the choir of Thrones are ever in devout attendance around every Tabernacle where the Blessed Sacrament is reserved. Doubtless a much greater number are present at Holy Mass, which is not merely a Sacrament but also a sacrifice." And we read in the revelations of St. Bridget: "One day when I was assisting at the Holy Sacrifice, I saw an immense number of Holy Angels descend and gather around the altar, contemplating the priest. They sang heavenly canticles that ravished my heart, Heaven itself seemed to be contemplating the great Sacrifice. And yet we poor mortals, blind and miserable creatures, assist at Mass with so little love, relish and respect!" Do Catholics ever think of this amazing truth, namely: that at Mass they are praying in the midst of thousands of God's Angels?

Let us beg St. Michael and his Angels to impart to us a greater realization of the infinite value of the Mass, "where Christ spiritually sprinkles the souls of the faithful with His Blood." St. Mary Magdalen de Pazzi says of this spiritual sprinkling: 'This Blood when applied to the soul, imparts to it as much dignity as if it were decked in a costly robe. It imparts such brilliance and splendor that couldst thou behold the effulgence of thy soul when sprinkled with that Blood, thou wouldst fall down to adore it.' Happy the soul adorned with such beauty! Let us go to Holy Mass often, that we may be sprinkled with this adorable Blood and our soul arrayed in rich apparel which will render us glorious forever in the sight of the Angels and the Saints. The Catholic Church owns no greater, no more costly treasure than the Precious Blood of Jesus Christ; for a single drop of this Blood, which is united

to the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, outweighs in value all the riches of Heaven and earth.

Let us remember also that one Mass heard during life is of more benefit to the soul than many heard for it after death, and that every Mass will go with you to Judgment and plead for pardon. They will, moreover, shorten your Purgatory and win for yourself a higher degree of glory in Heaven. How pleasing to God is the frequent attendance at Mass, is well illustrated in the following gracious little story:

A poor farmer was wont to attend daily Mass for many years of his life. He was crossing the snow-covered fields one cold morning on his way to church, when he thought he heard foot-steps behind him, and turning, he saw his Guardian Angel bearing a basket full of beautiful roses which exhaled a delightful perfume. "See," said the Angel, "these roses represent each step you have taken on the way to Mass and each rose represents also a glorious reward which awaits you in heaven. But far, far greater are the merits you have acquired from the Mass itself."

The thought of the priceless advantages that are to be derived from devout assistance at Mass, ought to be a stimulant for us to hear it not only on Sundays, but also on week days; whenever possible. Should illness or some other serious reason prevent us from doing so, let us send our Guardian Angel in our stead with the prayer following the next section.

Fittingly is the Blessed Sacrament called the "Bread of Angels," because of the ardent love with which the Angels cherish the adorable Sacrament and the profound adoration which they render to their God hidden beneath the Sacramental veils. But this designation reminds us also of the Angelic purity which ought to adorn our hearts when we receive Holy Communion. We ought, therefore, to think of our Guardian Angels and their incomparable purity whenever we approach the Table of the Lord, asking them to obtain for us the grace to approach the Heavenly Banquet with true purity of heart and worthy dispositions.

It is particularly when we approach the Holy Table that our Guardian Angels exercise their most watchful care over us, for here there is question of a very special homage to their most beloved Lord in the wondrous condescension of His Eucharistic state. With what glowing love they hasten to render Him their services! And yet the Holy Eucharist was instituted not for the Angels, but for men. Ought we not to be wholly abashed in contemplating the Angels' fervor?

When we are preparing for Holy Communion, the Angels strive to awaken in us holy sentiment; they urge us to banish distractions and to repeat pious acts of contrition, longing and love. The evil spirit takes delight in disturbing us in order to hinder us from receiving Holy Communion fruitfully, for he knows that this is the fountain of all good. On this account, we often experience that just during Holy Mass and at the time of Holy Communion we are most violently assailed by distractions and temptations. But our faithful Angel also redoubles his watchfulness at this sacred time, and if we cooperate with him, he will assist us to conquer the enemy and to receive the adorable Sacrament with proper dispositions. We must also strive not to displease our good Angel by want of reverence in approaching the Holy Table.

Our holy Guardian Angels also rejoice in uniting with us in adoration before the Most Blessed Sacrament and during the

time of Holy Mass. They do all they can to keep us from inattention and irreverence, for they are inflamed with love of God, whom they behold face to face.

St. Francis de Sales had special devotion toward the holy Angels charged with the guardianship of the tabernacles. His veneration for these Angelic Guardians was increased by an instance which showed that these pure spirits revere not only the Sacred Species, but also the ministers who consecrate and handle them. After having conferred Holy Orders on a pious young man, St. Francis noticed that the newly ordained priest hesitated before a door as if to let someone pass before him. "Why do you pause?" asked the Saint. "God favors me with the sight of my Guardian Angel," replied the priest. "Before I was ordained to the holy priesthood, my Angel always remained at my right and preceded me. Now he walks at the left and refuses to go before me." Such is the great veneration which the Angelic spirits show even to God's ministers because of their reverence for the Blessed Sacrament.

It is related of St. Catherine of Siena, who was also favored with the visible presence of her Guardian Angel, that once while praying in the church she turned her head slightly to gratify her curiosity. Her Guardian Angel gave her so severe a look for her disrespect in the presence of the Most Holy that for several days St. Catherine was inconsolable and performed severe penance in atonement.

Blessed Veronica of Binasco relates a similar experience: "Once," she writes, "when, prompted by curiosity, I happened during the time of Mass to look at one of the Sisters who was kneeling near the altar, the Angel of God who is constantly beside me rebuked me with such severity that I almost fainted with terror. How threateningly he looked at me as he said, 'Why dost thou not keep watch over thy heart? Why dost thou gaze thus curiously at thy sister? Thou hast committed no slight offense against God.' Thus spoke the Angel, and by Christ's command he enjoined on me a heavy penance for my fault, which for three days I bewailed with tears. Now, when I hear Mass, I never venture so much as to turn my head, for fear of incurring the displeasure of the Divine Majesty." What a lesson for those who give free rein to their eyes in church and even talk during the time of Holy Mass!



