



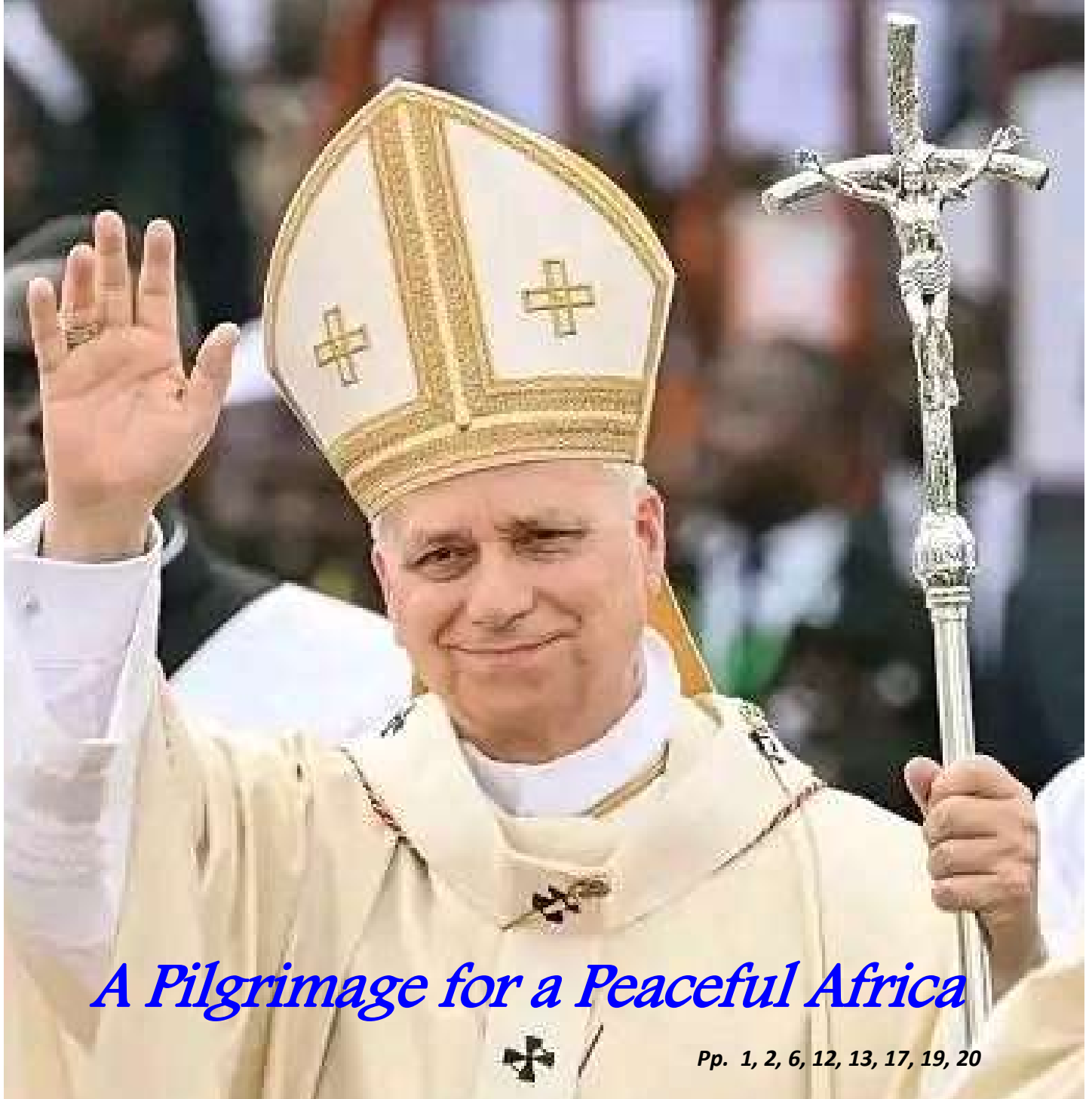
SECAM NEWS

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POPE LEO XIV IN AFRICA



A Pilgrimage for a Peaceful Africa

Pp. 1, 2, 6, 12, 13, 17, 19, 20

THE HOLY FATHER IN AFRICA: A TRIBUTE TO THE ROOTS OF WESTERN CHRISTIANITY AND THE GROWTH OF THE CHURCH TODAY



The Holy Father's historic pastoral visit to Africa from 13 to 23 April 2026, is rich in symbolism. It was his first ordinary apostolic journey (excluding visits to Turkey and Libya, which were of a different nature). Choosing Africa as the starting point for his pastoral visits was an intentional gesture to pay tribute to the Church in Africa for two main reasons.

Firstly, through this visit, the Holy Father aimed to honour the ancient roots of African Christianity. By visiting Africa, particularly North Africa (Hippo, now Annaba, in Algeria), Pope Leo XIV emphasised that Christianity was rooted in Africa long before it became the dominant religion in Europe. Western Christianity, at its origins, draws from traditions that are fundamentally African. Africa is not peripheral to Western Christianity; it is part of its foundational history. Many major Western Christian traditions, including the Latin liturgy and theologians such as Tertullian, Cyprian, and Saint Augustine of Hippo, originated in North Africa. Their works form the backbone of Western Christian theology. Africa is truly a land of Christian roots, with the Greek tradition also developing there, especially in Egypt (Alexandria) and Ethiopia.

