



SECAM NEWS

YEAR 2026

MAY

N°05

CCEE-SECAM SEMINAR IN LUXEMBOURG

Continental Pathways of Synodality

Pp. 2, 20



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CONTINENTAL PATHWAYS OF SYNODALITY

Bishops from Africa and Europe have gathered in Luxembourg from May 25 to 28 under the theme "Evangelization and Synodality: Continental Pathways" to reflect on the future of the Church's mission in an increasingly complex and interconnected world. In his opening remarks, Fridolin Cardinal Ambongo offered a powerful call for deeper communion, shared missionary responsibility and renewed ecclesial cooperation between the two continents.

Members of the Council of Bishops' Conferences of Europe (CCEE) and of the Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar (SECAM) held their 10th CCEE-SECAM Seminar in Luxembourg.

The opening remarks delivered by Cardinal Ambongo at the seminar offer more than ceremonial diplomacy. They articulate a compelling vision for the future of the Catholic Church: one rooted in synodality, missionary reciprocity and authentic ecclesial partnership between Africa and Europe.

For many generations, said the President of SECAM, "Europe generously sent missionaries to Africa, planting the seeds of the Gospel that today continue to bear abundant fruit throughout the continent". At the same time, he added, "Africa increasingly recognizes its own missionary responsibility toward the universal Church through

the growing contribution of African priests, religious, missionaries, and lay faithful who now serve in many dioceses and ecclesial communities across Europe".

Synodality is a concrete path toward unity

The theme "Evangelization and Synodality: Continental Pathways," arrives at a decisive moment in global Catholicism. Synodality, the call to listen, discern, and walk together, has become central to the Church's self-understanding under the pontificate of Pope Leo XIV. Cardinal Ambongo rightly insists that evangelization and synodality are inseparable. A Church that listens deeply is better equipped to proclaim the Gospel convincingly in a fractured and skeptical world.

At a time marked by polarization, migration crises, declining vocations in some regions, and cultural uncertainty, this seminar proposes a different model for the Church's future: collaboration rather than competition, communion rather than isolation.

Cardinal Ambongo's remarks remind Catholics everywhere that synodality is not an abstract ecclesial slogan, but is a concrete path toward unity, shared mission, and renewed hope for the universal Church.

Rev. Fr. Rafael Simbine Junior
Secretary General of SECAM

POPE LEO HAS APPOINTED FIVE BISHOPS FOR THE CHURCH IN AFRICA

Most Rev. Linus Ngenomesho



On May, 11, 2026, the Holy Father has appointed the Rev. Fr. Linus Ngenomesho, O.M.I., until now apostolic administrator of the apostolic vicariate of Rundu, Namibia, as vicar apostolic of the same circumscription. Bishop Linus Ngenomesho was born on 22 August 1969 in Omatando, archdiocese of Windhoek, Namibia. He studied philosophy and theology at Saint Joseph's Oblates Scholasticate in Cedera, South Africa.

Most Rev. John Alphonse Asiedu



The Holy Father has elevated on May, 12, 2026, the apostolic vicariate of Donkorkrom, Ghana, to a diocese, with the same name and territorial configuration, making it a suffragan of the metropolitan see of Accra. The same day, he has appointed Bishop John Alphonse Asiedu, S.V.D., until now vicar apostolic of Donkorkrom, as first bishop of Donkorkrom.

Most Rev. Simon Peter Kamomoe



On May, 13, 2026, Pope Leo XIV has appointed Bishop Simon Peter Kamomoe, until now auxiliary bishop and apostolic administrator sede vacante of the diocese of Wote, Kenya, as bishop of the same see. Bishop Simon Peter Kamomoe was born on 26 November 1962 in Gatundu, and was ordained a priest on 18 June 1994.

Most Rev. Jean Martial A. Kouamé



The Holy Father has appointed on May, 13, 2026, the Rev. Fr. Aguia Jean Martial Arnaud Kouamé, until now parish priest of Saint Ambroise Ma vigne, Ma Vie, as auxiliary bishop of the metropolitan archdiocese of Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire, assigning him the titular see of Sutunurca. The elected bishop was born on 26 March 1977 in Abidjan.