Diocesan News

Speech Delivered by Mr. Rene Geoffrey Renner, former Supreme Knight of The Knights of Saints Peter and Paul

The International Alliance of Catholic Knights (IACK) International Essay Competition Award Ceremony Church of the Holy Cross, Brusubi, West Coast Region, The Gambia on Sunday 9th June, 2019 (Pentecost Sunday)

Rev. Father Michael Ndecky, our Mass Celebrant, Rev. Fr. Anthony Gabisi, Chaplain to the Knights of Saints Peter and Paul, essay competitors and their parents, relatives and friends, dear brothers and sisters in Christ. I have been requested to make some remarks by way of introduction to the genesis of today's ceremony to give a background to the organization of the process leading to this event, and I am happy to do so.

The Knights of Saints Peter and Paul was founded in 1988 and formally inaugurated in 1989 by the three heads of the mainline Christian Churches in The Gambia with our revered brother Thomas G.G. Senghore (Supreme Knight) and my humble self as his unworthy Vice President (Deputy Supreme Knight) and the Order, is in its 31st year of service in the Catholic community and its environment in The Gambia. I was honoured to be made Supreme Knight in normal succession for the period 1992 to December 1994 when I left for an international assignment for the World Bank in Lilongwe, Malawi.

The International Alliance of Catholic Knights (IACK) was formed on the 12th October, 1979 in Glasgow, Scotland, in the United Kingdom, and will celebrate its 40th anniversary with the hosting by the Knights of Columba, a constituent founding Order, which is celebrating its centenary of establishment on the 28th meeting of the International Council of the Alliance at the venue of the Alliance's birth, from 5th - 12th October, 2019. Our Order joined the International Alliance as a full voting member in 1992, the year when the Alliance received recognition by the Vatican as a private international Lay Organisation, by a Decree dated 14th April, 1992, signed by the Cardinal James Francis Stafford, then President of the Pontifical Council for the Laity in Rome. Having attended the biennial meetings of the International Catholic Council of the Alliance in 1993 and 1997, in New Orleans, Louisiana, USA and Accra, Ghana, respectively. I was at the 18th council meeting in New Haven, Connecticut, USA in 1999, selected as first Deputy President of the Alliance and became President at the 19th meeting held in Melbourne, Victoria, Australia in 2001 for the next biennium. I, concurrently, nominated my Bishop and former High School teacher Bishop (now Emeritus) Michael J. Cleary, CSSP for the position of International Chaplain, which was duly endorsed by the Pontifical Council for the Laity in Rome, for the same period.

As a member of the Education Fraternity of our Order, under the Chairmanship of Brother Lawrence Bruce, we were tasked to assess the competition essays, rank them in order of

merit and forward the winning essay to the International Alliance to evaluate, along with those from other Orders' countries. Theme of the essay, "walking in joy to serve the Lord."

The Alliance consists of 15 member Orders located in countries such as the USA, Ireland, United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand, Ghana, Nigeria, South Africa, Austria, Belgium, Pakistan, Mauritius, The Gambia and the United Nations, and covering other countries like Canada, Mexico, Puerto Rico, the Philippines, the Caribbean, Togo and Liberia. The IACK adjudicators were made up of: Fr. John Allen Green of the Order of Friars Minor (OFM), Parish Priest and author from South Africa; Madame Julieanne Moran, National Secretary of the Irish Society of Missionary Children, a Catechist; and Ms Mary Haughey of the United Kingdom, a retired English teacher and pastoral worker.

This, undoubtedly formidable panel, declared our own Mama Ansel Sanyang, a 16 year old Grade 11 pupil from St. Peter's Parish, the winner, and commented that "the standard was very high and the adjudication tough." The IACK Secretary General Brother, Niall Kennedy, Knight Commander of St. Gregory (KCSG), who announced the result on the 30th April, 2019 offered his personal congratulations to the winner of "the best essay on the subject selected by the Alliance" in a personal letter to young Ms Sanyang, dated the 7th June, 2019.

The Order intends to make this essay competition an annual event, which will suitably complement the national bible quiz organized yearly for Catholic pupils in lower basic schools in The Gambia by the Catechetical Commission, and which has been sponsored by the Knights for a number of years.

Mama Ansel and her family, teachers, pastors and friends should be justly proud for helping to raise the Gambian flag so high and being a credit to her community. As a Past President of IACK I wish to add my humble word of commendation to Mama Ansel and implore the Holy Spirit to amplify his many gifts to her on this day of Pentecost. International Winner prize £1000 from IACK National winners

- 1st prize D12,000 KSPP
- 2nd prize D10,000 KSPP
- 3rd prize D7,500 KSPP
- 6 consolation prizes of D500.00
- Every essay won a prize



The author

*Rene – Geoffrey M. Renner
Past Supreme Knight, KSPP
Past International President, IACK*

Opinion

There is Fire on the Mountain

Crime and insecurity are getting out of hand Why are innocent Gambians at such a great risk as they find themselves today unlike before? Are we to run from our fatherland?

Our much-desired New Gambia is getting loaded with strange things, as we face an increasing trend in crimes, since 2017. Concerns over insecurity and questions of safety have become central issues in our society as high crime rate, assorted horrors and strange things painfully mark it. These developments have, in their turn, heightened feelings of insecurity and unsafety. The U.S. Department of State Travel Advisory in a report, assesses The Gambia and categorizes as a HIGH-threat location for crime, and thus indicating that travelers should exercise normal precautions.

According to the report, crimes of opportunity, such as pickpocketing, purse snatching, theft of valuables from vehicles, assault, and residential burglary, which are graduating to a reign of terror, with intermittent killings of innocent citizens, are rapidly becoming a daily phenomenon. People going armed in public, breaking and entering, stealing, rape, allied violent attacks, among others, define the taxonomy of the new crime wave in the country. Just last month, the life of a young girl, Marie Mendy, was cut short in a brutal manner at Busumbala. Not only that she was murdered in cold blood, her private part was also removed, for yet unexplained reasons. Since then, crimes that are more heinous have been committed in several parts of the country. In recent times, we are witnessing dimensions of crime that were never heard of in the history of this country, such as broad-day armed robbery, both on the road and at people's homes. The very recent incidence at Westfield, which led to the death of the victim stunned almost everybody in the country.