Secondly, with this visit, the Holy Father wished to highlight the rapidly growing demographic region of Africa as a centre of spiritual energy and wisdom capable of enriching the entire Catholic Church. While early

Christianity has deep roots in North Africa, the current Catholic Church is experiencing remarkable growth in sub-Saharan Africa, represented during this visit by Angola, Cameroon, and Equatorial Guinea. This journey made clear that Africa is no longer merely a 'missionary field', but a vibrant and central heartland of global Catholic faith.

This visit was seen as an invitation from the Holy Father to the Church in Africa, especially Sub-Saharan Africa, to follow in the footsteps of the ancient Church in North Africa by engaging in missionary aid to the West, where the Church is diminishing in number and facing the effects of secularism. This invitation was received with joy, as it not only reminds us of the Lord's command, 'Go and make disciples of all nations...' (Matthew 28:19-20), but also serves as an act of gratitude, particularly to Europe, which evangelised Sub-Saharan Africa.

The Holy Father was warmly received across Africa. During his visit to four countries, Pope Leo XIV addressed the Church in Africa and all Africans, delivering a message rooted in peace, interreligious dialogue, and solidarity with the poor. By visiting nations facing significant challenges, from poverty to political instability, the Holy Father highlighted the exploitation of Africa's resources and emphasised the urgent need for ethical development. He condemned both local despots



and foreign exploitation, calling for a more just and responsible approach to Africa's growth.

The Holy Father also invited African youth to reject corruption and the pursuit of quick gains, urging them to become architects of resilience and builders of a better future. This visit reinforced the understanding that the vibrant Church in Africa is not merely a consumer of theology but a creator of its own future, contributing her rich values of faith, family, solidarity, and hospitality to the universal Church.

We are grateful for the Holy Father's enriching visit to our continent. Nothing will be the same in Africa after this visit. We believe it will inspire renewed efforts in evangelisation, social justice, and the empowerment of African Catholics to witness to the Gospel values in their daily lives. It will also encourage us to honour the Christian name through solidarity with the poor, fulfilling obligations toward the State, supporting local development initiatives, and engaging in responsible political action, while rejecting

injustice, corruption, and illicit wealth.

The Church in Africa, at every level, took this occasion to express her spiritual solidarity and unconditional support for the Holy Father's ministry, especially in these challenging times. She prayed that he might remain steadfast in his mission to strengthen faith, promote unity, and uphold peace, dignity, and sincere dialogue among nations.

His visit to Africa also provided a meaningful opportunity to celebrate his first anniversary as the successor of Saint Peter. The Church across the continent gathered in prayer, offering heartfelt wishes for abundant blessings, strength, and prosperity in his Petrine mission.

Africa will be forever grateful to God and to the Holy Father for the blessing of this visit.

Rev. Fr. Rafael Simbine Junior
Secretary General of SECAM

POPE LEO HAS APPOINTED SEVEN BISHOPS FOR THE CHURCH IN AFRICA

Most Rev. Isaac Jogues Gaglo



Pope Leo XIV has appointed on April 10, 2026, Bishop Isaac Jogues Kodjo Agbéménya Gaglo of Aného, apostolic administrator of the archdiocese of Lomé, Togo, as metropolitan archbishop of the same archdiocese. Bishop Isaac Jogues Gaglo was born on 7 October 1958 in Kpémé, Togo, and was ordained a priest on 9 August 1985.

Most Rev. Lawrence Oftentse Pheto



On April 10, 2026, the Holy Father has appointed the Rev. Fr. Lawrence Oftentse Pheto, of the clergy of Gaborone, Botswana, until now parish priest of St. Theresa in Lobatse and judicial vicar for the diocesan marriage tribunal, as bishop of the diocese of Francistown, Botswana. Bishop Lawrence Oftentse Pheto was born on 12 March 1976 in Ramotswa, in the diocese of Gaborone.

Most Rev. Patrick Ngwenya



On April 11, 2026, the Holy Father has appointed the Rev. Fr. Patrick Ngwenya, of the clergy of Harare, in Zimbabwe, until now parish priest of Saint Francis Xavier in Harare and coordinator of the family apostolate of the archdiocese of Harare. The elected bishop was born on 1 February 1967 in Mutare.

Most Rev. Motlatsi Meshack Phomane



Pope Leo XIV has accepted on April 14, 2026, the resignation from the pastoral care of the diocese of Bethlehem, South Africa, presented by Bishop Jan de Groef, M. Afr.

The same day, he has appointed the Rev. Fr. Motlatsi Meshack Phomane, of the clergy of the diocese of Umtata, until now parish priest of Mt. Nicholas in Libode, as bishop of the diocese of Bethlehem, South Africa. The elected bishop was born on 14 November 1975 in Tshenola, Matatiele, in the diocese of Umtata.

Most Rev. Jean-Marie Vianney Musul Masas



On April 15, 2026, the Holy Father has appointed the Rev. Fr. Jean-Marie Vianney Musul Masas, until now chancellor of the metropolitan archdiocese of Lubumbashi, Democratic Republic of the Congo, as auxiliary bishop of the same archdiocese, assigning him the titular see of Satafis. The elected bishop was born on 23 August 1974 in Fungurume, archdiocese of Lubumbashi.