Most Rev. Miguel Angel N. B. Etete



On May 14, 2026, the Holy Father has appointed Bishop Miguel Angel Nguema Bee Etete, S.D.B., until now apostolic administrator of Bata and bishop of the diocese of Ebebiyin, as bishop of Bata, Equatorial Guinea. Bishop Miguel Angel Nguema Bee Etete, was born on 13 July 1969 in Bata, Equatorial Guinea. He was ordained a priest on 24 July 2000.

MAGNIFICA HUMANITAS: “LET’S NOT FEAR ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE, BUT CONSTANTLY KEEP THE QUESTION OF THE HUMAN IN PLAY”



Pope Leo XIV at the promulgation of his first Encyclical Letter *Magnifica Humanitas*/Vatican Media

At the Vatican, on May 25, 2026, Pope Leo XIV presented and promulgated his first encyclical, [Magnifica Humanitas](#), calling for the “disarmament” of artificial intelligence and urging the world to place human dignity at the centre of technological progress.

Speaking before Church leaders, scientists, engineers and public officials, Pope Leo XIV described artificial intelligence as one of the defining challenges of the modern age.

Drawing parallels with Pope Leo XIII’s landmark 1891 encyclical *Rerum Novarum*, which addressed the social consequences of the Industrial Revolution, Pope Leo XIV said humanity now faces a transformation “of similar magnitude, with perhaps even greater consequences.”

“Artificial intelligence already touches many areas of our lives and affects decisions that shape human coexistence,” the Pope said, warning against autonomous weapons systems, discriminatory algorithms, and technologies that deepen exclusion and injustice.

“Artificial intelligence needs to be disarmed”

The Holy Father emphasized that the Church is not opposed to innovation, but seeks ethical safeguards to ensure technology serves the common good.

“Artificial intelligence needs to be disarmed,” he declared, explaining that AI must be freed from “logics that turn it into an instrument of domination, exclusion and death.” He insisted that “when technology weakens our critical sense, peace itself is at risk”.

Recalling his missionary experience in Peru after devastating floods in 2017, Pope Leo XIV stressed that humanity must not only “disarm” harmful technologies but also “build” a future rooted in solidarity and hope. Citing the biblical figure Nehemiah rebuilding Jerusalem’s walls, he urged governments, developers and communities to work together “brick by brick” toward a more just society. “Let’s not fear artificial intelligence, but constantly keep the question of the human in play,” he said.

The Pope also called for a global conversation involving both technology experts and ordinary people affected by digital transformation.

Concluding the ceremony, Pope Leo XIV invited the Church and the world to become “artisans of hope,” building what he described as a “civilization of love” where technological progress respects every human person and safeguards peace.

SECAM News

“AM I MY BROTHER’S KEEPER?” (Gen 4:9)

SECAM Statement on social tensions and acts of violence targeting nationals of other African countries in South Africa

Accra (Ghana), 5 May 2026 - The Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar (SECAM), the body for communion, consultation, and coordination of the Catholic Church in Africa and the neighbouring islands, is deeply concerned about the recent events in the Republic of South Africa, which have been marked by acts of xenophobic violence against nationals of other African countries.

In these particularly grave circumstances, SECAM expresses its fraternal and ecclesial solidarity with the Southern African Catholic Bishops’ Conference (SACBC) for its prophetic stance in support of African migrants who are victims of discrimination and xenophobia. It also extends its sympathy to all victims of this violence and to their families, who have been severely affected.

At the heart of this crisis lies a fundamental challenge to the human conscience. Biblical revelation teaches that every person is created in the image and likeness of God (Gen 1:26-27), a truth that underpins the infinite dignity of every human being, regardless of their origin, nationality, tribe, culture, or migration status. SECAM strongly reiterates that this dignity must remain the primary criterion for all social organisation and public policy. Any violence directed against foreigners constitutes not only a grave violation of the human person but also a negation of the foundations of universal brotherhood and the Africa we want.

SECAM reaffirms the need for a balance between the legitimate sovereignty of states and the imperative requirement for migrants to respect the laws and customs of their host country. As the Catechism of the Catholic Church teaches: “Political authorities, for the sake of the common good for which they are responsible, may make the exercise of the right to immigrate subject to various juridical conditions, especially with regard to the immigrants’ duties toward their country of adoption. Immigrants are obliged to respect with gratitude the material and spiritual heritage of the country that receives them, to obey its laws and to assist in carrying civic burdens.” (CCC, n. 2241).