Crime is primarily the outcome of multiple adverse social, economic, cultural and family conditions. To prevent crime, it is important to have an understanding of its roots. Though, the causes of crime differ from society to society, because of

different cultural, economic and social characteristics. The causes of crime in our society are primarily related to economic situation, social environment and family structures.

The major economic factors that contribute to the crime initiations in this country are poverty and unemployment. Financial crisis, due to poverty, can cause a person to get involved in criminal activities. On the other hand, lack of employment opportunities leads to criminal activities by the unemployed.

An unemployed person needs to run his household by any means, and when he does not find any legal opportunity to earn, he may get involved in criminal activities to finance his living. Also, social environment provokes some of the criminal activities too. It mirrors to citizens and communities what we value and how we set priorities. The social root causes of crime are; inequality, lack of support to families and neighborhoods, real or perceived inaccessibility to services, low value placed on children and youth.

After identification of the root causes of crime in our society, the remedial measures to control the criminal activities must revolve around those identified causes. Therefore, strengthen the law enforcing agencies in the country by strengthening them with the relevant resources and allied infrastructure. The police seem to have limited strength. There is a need to motivate them, as well as solving their allied socio-economic problems, in order to improve their attitude towards their duties, which are indeed very demanding. Also, providing job opportunities for the young people, as well as improving the socio-economic well-being of all, can help curb the rate of crime in our society.

Crime affects people on many levels, often needlessly generating fear and anxiety and leading to victimization and over-reaction.

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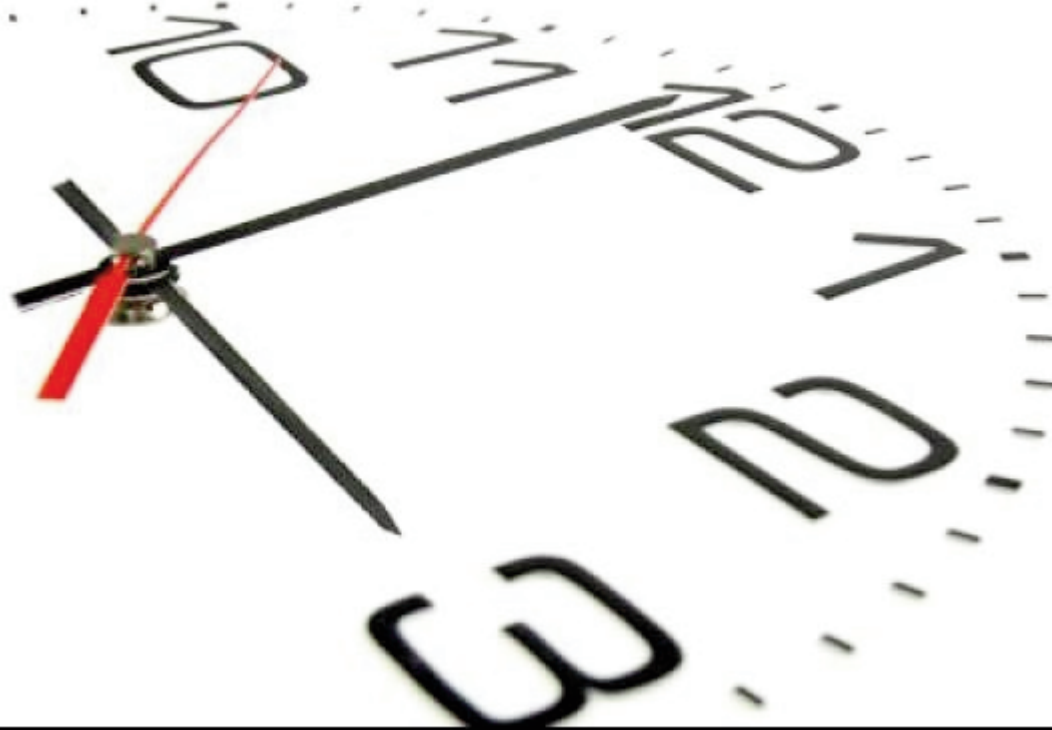
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Spiritual Power and Implications of 3 O' Clock



3 o' clock every afternoon is the hour of powers, and the 'Hour of Great Mercy', which in effect ,calls for a serious devotion to the Divine Mercy of Jesus. The Diary of St. Faustina gives us precise instructions from Jesus as to how He wanted the new devotion to His Mercy to be formulated. From the very depths of His tender mercy, He created the Feast of Mercy, the Chaplet of Divine Mercy, the Divine Mercy Novena, the Image of Divine Mercy and the conversion prayer known as the 3 O' Clock Holy Hour.

At 3 o'clock on Good Friday, Jesus died in incomprehensible agony on the wooden Cross, which the Roman soldiers had nailed Him to. The soldier appointed to watch the bodies, checked if the three, whom they had crucified, were still alive, but when he examined Jesus, he discovered Jesus had already died. So, he did not break His legs, which was a Roman custom, thereby fulfilling the prophecy "Not one of his bones will be broken" (Psalm 34). Instead, he took a spear and pierced His sacred body, driving the iron blade into His Merciful Heart. As he withdrew the spear, there followed a gush of blood and water. The soldier was shocked and gave witness to St. John, the beloved disciple of Jesus, of this event. It is this moment which changed the world forever, and it is this prayer that commemorates that extraordinary moment.

In His revelations to St. Faustina, Our Lord asked for special prayer and meditation on His Passion each afternoon at the three o'clock hour, the hour that recalls His death on the cross.

At three o'clock, implore My Mercy, especially for sinners; and, if only for a brief moment, immerse yourself in My Passion, particularly in My abandonment at the moment of agony. This is the hour of great mercy. ... In this hour I will refuse nothing to the soul that makes a request of Me in virtue of My Passion (Diary, 1320).