Most Rev. Dennis Kofi Agbenyadzi



The Holy Father has erected on April 25, 2026, the ecclesiastical province of Berbérati, with the suffragan dioceses of Bouar, Mbaïki, and Bossangoa, and has appointed the same day Bishop Dennis Kofi Agbenyadzi, S.M.A., until now bishop of Berbérati, as metropolitan archbishop of the same province. Most Rev. Dennis Kofi Agbenyadzi, S.M.A., was born on 9 October 1964 in Kadjebi-Akan, diocese of Jasikan, Volta Region, Ghana.

Most Rev. Joseph Samedi



Pope Léo XIV has appointed on April 25, the Rev. Fr. Joseph Samedi, S.J., until now director of the Pope Francis School Complex and superior of the Society of Jesus in Bangui, as coadjutor archbishop of Bangui, Central African Republic. The elected bishop was born on 20 December 1971 in Mongoumba, in the diocese of M’Baïki, Central African Republic.

Nuncio Libya: Archbishop Wojciech Zaluski

On April 25, 2026 the Holy Father has appointed Archbishop Wojciech Zaluski, titular of Diocletiana, as apostolic nuncio in El Libya.

Members of the Dicastery for Communication

On April 9, 2026, the Holy Father has appointed the following as members of the Dicastery for Communication: Cardinal Luis Antonio G. Tagle, pro-prefect of the Dicastery for Evangelization, Section for First Evangelization and the New Particular Churches; **Cardinal Fridolin Ambongo Besungu**, O.F.M. Cap., archbishop of Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of the Congo, president of the Symposium des Conférences Episcopales d’Afrique et de Madagascar; **Cardinal Cristóbal López Romero**, S.D.B., archbishop of Rabat, Morocco; Cardinal Filipe Neri António Sebastião do Rosário Ferrão, archbishop of Goa and Damão, India, president of the Federation of Asian Bishops’ Conferences; Cardinal José Tolentino de Mendonça, prefect of the Dicastery for Culture and Education; Archbishop Salvatore Fisichella, pro-prefect of the Dicastery for Evangelization, Section for Fundamental Questions regarding Evangelization in the World; Archbishop Ryan Jimenez P. of Agaña, Guam; **Bishop Bernardin Francis Mfumbasa** of Kondo, Tanzania, president of the Pan African Episcopal Committee for Communications; Bishop Marcelino Antonio M. Maralit of San Pablo, Philippines, president of the Office of Social Communications of the Federation of Asian Bishops’ Conferences; Bishop Lizardo Estrada Herrera, O.S.A., auxiliary bishop and vicar general of Cuzco, Peru, secretary general of the Consejo Episcopal Latinoamericano y Caribeño; the Reverend Father Roberto Pasolini, O.F.M. Cap., preacher of the Papal Household; and the distinguished Dr. Helen Osman, president of SIGNIS.

CARDINAL AMBONGO ANALYSES THE POPE'S CALL FOR A PEACEFUL AFRICA

At the end of the Pope's visit to Africa on 23 April, Cardinal Fridolin Ambongo, Archbishop of Kinshasa and President of the Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar (SECAM), assessed the outcome of this apostolic journey. This took place during an interview with the Vatican media. Here is an extract from that interview.

Your Eminence, what do you think is the central theme that emerges from this apostolic journey?

I would say, strictly speaking, that the trip of Pope Leo XIV to Africa is the first of his pontificate. We are first struck by the choice of countries. Algeria first of all, a country that is more than ninety per cent Muslim, where Christians are a minority and do not always have the freedom to live out their faith or even to share it with others.

Next, Cameroon, a country experiencing some difficulties in terms of social harmony and peaceful coexistence. He went there as a messenger of peace. Then come two other countries which we consider in Africa to be rather wealthy: Angola and Equatorial Guinea. The key message was essentially one of distributive justice: the fair distribution of this financial windfall so that no son or daughter of these countries might feel excluded.

Faced with the challenges of the continent, particularly in the various countries the Pope visited, what message does he convey?

The common message is, first and foremost, the hope he offered to young people and a call to our leaders' conscience, urging them not to think only of themselves, but of their people as a whole. This appeal to conscience, wherever he went, I believe resonated quite strongly. But within the Catholic Church itself, it is this emphasis on the place of Christ in our lives. He emphasised the Eucharist. This means that if we call ourselves Catholics, we must first understand what our true identity is in the



midst of a world dominated by opposing forces and multiple religious denominations. We no longer know who teaches Jesus Christ, but we must know who we are, our identity.

What political outlook for the continent?

The Pope sought to appeal to the conscience of our leaders in Africa regarding their global responsibility. I believe that even if they did not express it officially, at least their conscience was touched, challenged.

What can we take away from the 'face' of the Catholic Church in Africa, as seen during the Pope's visit?

The Holy Father came to meet young and dynamic Churches full of hope for the future; yet these Churches are, at the same time, facing the challenges of poverty, injustice and poor governance in our countries. And the Pope's visit, precisely in the face of these challenges, is like a boost for all these countries and their people. It is therefore a message of encouragement in a context marked by major challenges.