The acts of violence recently witnessed in South Africa constitute a serious violation of African principles and continental law. They undermine the fundamental rights guaranteed by the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights, notably the right to life, dignity, security, and equality before the law. They also contradict the continent’s core values, such as African solidarity, the spirit of Ubuntu – I am because we are – and the ideals of Pan-Africanism and African Renaissance.

In light of this situation, SECAM calls on the Government of the Republic of South Africa to take urgent, concrete, and sustainable measures to



Card. Ambongo

ensure the protection of all persons living on its territory, in accordance with its continental and international commitments. It urges the Government to conduct impartial investigations, identify and prosecute those responsible for these acts, put an end to all forms of vigilante justice, and strengthen the legitimate authority of the State.

SECAM also calls on the African Union to fully assume its role as guardian of continental values, to ensure the effective implementation of African legal instruments on human rights, and to encourage the establishment of prevention and early warning mechanisms against xenophobic violence. The credibility of Africa, which aspires to become a key player on the international stage, is at stake.

SECAM calls on people to reject all forms of violence, all rhetoric of hatred and stigmatisation, to reject discourse that divides African peoples, and to promote a culture of encounter, dialogue, and African brotherhood.

Following the example of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:30–35), we are all called to rediscover an ethic of closeness, where the stranger is not perceived as a threat but recognised as a brother or sister of whom we are the guardians.

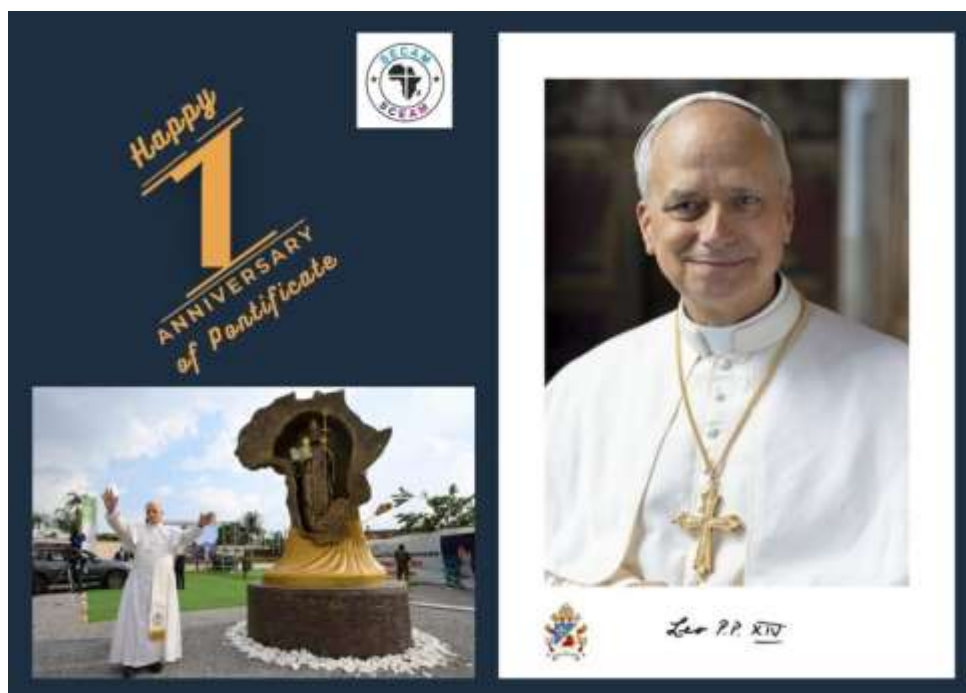
At this critical juncture, SECAM reaffirms its resolute commitment to migrants, the poor, and the most vulnerable, to promote a society founded on justice, peace, and human dignity, as well as on dialogue between African peoples and nations. It invites all men and women of good will to work tirelessly towards building a reconciled Africa, faithful to its profound vocation to be, from Cairo to Cape Town, a family of peoples united in dignity and solidarity.

Finally, SECAM assures all victims of xenophobic violence of its spiritual, pastoral, and supportive closeness: dear brothers and sisters, you are not alone; we will never abandon you!