As often as you hear the clock strike the third hour, immerse yourself completely in My Mercy, adoring and glorifying it; invoke its omnipotence for the whole world, and particularly for poor sinners; for at that moment, mercy was opened wide for every soul. In this hour, you can obtain everything for yourself and for others for the asking; it was the hour of grace for the whole world - mercy triumphed over justice.

The short prayer which Jesus taught St. Faustina for the veneration of His Mercy at 3 o'clock is, "O Blood and Water, which gushed forth from the Heart of Jesus as a Fount of Mercy for us, I trust in You." This is also known as the Conversion Prayer. Jesus told St. Faustina, "I desire that you know more profoundly the love that burns in My Heart for souls, and you will understand this when you meditate upon My Passion. Call upon My mercy on behalf of sinners; I desire their salvation. When you say this prayer, with a contrite heart and with faith on behalf of some sinner, I will give him the grace of conversion. This is the prayer: "O Blood and Water, which gushed forth from the Heart of Jesus as a fount of Mercy for us, I trust in You." (Diary 186-187) St. Faustina also created her own prayer for this moment, which is: You expired, Jesus, but the source of life gushed forth for souls, and the ocean of mercy opened up for the whole world.

O Fount of Life, unfathomable Divine Mercy, envelop the whole world and empty Yourself out upon us. (Diary 1319)

My daughter, try your best to make the Stations of the Cross in this hour, provided that your duties permit it; and if you are not able to make the Stations of the Cross, then at least step into the chapel for a moment and adore, in the Most Blessed Sacrament, My Heart, which is full of mercy; and should you be unable to step into the chapel, immerse yourself in prayer there where you happen to be, if only for a very brief instant (1572).

From these detailed instructions, it's clear that Our Lord wants us to turn our attention to His Passion at the three o'clock hour to whatever degree our duties allow, and He wants us to ask for His mercy.

In Genesis 18:16-32, Abraham begged God to reduce the conditions necessary for Him to be merciful to the people of Sodom and Gomorrah. Here, Christ Himself offers a reduction of conditions because of the varied demands of our life's duties, and He begs us to ask, even in the smallest way, for His mercy, so that He will be able to pour His mercy upon us all.

We may not all be able to make the Stations or adore Him in the Blessed Sacrament, but we can all mentally pause for a "brief instant," think of His total abandonment at the hour of agony, and say a short prayer such as "Jesus, Mercy," or "Jesus, for the sake of Your Sorrowful Passion, have mercy on us and on the whole world."

This meditation, however brief, on Christ's Passion brings us face-to-face with the cross, and, as Pope John Paul II writes in Rich in Mercy, "It is in the cross that the revelation of merciful love attains its culmination." God invites us, the Holy Father continues, "to have mercy" on His only Son, the crucified one." Thus, our reflection on the Passion should lead to a type of love for Our Lord which is "not only an act of solidarity with the suffering Son of man, but also a kind of 'mercy' shown by each one of us to the Son of the Eternal Father." The following Mercy Stations of the Cross prayer are appropriate for use at the three o'clock hour.

Begin each station with:

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.

Pause briefly, meditating on the Passion of Jesus. Then say the invocation given below, followed by:

... Have mercy on us and on the whole world.

Invocations:

1. For the sake of His institution of the Eucharist as the memorial of His Passion, ...
2. For the sake of His agony in the Garden, ...
3. For the sake of His being scourged and crowned with thorns, ...
4. For the sake of His being condemned to death, ...
5. For the sake of His carrying the Cross, ...
6. For the sake of His falling under the weight of the cross, ...
7. For the sake of His meeting His afflicted Mother, ...
8. For the sake of His accepting help in carrying the Cross, ...
9. For the sake of His receiving mercy from Veronica, ...
10. For the sake of His consoling the women, ...
11. For the sake of His being stripped, ...
12. For the sake of His being crucified, ...
13. For the sake of His death on the Cross, ...
14. For the sake of His being buried, ...
15. For the sake of His being raised from the dead, ...

Pray three times:

Holy God, Holy Mighty One, Holy Immortal One, Have mercy on us and on the whole world.

This holy hour is an exceptionally important element of the devotion to Divine Mercy. For if we do not take the time everyday to contemplate and understand the mercy of God and the sacrifice that Jesus made for mankind, how can we understand the purpose of the Chaplet, the Image, the Novena and particularly the Feast of Mercy? The Passion of Jesus teaches us what true mercy is. How can we grow in love of God if we don't trust Him? And if we don't understand the depth of His mercy, we may never truly trust Him and therefore never truly love Him. We will be forever standing afar from Jesus, fearful and distrusting. But Jesus understands the reasons why we behave like this. We are viewing Him through our human experience where doubt, fear and an unwillingness to forgive, condition our everyday lives. We refuse to believe that God is as good, as merciful and as loving as He says He is and as He has proven He is. It is for this reason that the 3 O'Clock Holy hour is so important, for it is only through meditation on the Passion of Jesus that we, in our own way, will begin to understand how incomprehensible and infinite His mercy is and also believe that He has forgiven us. Only then can we believe in His Goodness and only then will we feel in our souls His love and mercy for each and

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Society & Development

Development Paradigm for The Gambia

By Andrew SYLVA - Email: andrewsylva1982@gmail.com Part 2

Continued from last edition

Transport is critical for the efficient functioning of the Gambia's economy. It links areas of production to markets and facilitates access to public services. For the private sector, transport infrastructure is critical to increase competition and provide greater opportunity for public-private partnerships. The fact that the country is divided in two by the Gambia River is central to the discourse on transport. Connecting the two banks is important to foster social cohesion and economic integration; not only in the Gambia but also in Senegal. Currently, a journey across the Gambia River to the north bank on the ferry can take up to two hours. If the ferry breaks down or is otherwise busy, people can take a small fishing boat to cross the river. These are often overcrowded and more than twice as expensive as the ferry.