(Extract/Vatican Media)

SECAM PRESIDENT ENCOURAGES KENYAN BISHOPS TO STRENGTHEN EVANGELIZATION AND SYNODALITY



Cardinal Fridolin Ambongo, in white, among Kenyan Bishops

The President of the Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar (SECAM), Fridolin Card. Ambongo, recently congratulates and encourages the Catholic Bishops in Kenya in their efforts to intensify evangelization, unity and synodality.

Addressing members of the Kenya Conference of Catholic Bishops in Nairobi, Nairobi, on April 14, 2026, Cardinal Fridolin Ambongo expressed gratitude for their pastoral work and praised the Church in Kenya for its maturity and historical significance.

The President of SECAM commended Kenyan bishops for their contributions in education, healthcare, and anti-corruption efforts, particularly applauding their commitment to transparency in Church fundraising. He urged them to remain steadfast in their prophetic mission for justice and integrity.

Focusing on evangelization, Cardinal Ambongo noted that although the Catholic Church in Africa is experiencing rapid growth, millions remain unreached. He emphasized the urgency of

proclaiming the Gospel while promoting inculturation.

Cardinal Ambongo also underscored the importance of ongoing formation for clergy and laity, especially the youth, who make up more than half of Kenya's population. He called for stronger pastoral programs to guide young people and help them become active witnesses of the faith.

This visit in Kenya is taking place at "a very special time, when the whole Catholic Church is experiencing a new era, a new Pentecost, the fruit of the Synod on synodality and of the Holy Year 2025," noted SECAM President who added that this requires commitment to collaboration, sharing insights and working together towards common goals.

"Africa cannot be the Church of tomorrow without SECAM," he said, urging renewed commitment to solidarity, self-reliance and cooperation among African bishops.

SECAM News

AFRICAN BISHOPS MOURN MOST REV. BERNARDIN FRANCIS MFUMBUSA



Most Rev. Bernardin Francis Mfumbusa

The Catholic Church in Africa mourns Most Rev. Bernardin Francis Mfumbusa deceased on April 14, 2026. Following this sad news, the Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar (SECAM) issued the same day a message of condolence. Member of SECAM Standing Committee, Bishop Mfumbusa was a prominent figure in Catholic social communications in Africa.

In a statement addressed to Most Rev. Wolfgang Pisa, President of the Tanzania Episcopal Conference, Fridolin Cardinal Ambongo Besungu, President of SECAM, expressed “deep sorrow and profound grief” at the passing of the Bishop of Kondoa, Tanzania.

Bishop Mfumbusa was widely recognized for his leadership in advancing evangelization through social communications. Member of SECAM Standing Committee since August 2025, he served as President of the Pan-African Episcopal Committee for Social Communications (CEPACS). His appointment on April 9, 2026, by Pope Leo XIV to the Dicastery for Communication, Vatican City, highlighted his expertise and commitment to using media and digital platforms in the Church’s mission.

Bishop Mfumbusa’s visionary leadership

Cardinal Ambongo described the late prelate as a “shining example of pastoral dedication” and a passionate advocate for

integrating communication tools into evangelization efforts. He noted that Bishop Mfumbusa’s humility, pastoral warmth, and visionary leadership inspired many across the continent and beyond.

Bishop Mfumbusa’s predecessor as CEPACS President, Most Rev. Emmanuel Adetoyese Badejo, Bishop of Oyo Diocese, Nigeria, paid tribute to “a real gentleman” highlighting his “competence in social communications and availability to serve the Church in Africa”.

The condolence message extended sympathies to the Tanzania Episcopal Conference, the Diocese of Kondoa, and the late bishop’s family and collaborators.

“May his soul rest in eternal peace, and may his legacy continue to inspire the Church’s mission of evangelization through new media,” the statement concluded.

Bishop Mfumbusa’s passing marks a significant loss for the African Church, particularly in the field of social communications, where his influence helped shape a more dynamic and connected evangelization approach.

The founding Bishop of the Diocese of Kondoa was laid to rest on April 22, 2026.

SECAM News

TRIBUTE TO MOST REVEREND BERNARDIN FRANCIS MFUMBUSA

Your Eminences and Excellences,

Reverend Fathers and Sisters,

Distinguished Guests,

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

It is with heavy hearts yet with deep gratitude to God that we gather today to celebrate the life of our brother, Most Rev. Bernardin Francis Mfumbusa, Bishop of Kondo, Tanzania. Kindly allow me, on the behalf of the Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar (SECAM), to pay tribute to the life and legacy of Bishop Mfumbusa, a shepherd whose ministry radiated wisdom, humility, and an unwavering commitment to the Gospel.

The passing of Bishop Mfumbusa marks a profound loss not only for his Diocese and the Church in Tanzania, but for the Church in Africa and the global community he faithfully served. As first Bishop of Kondo, he laid strong pastoral and institutional foundations, guiding his flock with clarity of vision and fatherly care since his episcopal consecration in 2011, following his priestly ordination in 1992 for the Diocese of Dodoma.

Dedicated scholar and expert of communication, Bishop Mfumbusa distinguished himself as a leading voice in the field of social communications. He generously placed his talents at the service of education and formation. Indeed, at St. Augustine University of Tanzania, he held key leadership roles, including Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences and Deputy Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs. Through these roles, he shaped minds and mentored future leaders, always emphasizing integrity, excellence and service.