+ Fridolin Cardinal Ambongo
Archbishop of Kinshasa
President of SECAM

GIVING THANKS FOR A YEAR OF PETRINE SERVICE

Message to His Holiness Pope Leo XIV



Accra (Ghana), 8 May 2026 - 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

SECAM CALLS ON UNIVERSITIES AND HIGHER INSTITUTES FOR EDUCATIONAL RENEWAL



Some participants of this General Assembly

The Association of Catholic Universities and Higher Institutes of Africa and Madagascar (ASUNICAM) held its general assembly on May 5 and 6, 2026, in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Catholic universities were called upon “to train a new generation of African leaders.”

The proceedings of this general assembly took place at the Limete campus of the Catholic University of Congo. The Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar (SECAM) was represented by Rev. Fr. Zéphirin Moubé, SECAM's Deputy Secretary General, responsible for evangelization.

Addressing the rectors and academic leaders, Fr. Zéphirin Moubé emphasized ASUNICAM's strategic role in the Church's mission in Africa. According to him, Catholic universities must transcend their institutional status to become true centers of excellence where faith and modernity converge.

The SECAM representative highlighted three priority areas. The first is the urgent need for an African Educational Pact, inspired by Pope Francis' Global Compact on Education, to train citizens capable of positively transforming their societies.

The second area emphasizes the preservation of Catholic identity in the face of the

challenges of secularization, recalling that the search for truth and ethical commitment must guide institutions.

Training a new generation of leaders

Finally, the third area concerns research focused on the common good. “Inspired by *Evangelii Gaudium*, our universities must adopt an outward-looking approach, that is, one oriented towards responding to social emergencies and providing solutions tailored to the ills afflicting our populations,” declared Father Moubé. He added that “universities can become laboratories where ethical and scientific responses to the complex challenges facing the continent are cultivated.”

He assured ASUNICAM of SECAM's support and then called upon members to train a new generation of African leaders combining competence, integrity, and social commitment, to build a reconciled and prosperous Africa.

Unanimously, the members of ASUNICAM re-elected Professor Fr. Léonard Santedi as interim president for another year, entrusting him with the responsibility of organizing an extraordinary general assembly in April 2027 in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire.

SECAM News

DRC: SECAM URGES WOMEN AND YOUTH TO BE AGENTS OF CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION



Participants at the opening of this workshop

A workshop on engaging women and youth in faith-based environmental campaigns for the preservation of the Congo Basin took place from May 18 to 19, 2026, at the Caritas Center in Kinshasa, in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Participants are urged to be agents of change in response to the ecological crisis.

Organized by the Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar (SECAM), in collaboration with the National Episcopal Conference of Congo (CENCO), this meeting brings together some forty participants from Kinshasa, Boma, Kisantu, and other provinces of the DRC. They were notably, representatives from CENCO, dioceses, religious congregations, Justice and Peace Commissions, ecclesial movements, universities, and several experts.

Also took part in this program, a delegation from SECAM led by the First Deputy Secretary General, Rev. Fr. Zéphirin Moubé, accompanied by Madam Mavis Anima Bonsu, and Rev. Fr. Louison Emerick Bissila Mbila, C.S.Sp.

The need for ecological conversion

At the opening of the workshop, Fr. Zéphirin Moubé emphasized that this meeting comes at a critical time for

Africa and for all of humanity, as the Congo Basin is facing increasing pressures related to climate change, deforestation and the illegal exploitation of natural resources. He stated that the Church cannot remain silent in the face of this ecological crisis and reiterated that safeguarding creation is a spiritual and moral responsibility, in accordance with Pope Francis's appeal in the encyclical *Laudato Si'*. Fr. Moubé emphasized the need for an ecological conversion rooted in faith, solidarity and collective responsibility.

The Secretary General of CENCO, Monsignor Donatien Nshole, highlighted the fundamental role of women and young people in the sustainable management of forests. According to him, women, the primary users of forest resources, hold a significant portion of the solutions to environmental challenges.

At the beginning of the opening ceremony, Madam Jeanne-Marie Abanda of the Episcopal Commission for Natural Resources (CERN) raised the challenges facing Africa, such as poverty, despite the continent's immense natural resources, and urged participants to be agents of change.