Moreover, the ferry only operates from 5:30am to 6:00pm, which limits access to the Greater Banjul Area. This is especially problematic because specialist hospitals are located in Banjul, meaning that, in cases of emergency, people must still cross the river to access urgent medical care. In addition, crossing the river is the quickest way to reach Senegal from Banjul. Investment in infrastructure to cross the river, therefore, would not only improve the connectivity of rural regions to the capital and improve their access to quality healthcare and education, but could also boost trade with Senegal.

With the change in government, youth have high expectations for change in the country, especially in regard to increased opportunities for decent work. The lack of decent employment opportunities has led to a dramatic rise in youth migration toward Europe. A major impediment to youth securing jobs is the education system at both the university and high school levels, which have high pass rates but little focus on skills development. Moreover, 31.6 percent of children between 7 and 15 years old are not in school; 29 percent of whom have never received formal education of any kind. There is a need both to expand the base of those who attend school and to focus more on vocational training to assist youth seeking white-collar opportunities. Supporting entrepreneurs could also foster economic growth and employment.

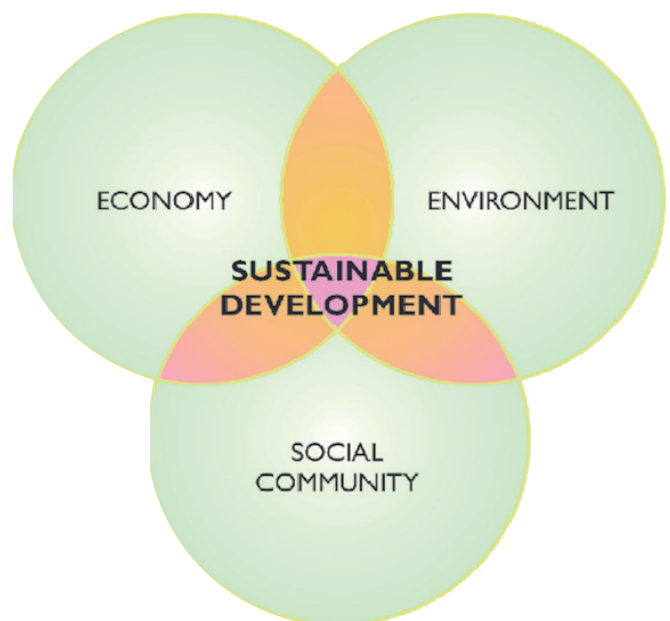
The Gambia ranked 173 out of 188 on UNDP's 2016 Gender Inequality Index, with women still struggling to access economic resources, healthcare, and education. Women and girls continue to be disadvantaged due to patriarchal norms and practices, including customary law which does not allow women to inherit land, and which does not give women equal status in judicial processes. In addition, women cannot control or own land despite their predominant

role in farming and their role in ensuring food security, and women disproportionately face financial access barriers that prevent them from participating in the economy and improving their lives, including access to credit and bank accounts. Additionally, many women have poor access to social services, healthcare, and education, and work in low-wage jobs.

Women in The Gambia also face financial exclusion, mainly due to limited access to land and credit. Social and cultural norms make it difficult for women to acquire vital information on available financial services, while the lower literacy rate among women (35.5 percent compared to 45.7 percent for men) means more women have difficulty processing and comprehending information they do have access to. Simply being able to open a bank account and access credit would help expand the economic opportunities available to women in The Gambia.

This is an area that has been largely overlooked or taken for granted by policymakers. Efforts to provide childcare could give women freedom to pursue other economic opportunities. One example is an initiative of Gaye Njorro Hair Plus, a vocational training center set up by a graduate of UNCTAD's Empretec entrepreneurship program, which provides childcare in its facilities so that mothers with children can attend training sessions.

The country is at a tipping point; public expectations remain high and the government is yet to communicate effectively with the citizenry to allay fears of regression to authoritarian rule. While there are tradeoffs that have to be made where resources are limited, development planning should remain an integral part of discussions around governance, transitional justice, and security. This means reducing poverty, increasing economic opportunities for all, and including, listening to, and empowering youth. At the same time, the government must strive to strengthen peace, governance, political participation,



rule of law, and security, and seek to deliver justice to victims of violence and conflict through the implementation of an effective transitional justice process.

The government should publicly commit to working with the private sector, particularly to improve infrastructure and public transportation. Improved infrastructure will assist not only in exporting and importing goods more effectively but also in connecting the regions north of the river with the Greater Banjul Area. Further, the government should fund small energy providers to scale up their production to meet electricity demands and move away from reliance on diesel. The government should focus on developing the country's agricultural sector, as well as more light-manufacturing industries to maximize processing of raw materials.

The Gambia's economy needs robust diversification in many areas of production such as cotton, palm oil, fishing, sesame, cashew, cassava, biomass, rice, timber, hide and skin, yam, maize, poultry, livestock, etc. Economic diversification holds great potential to increasing The Gambia's resilience, and would contribute to achieving and sustaining long term economic growth and development in the country. Broadly-based economies, active in a wide range of sectors, and firmly integrated into the sub- region, are better able to generate healthy and sustainable growth. However, the expansion of activities in underdeveloped sectors, or indeed the development of new activities, is a significant challenge and requires a combined effort of The Gambia government and the private sector, and with the assistance of African countries' with stronger economies. In addition, and in light of the small size of the country's economy, a regional approach to economic diversification is imperative to reap the benefits of larger domestic markets and economies of scale.

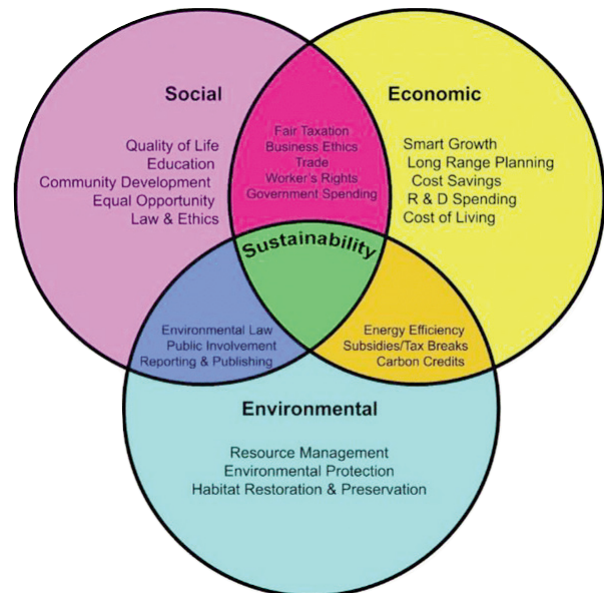
The central government of The Gambia should, as a matter of necessity, set up a Natural Resources Search Committee (N.R.S.C.) to explore the nooks and crannies of the country to search for untapped natural resources in the land. This committee should be made up of Gambian engineers, scientists, geologists, environmental specialists etc. The massive expanse of lands in the country still harbours some unidentified, untapped natural resources. Probably, who knows, one day, The Gambia may have solid and or liquid minerals to explore. There is need to maximize the available land in the country to attain better economic growth and development.

