



SYMPOSIUM OF EPISCOPAL CONFERENCES OF AFRICA AND MADAGASCAR

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GIVING THANKS FOR A YEAR OF PETRINE SERVICE
Message to His Holiness Pope Leo XIV

The Church, Family of God in Africa, joins the Universal Church in joyful thanksgiving to Almighty God as His Holiness Pope Leo XIV celebrates the first anniversary of His Pontificate on this blessed day of 8 May 2026, the Feast of Our Lady of Pompeii.

On this providential day one year ago, under the loving gaze of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Church received with gratitude the generous acceptance by His Holiness of the mission entrusted to him as Successor of Peter. From the very beginning of His Petrine ministry, Pope Leo XIV has guided the People of God with simplicity, wisdom, compassion, and evangelical courage.

Throughout this first year of His Pontificate, His witness of faith and humility has become a source of hope for the Church and for the world. His tireless appeals for peace, reconciliation, justice, and human fraternity have touched hearts across nations and renewed confidence in the Gospel of Christ, especially among those who suffer from war, poverty, displacement, and social injustice.

The Church in Africa remains profoundly grateful for the Apostolic Visit of His Holiness to the continent. His presence among the African peoples was not merely a pastoral journey, but also a powerful sign of communion, closeness, and encouragement. He came to Africa as a true Apostle of Christ and Messenger of Peace, strengthening the faith of the people, comforting the afflicted, inspiring the youth, and reaffirming the dignity of every human person.

The words and gestures of His Holiness have already borne abundant spiritual fruits within the local Churches. They have renewed missionary zeal, encouraged reconciliation where wounds and divisions persist, deepened solidarity among ecclesial communities, and strengthened the Church's commitment to justice, peace, and integral human development. His paternal voice continues to resonate in the hearts of the faithful, calling all to walk together in synodality, hope, and fidelity to the Gospel.

As the Church, Family of God in Africa, SECAM renews its filial closeness, prayers, and full communion with His Holiness. The Church in Africa entrusts His ministry to the loving protection of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of the Church and Our Lady of Pompeii, praying that she may continue to intercede for him and sustain him with grace and strength in his universal mission.

May the Lord abundantly bless His Holiness with wisdom, good health, serenity, and the enduring joy of the Holy Spirit as he continues to guide the Church along the paths of peace, unity, and salvation.

Ad multos annos, Holy Father.

† **Fridolin Cardinal Ambongo**
Archbishop of Kinshasa
President of SECAM