SECAM News

Preserving Human Voices and Faces : Communicate, Not Excommunicate

Reflection of Most Rev Emmanuel Adetoyese Badejo



Most Rev. Emmanuel Badejo

The Holy Father Pope Leo focused his first World Communications Day message on the interesting topic: “Preserving Human Voices and Faces. That theme alone demonstrates the Pope’s concern that we should pay attention to the dwindling role of the human face and voice in contemporary communication social relationships. Authentic communication must promote communion with God and with our fellow men and women. Bad communion does the exact opposite causing division, stress and conflict.

A worthwhile Week-long Celebration

As I often like to say we all must aim at communicating without excommunicating - meaning, without alienating others. This World Communication Day celebration is targeted at helping us to balance Faith, Humanity and Digital Presence in our day-to-day relationships and with regards to all. That is why the communications office of the Catholic Secretariat of Nigeria commendably proposed this year as in the past, an incisive and enriching week-long programme for the 2026 celebration. The aim is to ensure that whenever we engage

with the media or with others through the media we must see not to sideline, exclude, demean, hurt or abuse anyone by our communication method and content or by the choices we make? What we do on and with the social media, for example must reflect and represent well the humanity we are part of and also the faith we profess?

We must contend with the ascendancy of the elements of digital media and especially, artificial intelligence today. A lot has been said about how much these gifts of God in our time, wonderful as they are, tend to veil, supplant or even substitute the faces and voices of human beings through whom we get in contact with one another and with God. However, we must do all that is necessary to “save disappearing humanity” from the encroaching “artificialization of communication”.

Humans are Irreplaceable

Pope Leo in his message has said: “Faces and Voices are sacred”. We know that sacredness implies being holy, consecrated or being connected to a divine power. Our faces and voices constitute our personality, given to us by God so that we might live our human relationship through love. That is already a very powerful thought to ponder in the economy of relationships in the world today. The Pope writes: “Each of us possesses an irreplaceable and inimitable vocation, that originates from our own lived experience and becomes manifest through interaction with others”. That uniqueness that has defined and cemented human relationship over the ages is now under threat. The concern is that In this age of artificial intelligence and digital technology, which the Church also embraces, we must safeguard our humanity from the shortage of critical reflection and thinking, the corrosiveness of quick emotional rewards, the consideration of technology as an omniscient friend and the eventual weakening and polarization of the society



which would necessarily ensue.

Pope Leo's insight is so true. One needs only to think about people who today substitute robots for their human companions and relationships. These are only little different from those who prefer spending long hours with digital devices and gadgets rather than with fellow human beings from whom they can share warmth, values, compassion and so on. The foregoing has damaged families, friendships and even cooperatives with potential advantage to society. The fact is that there are far too many people today who simply do not understand the nuances that come with the pleasures of uncritical engagement with digital technologies and artificial intelligence and merely completely entrust themselves to these fascinating tools.

Prayer cannot be Outsourced to Machines

The challenge however does not concern human relations alone but also human relationship with God. In teaching about prayer, Jesus taught that the more personal our relationship with God is, the more effective our prayer becomes. "Truly, truly, I say to you, if you ask anything of the Father, he will give it to you in my name" (Jn 16: 23). Therefore, if we want to be in touch with God we have to pray and pray well, by asking for our needs in His name – that is a personal process. It is only through such prayer that we can best speak to God and God

can speak to us in love. A good sample of this great prayer of Jesus for unity which we read in today's gospel (Jn 17: 1-11).

Just imagine for one minute anyone communicating with God by his cell phone or television! We are therefore called to strive to see the face of God in every human being and hear His voice in the voice of every one we meet. Faces and voices reveal every human being's unrepeatable identity. The inordinate and ubiquitous use of the media gadgets of today impede our full appreciation of each other's value and of God's transcendence in this regard.

The Imperative of Digital Media Education

The way out is certainly not to demonize the digital media but to educate ourselves more to critically engage with and profit from the resources they offer through media and information literacy. As the Holy Father rightly emphasized, we all need to cherish the gift of communication as the deepest truth of humanity, to which all technological innovation should also be oriented. Only thus can human voices and faces be preserved in our society to ensure the re-humanization of our world which in many ways is so very often dehumanized.