Bishop Mfumbusa's leadership extended far beyond the classroom and the confines of his diocese. As President of the Pan-African Episcopal Committee for Social Communications (CEPACS), mandated during the SECAM Plenary Assembly in Kigali in 2025, he championed a bold vision for evangelization in Africa through communication. He recognized early the transformative potential of digital media, social networks, and



emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence. With foresight and pastoral sensitivity, he urged the Church to embrace these tools not merely as instruments, but as spaces of encounter, dialogue and proclamation.

His recent appointment by Pope Leo XIV to the Dicastery for Communication was a clear affirmation of his expertise and dedication. It was also a sign of the trust the universal Church placed in his ability to contribute to its mission in this interconnected world.

Our late brother was a man of deep faith, gentle spirit and pastoral warmth. He fostered interfaith coexistence, promoted education and consistently uplifted the dignity of every person he encountered. His leadership style was marked not by authority alone, but by listening, accompaniment and genuine care.

In mourning his passing, we also celebrate a life poured out in service. His legacy endures in the countless lives he touched, the institutions he strengthened and the vision he cast for a Church that speaks meaningfully to the contemporary world.

May the soul of Bishop Bernardin Francis Mfumbusa rest in eternal peace. And may his witness continue to inspire the Church in Africa and beyond to proclaim the Gospel with courage, creativity and hope.

Kondo (Tanzania), 22 April 2026

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

SECAM-AU CAPACITY-BUILDING TRAINING FOR PEACEFUL ELECTIONS IN ZAMBIA



Participants of this workshop in Lusaka

As Zambia approaches its general elections in August 2026, a high-level capacity-building training was held in Lusaka, Zambia, from April 20-21, 2026, to promote a transparent and democratic election process.

The workshop, focused on peacebuilding, election monitoring and democratic transitions, marks an important step in the partnership between the Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar (SECAM) and the African Union (AU).

The training gathered thirty-five (35) participants including the Electoral authorities and Church leaders such as Diocesan coordinators of Justice and Peace commissions, clergy, religious, youth and women leaders. This event is one of the outcomes of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed in February 2026, aiming to promote good governance, peace and credible elections across the continent.

Promote credible elections

The training featured a range of sessions on election observation methodologies, emphasizing their importance in ensuring

transparency and public confidence. Mr. Samuel Atuobi, Senior Elections Officer at the AU's Department of Political Affairs, underscored the need for elections to be not just administrative exercises but reflections of the people's will, anchored in principles of fairness, freedom, and transparency. The workshop also covered various phases of the electoral cycle, from pre-election assessments to post-election dispute resolutions, highlighting key indicators of credible elections.

Additionally, the training emphasized ethical responsibility, with input from the Zambia Conference of Catholic Bishops (ZCCB) and Caritas Zambia. Participants discussed the Church's role in peacebuilding and election observation, drawing on regional experiences from Zimbabwe and the broader framework of international and continental standards like the African Charter on Democracy and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

SECAM News

DRC: WOMEN TRAINED TO FIGHT DISCRIMINATORY PRACTICES



Participants of this Training/ACEAC

In Kinshasa, approximately fifty women community leaders were trained from April 20 to 25, 2026, on human rights and combating discriminatory practices.

In several communities in the DRC, discriminatory practices persist and affect the most vulnerable people, including women, children, people with disabilities, people with albinism, and Indigenous peoples.

It is in this context that this workshop was organized by Development and Peace Caritas Canada, in partnership with the National Episcopal Conference of Congo (CENCO), through its Justice and Peace Commission. Initiated within the framework of the Electoral Education and Inclusive Governance Program in the Democratic Republic of Congo (EEGIR), the workshop brought together women from various provinces across the country: national and provincial coordinators, members of the women's network "Dynamiques Femmes", and representatives of women's associations and movements.

The main objective was to prepare these women to, in turn, train other local actors, in order to reach and

defend the rights of a greater number of people, particularly women, girls, and marginalized groups.

When Women Take Action

During the workshop, participants explored concepts related to human dignity, human rights, and protection mechanisms. They also analysed the different forms of discrimination present in their communities and identified concrete ways to address them.

A pedagogical approach centered on interaction allowed participants to share their experiences and propose solutions tailored to their specific contexts. Particular emphasis was placed on developing practical skills in mediation, conflict management and community engagement.

The organisers reiterated that promoting human rights cannot be limited to written documents. It requires concrete commitment and a change in daily behaviors. Participants pledged to demonstrate empathy, critical thinking and leadership in their actions. The provincial coordinators discussed the implementation and monitoring of activities in the field.

ACEAC Communication

IN CAMEROON, LEO XIV CALLS FOR IMPROVED GOVERNANCE



Pope Leo XIV presiding a Eucharist in Cameroon, April 2026 (©Vatican Media)

On April 15, Pope Leo XIV, on an apostolic visit, delivered his first address on Cameroonian soil, at the Unity Palace in Yaoundé. He made a strong appeal to the authorities, civil society, and the diplomatic corps, urging them to improve governance, prevent violence, and restore hope to the youth.

Leo XIV is the third pope to visit Cameroon in 40 years, and this visit marks the fourth pontiff's visit to the country.