Intensive Research and Development (R&D) are apparently lacking in The Gambia, and there could be no meaningful economic development without emphasis on R&D. Therefore, it is necessary to develop a three-pronged policy for Science and Technology (S&T) development with clearly distinguished support mechanisms for basic science, applied science, extension services and education. Basic science has the fundamental role to play in enhancing the quality of higher education for scientists, engineers and the society at large. The

universities must be empowered to develop explicit links between their graduate and undergraduate programmes, support intellectual and financial investments for the development of materials for science teaching as well as research work. Fellowship and Scholarship programmes abroad should be revitalized and strengthened. Fellowships should be awarded with a clear perspective of returning to productive work in The Gambia and not to stay overseas after graduation, as it does not help the country in manpower development. On the other hand, applied research should be strongly supported and evaluated in terms of its short-term scientific and medium or long-term practical results. Lack of appropriate evaluation procedures and strategies makes applied R&D run the risk of being expensive and of doubtful technical and commercial viability.

This piece recommends that for The Gambia to overcome her present social, economic, political, health, education woes, etc., there is the urgent need for the people and the leadership of this country to create their own indigenous identity, based on their own language, culture, technology, politics, economy, education, religion, craft, etc. that would be interwoven with good governance and transparency. This multi- dimensional approach to tackling the problems of the country would help give the country a new face-lift. Development studies have demonstrated that there is not a model or "recipe" for progress and modernization. A diversity of development policies are needed in order to face these structural problems of development.

The author has experience spanning over a decade in International Development Cooperation and currently works with the European Development Fund. #GambiaRise



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Life of the Saints

Peter and Paul - heroes of the Faith

On June 29th, we celebrate the feast of two great saints, through whose boundless faith in Christ the early Church was established. Peter and Paul were very different personalities: Peter, the warm-hearted, impetuous fisherman; Paul, the intensely-committed religious leader, who strove first for the Pharisees, then for the Risen Christ.

Petros - the Rock

PETER played the leading part in the ministry of Jesus and in the life of the first Christian communities in Jerusalem and Rome. He and his brother St. Andrew were the sons of Jonah, Galilean fisherman of Bethsaida (John 1: 44) and Capernaum (Mark 1: 21). They were summoned by Jesus to be 'fishers of men.'

Peter was a married man, and took his wife with him on his missionary journeys (1 Corinthians 9: 5). His first name was Simon. But when he recognised his Master as Christ, Jesus conferred on him the punning name of Peter, saying, 'You are Peter [Greek, Petros], and upon this rock [petra] I will build my church (Matthew 16: 18).

The Church teaches that 'You are Peter' (Tu es Petrus) authenticates the office of the Pope, as St. Peter's successor, to be the father of all Christians. This right is reinforced by the granting to Peter of the keys of the kingdom of heaven [Tibi dabo claves regni coelorum: Matthew 16: 19), and the commission given to Peter by Jesus after the resurrection: 'Feed my sheep' (John 21: 17).

Apostle to the Gentiles

PAUL is known as 'the Apostle to the Gentiles'. His name was Saul, born at Tarsus in Cilicia, and thus a 'citizen of no mean city' (Acts 21: 39). He was of Jewish parents, who had the advantage of being Roman citizens, a fact which would later give Paul the right to be sent to Rome for trial.

Saul was brought up a strict Pharisee, and studied at Jerusalem under Gamaliel. His hatred of the new Christian sect caused him to take part in the stoning of the young deacon, St. Stephen, the first martyr (Acts 8: 1-3). Saul heard Stephen pray for his executioners, and this led to the great event in his life, his conversion, which took place when he was on the road to Damascus, 'breathing out threatening and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord'. He was blinded by a light from heaven, and heard a voice saying, 'I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting.' Saul was cured of his blindness in Damascus by Ananiaus, a Christian who was told in a vision to visit Saul.

Preaching with vigour

Saul was baptised, took the name of Paul, and retired to the desert to meditate. He had previously fought ferociously to drive Christians out of the synagogues, but he returned to Damascus to preach Christ with equal vigour. Strict Jews 'took counsel to kill him' and watched the city gates hoping to capture him, but Christian disciples let him down from the walls by night, and he escaped to Jerusalem. There it was necessary for St. Barnabas to vouch for him, because the apostles could not believe that Paul was the same man who had previously ill-treated them (Acts 9: 1-31).

It was agreed that Paul's field of activity should be among the gentiles. He came into conflict with St. Peter at Antioch over the question of the circumcision of gentile converts, which the Church in Jerusalem insisted on, but which was finally resolved in Paul's favour (Galatians 2: 11-14).

The vivid account of Paul's missionary journeys given in the Acts of the Apostles, ends with his preaching the Gospel in Rome for two whole years while awaiting his trial.

Tradition says that Peter and Paul were both martyred in Rome, Peter by crucifixion, Paul by the sword.

Prevent the spread of COVID-19 in

7 STEPS



- 01 Wash your hands frequently.
- 02 Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.
- 03 Cover your cough using the bend of your elbow or a tissue.
- 04 Avoid crowded places and close contact with anyone that has fever or cough.
- 05 Stay at home if you feel unwell.
- 06 If you have a fever, cough and difficulty breathing, seek medical care early — but call first.
- 07 Get information from trusted sources.