*Most Rev. Emmanuel Adetoyese Badejo,
Bishop of Oyo Diocese*

WORKSHOP IN GHANA TO PROMOTE ETHICAL USE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE



Participants of this workshop

A few days before the inauguration of Pope Leo XIV's first encyclical on artificial intelligence (AI), a workshop was organized in Ghana on this technological revolution. A significant step by the Catholic Church in addressing the ethical challenges and opportunities posed by AI.

The Ghana Catholic Bishops' Conference (GCBC), in collaboration with Ethical Artificial Intelligence for Human Development (EAIH) and the Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar (SECAM), organized a Workshop on "Artificial Intelligence" (AI) and Ethics for Catholic Organizations in Accra from May 19 to 21, 2026.

Hosted at the National Catholic Secretariat under the theme "Artificial Intelligence: A Catholic Perspective from Ethical Principles to Critical Use," the workshop brought together fifty pastoral agents and Catholic communication practitioners for formation on the responsible use of AI in evangelization and communication.

The sessions were facilitated by Maria Amparo Alonso Escobar and Luca Baraldi, who explored both the promise and dangers of AI technologies. Participants examined critical issues including human rights, environmental impacts, voice cloning,

mobile fraud, child exploitation risks, and the hidden social costs behind AI infrastructure and data extraction.

AI is not neutral

Addressing the workshop, the facilitators emphasized the need for awareness and education, warning that AI systems without adequate safeguards could expose vulnerable groups, especially children, to exploitation and manipulation. They also highlighted concerns about psychological impacts and the increasing carbon emissions linked to AI technologies.

They also focused on what he described as the "hidden fabric of AI," drawing attention to invisible labour, data governance, and technological asymmetry.

Throughout the three-day workshop, participants were encouraged to develop critical thinking and ethical discernment in using digital tools and social media content platforms. Organizers stressed that AI is not neutral but a powerful force shaping society, trust, and human relationships.

The workshop concluded with a call for the Church in Africa to engage AI proactively, placing human dignity, transparency, and the common good at the centre of technological development and pastoral communication.

Charles Ayetan

REGIONAL WORKSHOP FOR PEACE IN THE GREAT LAKES



Participants of this Workshop/ACEAC

A regional workshop dedicated to reflecting on peace and advocacy related to the situation in the Great Lakes region was held from May 21 to 22, 2026 in Bujumbura, Burundi.

The workshop was opened by Most Rev. Joachim Ntahondereye, Bishop of Muyinga in Burundi and President of ACEAC, on May 21 in Bujumbura. This meeting brought together experts from Burundi, DRC and Rwanda. Its aim was to conduct a joint analysis of the form and content of a future Regional Civil Society Conference, as well as the Church's contribution to the peace process in the Great Lakes.

The discussions focused on mechanisms to strengthen the participation of local communities, social leaders, and citizens' organizations, and on establishing a training framework for advocacy led by the Bishops of the region. This initiative aims to amplify the voices of populations affected by conflicts, forced displacements and social

crises, while advocating for concrete actions to promote lasting peace and human dignity and justice.

Strengthen the Church's role in Peace building

At the opening, the President of ACEAC emphasized that true peace cannot be built without the active involvement of communities and genuine collaboration between political and religious institutions, civil society and development partners. He stressed that the Great Lakes region needs initiatives capable of restoring trust among peoples, fostering dialogue and giving hope to populations often scarred by the consequences of conflicts.

The workshop resulted in the development of strategic directions and recommendations to strengthen the Church's role in regional peace and advocacy initiatives.

ACEAC Communication

CHAD'S BISHOPS CALL FOR DIALOGUE TO BREAK THE DEADLOCK IN THE COUNTRY



Chadian army on the shores of Lake Chad (illustration: AFP or licensors)

In a statement published on May 6, the bishops of Chad expressed their concern about the sharp deterioration of the political situation in their country. They called on the authorities to foster a climate of trust conducive to reconciliation.

This statement echoes the violent and bloody intercommunal conflicts that have recently struck Chad, particularly in Dar Tama in the Wadi Fira region and in the Guera region. The attack on the Barka Toulorom military base on May 5 resulted in the deaths of at least 23 people, according to a statement from the Chadian government. On April 26, at least 42 people died in intercommunal clashes in the east of the country. The bishops condemn these killings, reaffirming the sanctity of human life, which "no one has the right to take."