The Deputy Secretary General of the Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar (SECAM), Rev. Fr. Zéphirin Moubé, represented SECAM Secretariat during this memorable visit. After the welcoming ceremony at Yaoundé-Nsimalen Airport, the Holy Father paid a courtesy visit to President Paul Biya at the Unity Palace, also known as the "Étoundi Palace."

Healing Wounds

"Serving one's country means dedicating oneself, with a clear mind and an upright conscience, to the common good of all the people: the majority and the

minorities, in their mutual harmony," declared the successor of St. Peter at the presidential palace in Yaoundé.

On the second day of his trip to the country, Pope Leo traveled to Bamenda, an Anglophone region in the Northwest of Cameroon affected by a security crisis. There, he expressed his closeness to the people. During a meeting for peace at St. Joseph's Cathedral, the Pope denounced the violence and urged everyone to be peacemakers: "Be the oil that is poured on human wounds."

For a decade, worshippers in this region have been suffering from violence linked to the "Anglophone crisis," which also affects the neighboring Southwest region. This conflict between separatist rebels and the army has already claimed more than 6,000 lives and displaced over a million people.

Following his peace meeting, Pope Leo XIV presided over a Mass at Bamenda Airport, which had been renovated after being closed in 2019 following an attack by separatist rebels on a Camair-Co flight.

C. A.

IN EQUATORIAL GUINEA, POPE LEO XIV DENOUNCED EXCLUSION



Pope Leo XIV in Equatorial Guinea, April 2026 (©Vatican Media)

During his visit to Equatorial Guinea from April 21 to 23, 2026, Pope Leo XIV denounced exclusion and called for hope.

On April 21 in Malabo, the Holy Father met with authorities, representatives of civil society, and the diplomatic corps to express his solidarity and encouragement to Equatorial Guinea.

In his address, he recalled the words of the Constitution *Gaudium et spes* of the Second Vatican Council, emphasizing the unity of human joys and sufferings, and the importance of living in a political world in harmony with the teachings of Christ.

The Pope also spoke of the importance of love for one's neighbor, especially the poor, and the call of Christians to positively influence earthly society while aspiring to the heavenly city. Addressing modern challenges, he emphasized the need for a just social policy, an ethic founded on solidarity and respect for human dignity, while also highlighting the dangers of exclusion and growing inequality.

“Builders of a Future of Hope”

Today, “exclusion is the new face of social injustice,” lamented Leo XIV, who therefore declared that it is the “imperative duty of civil authorities and good policy to remove obstacles to integral human development, of which the universal destination of goods and solidarity are fundamental principles.”

In Mongomo, during Mass celebrated at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception on April 22, the Pope urged the Christian faithful of Equatorial Guinea to become “builders of a future of hope.” Reflecting on the 170 years of evangelization in the country, he called on everyone to live an active faith, capable of transforming society and promoting human dignity.

That same day, during a visit to Bata prison, the Holy Father reassured the inmates, saying, “You are not alone” and “No one is excluded from God’s love.”

C. A.

WOMEN HONORED FOR THEIR ROLE IN SERVING THE CHURCH AND SOCIETY



Illustration photo/C.A.

Most Rev. Claudio Lurati, Apostolic Vicar of Alexandria, Egypt, participated in a celebration honoring a number of women, organized by the Council of Churches in Egypt, in the presence of church officials and families.

The honorees included Sister Chiara Latif, of the Franciscan Elizabethan Sisters and head of the Pastoral Office and the Youth Committee of the Diocese, and Mrs. Teresa Gabra, a servant at the Basilica of Our Lady of Heliopolis, in recognition of their tangible contributions to the service of the Church and society.

The event was also attended by Monsignor Antoine Tawfik, Vicar of the

Latin Church in Egypt, along with several members of the Jubilee Committee, the Youth Committee of the Diocese, and the families of the honorees.

On this occasion, the Latin Patriarchate of Egypt expressed its heartfelt congratulations to the honored mothers, praising their pioneering role in giving and dedication, and offering prayers to God through the intercession of the Virgin Mary, that He may bless their lives and grant them the strength to continue their mission of serving the Church and society with love and devotion.

Lemessenger-online.com

PEACEBUILDING AND ADVOCACY WORKSHOP IN SOUTH SUDAN



Participants of this workshop/AMECEA

The Association of Member Episcopal Conferences in Eastern Africa (AMECEA), in partnership with the Sudan and South Sudan Catholic Bishops' Conference (SSSCBC), has launched a five-day peacebuilding and advocacy workshop in South Sudan.

The training, which began on April 20, brings together participants from diocesan Justice and Peace Commissions, Caritas, and Catholic media to strengthen grassroots efforts in peacebuilding, reconciliation, and civic engagement.

Held under the theme of equipping participants with practical tools and skills for diocesan peace strategies, the workshop comes at a crucial time as South Sudan faces ongoing local tensions and uncertainty over delayed democratic elections. The program focuses on conflict analysis, advocacy, and community dialogue, while also guiding participants in developing action plans tailored to their local contexts.

Speaking at the opening session, Rev. Fr. Paul Mung'athia Igweta of AMECEA described the gathering as both a training forum and a platform for peace advocacy. He recalled the Church's continued commitment since 2018 to support South Sudan through

prayer, international collaboration, and engagement with governance institutions. While acknowledging progress, he stressed that lasting peace requires sustained effort and the Church's strong moral voice in promoting justice and social cohesion.