Gambian Christian Anniversaries: June & July

TWELVE YEARS AGO Sr. Pauline Leahy, in June 2009, retired to Ireland, after spending 44 years in The Gambia. After her profession in the Congregation of St. Joseph of Cluny, she worked 17 years in Australia before coming to The Gambia in 1967. Until 1988, she taught at St. Joseph's Senior Secondary School, then at St. Joseph's Adult Education Centre, Banjul. Over many years, Sr. Pauline was a regular visitor to Mile Two Prison, the mental home, the sanatorium, the Royal Victoria Hospital and the old people's home.

21st June, 1900: Death, aged 44, of Fr. Charles Amman, Superior of the Catholic Mission since 1889. (In the Cathedral there is a plaque to his memory.)

22nd June, 1924 (Corpus Christi): Ordination by Bishop Le Hunsec of Dakar, in the Cathedral at Banjul, (then a parish church) of a citizen of Banjul, Fr. Joseph Charles Mendy. There were now four priests serving in the Mission.

20th June, 1930: Celebration of Fr. John Meehan's Silver Jubilee as a priest. Having arrived in The Gambia in 1905, Fr. Meehan had been Superior since 1908. He was presented with the Mission's first motor car.

20th June, 1937: In Dublin, ordination to the priesthood of Fr. Michael Moloney CSSp, who was later to become First Bishop of Banjul.

9th June, 1949: It was announced in The Gambia Gazette that Edward Lloyd-Evans had been awarded the MBE.

15th July, 1951: Ordination in Dublin of Fr. Reginald Gillooly CSSp. He arrived in The Gambia the following year.

1st July, 1956: Ordination in Dublin of the priest-scholar Fr. Myles Fay CSSp, who subsequently served in Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Tanzania, the US, Rome and The Gambia. He died in Dublin on 2nd February 2006.

28th July, 1958: Work began on the building of the tower at the Cathedral.

3rd June, 1965: Departure of Fr. William Costelloe, who had first arrived in 1952.

27th July, 1973: Departure of Fr. Seamus Fleming. Since his arrival in 1962, he had principally worked around Basse and Bwiam.

19th June, 1977: Departure of Fr. Thomas Tarmey, who arrived in 1959.

15th July, 1985: The St. Vincent de Paul Society, founded in The Gambia in 1968, formed a national council.

21st May, 1995: Opening of St. Kizito's Church, Bakoteh.

25th June, 1995: Opening of St. John the Baptist's Church, Tenene.

8th June, 1996: Death of Justice Solomon Njie.

21st June, 1997: Opening of the new St. John the Baptist's Church, Farafenni.

24th June, 1997: Opening of Holy Trinity Church, Kafuta.

25th July 2000: Death of Archbishop Johannes Dyba, first Papal Nuncio to The Gambia.

16th July, 2001: Death in Banjul, aged 90, of Sr. Albert

Byrne SJC, who had served in The Gambia since 1935.

29th July, 2003: The Archbishop of Canterbury, the Most Revd. Rowan Williams, began a visit to The Gambia.

2nd July, 2006: Death, aged 86, of Cecilia Cole, teacher, magistrate, Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly and staunch Methodist.

8th July, 2006: Ordination at Kanifing by Bishop Robert Ellison of Fr Michael Gomez CSSp.

9th July, 2006: Fr. Joseph Boafo CSSp bade farewell to the people of Bakau Parish, where he had spent 10 years as Parish Priest.

28th June, 2007: Bishop Robert Ellison appointed a nine-member Diocesan Finance Committee, to serve for five years.

5th July, 2007: Death of Edward Paul Mansal, who had retired in July the previous year as Principal of St. Edward's Senior Secondary School, Bwiam.

5th - 8th June, 2008: Visit to The Gambia of Cardinal Théodore-Adrien Sarr, Archbishop of Dakar.

11th June, 2009: The 25th anniversary of the John Paul II Foundation for the Sahel was celebrated at an 'Open Day' at GPI.

13th June, 2009: Bishop Ellison and ten priests concelebrated Mass at the out-station Church of St. Paul, Makumbaya to mark the end of the Year of St. Paul.

8th June, 2010: Fr. Matthias Murphy CSSp told the congregation at Holy Spirit, Banjul, that he was about to retire after many years as their Parish Priest.

9th-11th July, 2010: As part of the Youth Festival a procession was held from St. Charles Lwanga, Fajikunda to St. Peter's, Lamin.

21st-23rd June, 2012: Senegalese and Gambian priests met at Kaolack to discuss co-operation between their dioceses.

27th June 2014: Among speakers at GPI, to mark the end of the pastoral year, T.G.G. Senghore spoke on the history of the Catholic Mission in The Gambia.

8th-17th June, 2015: Visit of a former priest at Basse and Bansang in the late 1980s and early 90s, the Rt. Revd John Kwofie CSSp, Bishop of Sekondi-Takoradi, Ghana.

26th June, 2016: Fr. Peter Lopez, former Parish Priest at Blessed Sacrament Kanifing, blessed four bells. They were unveiled on 3rd July by Bishop Ellison.

24th June, 2017: Bishop Ellison celebrated a Mass of Thanksgiving at the Cathedral to mark the 60th anniversary of the creation of the Diocese of Banjul by Pope Pius XII.

During June, 2017: Four Salesian priests visited the Diocese to explore the possibility of establishing a ministry at Kunkujang Mariama. They are now serving there.

7th July, 2017: Philip Saine launched his book, 'Challenges to Gambian Churches during Yahya Jammeh's Era'.

22-24th June, 2018: The National Youth Cross celebration attracted young people from every parish, together with Anglicans, Methodists and evangelical Christians. Sixty young people from the Dioceses of Dakar, Kaolack and Kolda participated in the event.