Fr. Louis Romano of SSSCBC highlighted the importance of unity and collaboration, noting that participants' shared experiences would enrich discussions and outcomes. He encouraged active engagement and dialogue throughout the sessions.

The workshop also aims to support preparations for peaceful and credible elections, urging participants to promote civic responsibility within their communities. Organizers emphasized that lessons from other countries in the region could inform local strategies.

As the workshop concludes, participants are expected to implement concrete peace initiatives in their dioceses, reinforcing the Church's role in fostering dialogue, resilience, and long-term stability in South Sudan.

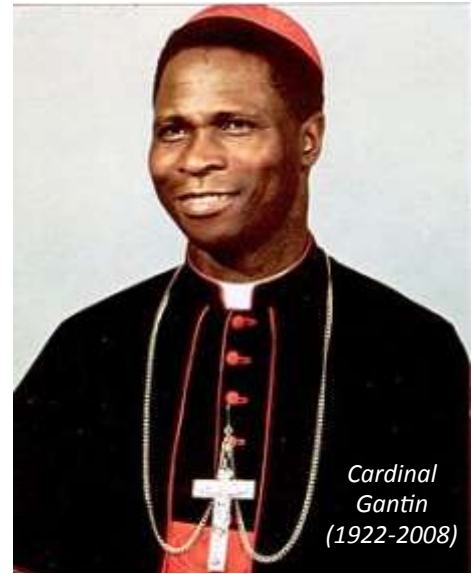
SECAM News, with Ginaba Lino

SECAM News editorial team offers you below some information from the episcopal conferences of West Africa.

BURKINA FASO: The Burkina-Niger Priestly Fraternity (FSBN) held its 33rd General Assembly from April 14 to 17, 2026, in Kaya, Burkina Faso, under the theme: “The Priest, Sower of Hope, in a World of Rapid Socio-Cultural Change.” Welcomed with gratitude by Bishop Théophile Naré of Kaya, this assembly brought together 302 priests from Burkina Faso and Niger to reflect on the mission of the priest as a witness and sower of hope in a context marked by violence and social challenges. The bishops, including Bishop Gabriel Sayaogo and Bishop Prosper Bonaventure Ky, emphasized that priests must embody fraternity, spread joy, and bring Christ's salvation to the heart of their communities.

CÔTE D’IVOIRE: In the fervor of Easter, the Diocese of Agboville celebrated the episcopal ordination of Bishop Darius Assandé Ekou, conferred by the Apostolic Nuncio to Côte d’Ivoire, Archbishop Mauricio Rueda Beltz. In his homily, the Nuncio recalled that the ministry of a bishop is first and foremost service and the proclamation of the Word of God. His predecessor, Bishop Alexis Touabli Youlo, praised a Church “vibrant and rich in its diversity,” composed of the Abbey, Akye, Agni, Baoulé, and Krobou peoples. Appointed on February 27, 2026, by Pope Leo XIV, Bishop Ekou becomes the second Bishop of Agboville. He was born in 1968 in Bongouanou and ordained a priest in 1996.

BENIN: The “Cardinal Bernardin Gantin Prize,” launched in December 2025, entered its final phase in March with the participation of 317 children from Africa and beyond. Through drawings inspired by the encyclical *Laudato si’* and suggesting eco-responsible actions to protect the environment, these young people, aged 5 to 18, are challenging leaders and the general public. Forty works have been shortlisted, and the jury will select twelve winners on April 15, divided between children with and without disabilities. The awards ceremony is



Cardinal
Gantin
(1922-2008)

scheduled for May 12, the eve of the 18th anniversary of Cardinal Gantin’s passing.

GHANA: Bishop Simon Kofi Appiah was consecrated and installed as head of the Diocese of Jasikan on April 11, 2026, during a Eucharistic celebration at St. Peter Claver Cathedral. In his homily, the principal consecrator, Mathew Kwafi Gyamfi, invited the new bishop to live a life of charity without discrimination. Appointed on December 23, 2025, by Pope Leo XIV, Bishop Appiah becomes the second bishop of the Diocese of Jasikan, located in the Oti Region. He was born in 1964 and ordained a priest in 1990.

TOGO: The ceremony of canonical possession of the Archdiocese of Lomé by Most Rev. Isaac Jogues Kodjo Agbéménya Gaglo is scheduled on May 30, 2026, in the Sacred Heart Cathedral of Lomé. This upcoming event followed the appointment of Bishop Gaglo by Pope Leo XIV as Archbishop of Lomé (Togo) on April 10, 2026. Previously Bishop of Aného and Apostolic Administrator of Lomé, Bishop Gaglo becomes the sixth Ordinary of the Metropolitan See, vacant since the death of Bishop Nicodème Barrigah-Benissan in August 2024.

*SECAM News,
With CERAO/RECOWA*

IN ALGERIA, POPE LEO XIV, "PILGRIM OF PEACE"



Pope Leo XIV addressing authorities in Algiers, April 2026 (Vatican Media)

First destination on Pope Leo XIV's first visit to Africa: Algeria, from April 13 to 15, 2026. A deeply meaningful pilgrimage in the footsteps of an African, Saint Augustine, Doctor of the Church, his spiritual father, as this pontiff is a member of the Order of Saint Augustine. During his stay, he called for unity, justice, and peace.

Arriving in Algiers on April 13, the Holy Father undertook a series of visits and activities. After being welcomed at Algiers Houari Boumediene Airport, he paid homage to the martyrs of the Algerian War of Independence at the Martyr's Memorial (Maqam Echahid). "I come among you as a pilgrim of peace," the Pope declared during his meeting on April 13 with authorities, civil society, and the diplomatic corps at the Djamaa el Djazair Conference Center. "The true strength of a country lies in the cooperation of everyone in achieving the common good," he affirmed.

To the authorities and civil society, the Pope then addressed them, saying: "The authorities are called not to dominate, but to serve the people and their development. The criterion for political action therefore lies in justice, without which there is no authentic peace, and is expressed through the promotion of fair and dignified conditions for all."



Pope Leo XIV visiting a care home for the elderly in Annaba, Algeria, April 2026 (Vatican Media)

Leo XIV visited the Augustinian Missionary Sisters' Reception Center in Bab El Oued, 16 kilometers from Algiers. There, he paid tribute to the memory of the nuns killed during the Algerian Civil War. Returning to the lands once traversed by Saint Augustine on April 14, Pope Leo I visited the archaeological site of Hippo Regius, now Annaba, where he had already been twice, in 2001 and 2013, before returning this year as pontiff.

"The Pope's visit to Annaba, the ancient Hippo Regius, mobilized the entire city, Christians and Muslims alike," Bishop Michel Guillaud of Constantine-Hippo told Vatican News.

C.A.

IN SEYCHELLES, EPISCOPAL ORDINATION OF LANDRY RASAMISON



Card. Ambongo, during this episcopal ordination/State House Seychelles

The episcopal ordination of Bishop Landry Philippe Rasamison OFM Cap took place on 12 April 2026, Sunday of Divine Mercy, in Victoria, Seychelles. He had been appointed Bishop of Port Victoria (Seychelles) by Pope Leo XIV on 21 February 2026.

Three cardinals presided over the consecration: Cardinal Fridolin Ambongo, Archbishop of Kinshasa, President of the Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar (SECAM) and a confrere of Bishop Landry in the Capuchin religious order OFM; Cardinal Maurice Piat, Bishop Emeritus of Mauritius; and Cardinal Désiré Tsarahazana of Toamasina.

During his homily, Cardinal Ambongo invited the Church to see in this ordination a profound sign of God's tenderness towards his people. In the spirit of mercy, he urged the new bishop to be a man of closeness, compassion and hope.

Also present were the Pope's representative, Bishop Tomasz Grysa, accompanied by his secretary José Israel Cruz Ascarraman; and bishops from neighbouring islands, bearing witness to the ecclesial unity of the various dioceses.

Also present from Madagascar were Bishop Fabien Raharilamboniaina, Bishop of Morondava and President of the Episcopal Conference of Madagascar (CEM); Bishop Donatien Francis Randriamalala, Bishop of Ambanja, Bishop Landry's home diocese; and Fr Séraphin Rafanomezantsoa, Coordination Secretary of the CEM. Also present were Capuchin friars, diocesan priests and numerous faithful who had travelled from far and wide.

The faithful of the Seychelles joyfully welcomed their new bishop, whose motto is: "My grace is sufficient for you." (2 Cor 12:9)

SECAM News

IN ANGOLA, POPE LEO XIV CALLS FOR DIALOGUE AND SOCIAL COMMITMENT



Archbishop José Manuel Imbamba of Saurimo, Angola, and 2nd Vice-President of SECAM, presenting a new chalice to Pope Leo XIV, during his visit to Angola, April 2026 (©Vatican Media)

Pope Leo XIV visited Angola from 18 to 21 April 2026. This apostolic visit was part of a process of dialogue, hope and social commitment.

In Luanda, on Saturday 18 April, the Holy Father delivered a moving address to the Angolan authorities, representatives of civil society and the diplomatic corps, highlighting Angola's spiritual and human richness.

In his address, the Pope praised the joy and hope that characterise the Angolan people, despite the difficulties and challenges they face. He also denounced the harmful effects of the exploitation of natural resources, calling for a profound transformation of development models.

The Holy Father emphasised the need for sincere dialogue to overcome conflicts, calling for a reconciliation that transcends personal interests to embrace the common good.

"Together, you can make Angola a project of hope," concluded the Supreme Pontiff, invoking divine blessing upon

the country.

"Healing wounds"

During the Mass he presided over on Sunday 19 April in Kilamba, a suburb of Luanda, the Pope urged citizens to be "able to heal wounds and rekindle hope".

In his homily, Pope Leo XIV stated that Angola needs all its daughters and sons "who have at heart the desire to break away from their own lives and give them to one another, to commit to mutual love and forgiveness, to build spaces of fraternity and peace, and to perform acts of compassion and solidarity towards those who need it most".

During his visit, the Successor of St Peter emphasised the need for close collaboration between the Church and the State, particularly in the health and education sectors, where joint projects are already underway to improve public services and the well-being of the population.

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POPE LEO XIV IN AFRICA