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 June and July - Year B



6th June, 2021

The Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ – Corpus Christi

1st Reading: Exodus 24:3-8

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 116:12-13, 15-16, 17-18

2nd Reading: Hebrews 9:11-15

Alleluia: John 6:51 **Gospel:** Mark 14:12-16, 22-26

Verse of the Day: “Take it; this is my body.” Then he took a cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, and they all drank from it. He said to them, “This is my blood of the covenant, which will be shed for many.” Mark 14:12-26

Reflection: On this day we celebrate the Lord Jesus’ giving His Body and Blood to us, in reality, by His freely chosen death and resurrection, and sacramentally in the Eucharist. Years ago, this solemnity was called by its Latin name “Corpus Christi” – “Body of Christ.” Our reading remind us today that the newer name for this celebration is the ‘Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ,’ since the readings focus more on the Blood of Sacrifice. The Eucharist is everything. It’s all things, the fullness of life, eternal salvation, mercy, grace, happiness, etc. Why is the Eucharist all this and so much more? Simply put, the Eucharist IS God. Period. Therefore, the Eucharist is all that God is.

13th June, 2021

11th Sunday in Ordinary Time

1st Reading: Ezekiel 17:22-24

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 92:2-3, 13-14, 15-16

2nd Reading: 2 Corinthians 5:6-10 **Gospel:** Mark 4:26-34

Reflection: This Sunday’s Gospel from Mark carries a significant message regarding faith and the Kingdom of God.

Today’s Gospel Reading consists of two parables about seeds. In the first, Jesus tells those gathered that this is “how it is with the kingdom of God.” A man scatters seed which over time sprouts and develops. Then when the grain is ripe, the man harvests his crop. The emphasis in the parable is on the seed, which seemingly has the power to grow on its own. In this, it is like the Kingdom of God. While on earth, Jesus planted the seeds of the kingdom by His life, miracles, teaching, and suffering.

However, the kingdom is not yet fully established. Although already present in Jesus and His group of twelve, it has yet to come to fruition; just as the seed in the parable needs time to grow, so does God’s kingdom.

20th June, 2021

12th Sunday in Ordinary Time

1st Reading: Job 38:1, 8-11

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 107:23-24, 25-26, 28-29, 30-31

2nd Reading: 2 Corinthians 5:14-17

Alleluia: Luke 7:16 **Gospel:** Mark 4:35-41

Reflection: Mark’s Gospel presents a vivid portrait of Jesus, whose words and deeds show that he is the Son of God. Today’s Gospel describes the end of a day of teaching in Jesus’ ministry. Jesus taught the crowd in parables and then offered explanations of these parables to his disciples. Jesus then led his disciples away from the crowds and into the boats that they will use to cross the Sea of Galilee. The sea and its surrounding area are the settings for Jesus’ teachings and miracles in this part of Mark’s Gospel. Today’s reading describes how Jesus calmed a storm at sea. It is the first of four miracles that are presented in sequence, at this point in Mark’s Gospel.

27th June, 2021

13th Sunday in Ordinary Time

1st Reading: Wisdom 1:13-15; 2:23-24

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

2nd Reading: 2 Corinthians 8:7, 9, 13-15

Alleluia: 2 Timothy 1:10

Gospel: Mark 5:21-43 or Mark 5:21-24, 35B-43

Reflection: The disciples’ words to Jesus are telling. They are familiar enough with Jesus to dare to wake Him. Their words to Him are words of reproach, questioning His care for them.

A careful reader might wonder what the disciples expected Jesus to do. Are they more troubled by the storm or by Jesus’ inattentiveness to their needs? How many of us have chided a family member or friend for not agreeing with our assessment of the severity of a situation?

Today’s Gospel offers evidence of Jesus’ power and authority as He calms the storm. In his day, power over nature was believed to be a sign of divinity—only God calms storms. Jesus’ rebuke of the storm also echoes the rebuke He uses when He talks to and expels demons. In each situation, Jesus’ power and authority is a sign of His divinity.

Indeed, the disciples are left wondering about Jesus’ identity at the conclusion of today’s Gospel. They see before them a human being who acts with the authority and power of God. The disciples’ uncertainty about Jesus’ identity is a recurring in Mark’s Gospel.

4th July, 2021**14th Sunday in Ordinary Time****1st Reading:** Ezekiel 2:2-5**Responsorial Psalm:** Psalm 123:1-2, 2, 3-4**2nd Readings:** 2 Corinthians 12:7-10**Alleluia:** Luke 4:18 **Gospel:** Mark 6:1-6

Reflection: Today's Gospel describes what many believe to have been the typical pattern of Jesus' ministry: teaching in the synagogue followed by acts of healing. In His hometown of Nazareth, the people are amazed by what they hear, but they also cannot comprehend how someone they know so well might move them so powerfully. Brothers and sisters of Jesus are also named. Scholars are divided on how to interpret this. As Catholics, we believe that Mary, was and remained always a virgin, thus we do not believe that this Gospel refers to other children of Mary. Some have suggested that these family members might be Joseph's children from a previous marriage, but there is little evidence to support this. Others explain this reference by noting that the words 'brother' and 'sister' were often used to refer to other types of relatives, including cousins, nieces, and nephews. This Gospel tells us that Jesus is hampered from performing miracles in Nazareth because of the people's lack of faith. Jesus is said to be surprised by this. He did not predict or foresee this rejection. In this detail, we find a description of the very human side of Jesus.

11th July, 2021**15th Sunday in Ordinary Time****1st Reading:** Amos 7:12-15**Responsorial Psalm:** Psalm 85:9-10, 11-12, 13-14**2nd Reading:** Ephesians 1:3-14 or Ephesians 1:3-10**Alleluia:** Ephesians 1:17-18**Gospel:** Mark 6:7-13**18th July, 2021****16th Sunday in Ordinary Time****1st Reading:** Jeremiah 23:1-6**Responsorial Psalm:** Psalm 23:1-3, 3-4, 5, 6**2nd Reading:** Ephesians 2:13-18**Alleluia:** John 10:27**Gospel:** Mark 6:30-34**25th July, 2021****17th Sunday in Ordinary Time****1st Reading:** 2 Kings 4:42-44**Responsorial Psalm:** Psalm 145:10-11, 15-16, 17-18**2nd Reading:** Ephesians 4:1-6**Alleluia:** Luke 7:16**Gospel:** John 6:1-15

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