Call for Respect for Pluralism and Dialogue

The Chadian bishops are deeply concerned by the recent "wave of arrests of opposition figures and critical

voices." "These arrests call into question the democratic principles in our country, the importance of freedom of expression, and respect for human rights," they write. "They only further weaken the already fragile social cohesion and have repercussions on the much-vaunted peaceful coexistence."

The prelates call for "respect for cultural, political, and religious pluralism," which, they note, contributes to building a state governed by the rule of law.

"It is imperative that all stakeholders engage in constructive dialogue, based on truth, mutual respect, and the search for peaceful solutions," they write, emphasizing that this dialogue is "essential for reconciliation and lasting peace in Chad." They call on the authorities to "show wisdom and restraint, and to foster a climate of trust conducive to reconciliation."

Fabrice Bagendekere, SJ
(Vaticannews.va)

THE 74TH EGYPTIAN CATHOLIC CENTER FILM FESTIVAL AWARDED DIRECTOR NOHA ADEL



The Closing Ceremony

The 74th edition of the Egyptian Catholic Center Film Festival concluded on May 1st, with a distinguished ceremony held at the Nile Hall of the Franciscan Fathers in downtown Cairo. The event was attended by film stars, filmmakers and media figures.

The closing ceremony reflected the success of this year's festival in supporting meaningful cinema and reinforcing the role of art in addressing societal issues, amidst widespread praise for the quality of the participating works and the festival's outstanding organization.

An introduction from Lamis Salama, journalist, welcomed the attendees and presented remarks from Fr. Boutros Daniel, the festival's president and director of the center. Fr. Philip Faragallah, the regional minister of the Franciscan Order in Egypt, also addressed the audience.

Several recognitions

The ceremony included honoring the festival's jury members, headed by director Kamla Abu Zekry, and several critics including a special tribute to media personality Lamis Salama, in recognition of her volunteer work presenting the festival's events for

several consecutive years. Certificates of participation were also presented to the filmmakers selected for this edition.

In a special gesture, actress Reham Abdel Ghafour accepted the Best Actress in a Drama award for 2025 for her role in the series "Zulm Al-Mastaba" (The Injustice of the Bench). The ceremony included a musical performance by singer Aya Abdullah, who was then honored with the center's shield.

The Official Awards

Finally, the festival's official awards were announced, with the film "Dakhal Al Rabee' Yadhak" (Spring Came on Laughing) winning the most awards, most notably: Best Film of 2025; Best Director and Best Screenplay for director Noha Adel; and Acting awards for several of its stars.

Actor Ahmed Malek won the Best Actor award for the film "6 Days", while child actress Doha Ramadan received the Jury's Special Encouragement Award for the film "Happy Birthday".

Charles Ayetan

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EBOLA: UGANDA POSTPONES MARTYRS' DAY CELEBRATIONS



Saint Martyrs of Uganda

The Ugandan government has announced the postponement of the annual Martyrs' Day commemorations, scheduled for June 3, due to concerns related to the Ebola outbreak in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni made the announcement following consultations with the national task force on the epidemic and religious leaders.

"After consulting with the national task force on the epidemic and religious leaders, we have decided to postpone Martyrs' Day to a later date, which will be announced," President Museveni said in a statement. The decision was made because Uganda receives thousands of pilgrims each year from eastern Congo, which is currently experiencing an Ebola outbreak, the statement noted. A significant number of pilgrims who had traveled on foot from the Catholic diocese of Butembo-Beni in eastern DRC, a region affected by the epidemic, had already crossed the Ugandan border on May 15 and are being housed in St. Michael's Parish in Kabuyiri, Kasese

District. They were welcomed by Bishop Francis Aquirinus Kibira of the Diocese of Kasese.

The Ugandan president urged them to return home, to respect all precautionary measures, to report any illness, and to consult a doctor promptly if they develop symptoms related to the virus.

The Legacy of the Martyrs

Beatified by Pope Benedict XV in 1920 and canonized by Paul VI 44 years later, the Uganda Martyrs are the first African saints of the modern era. Officials at the royal residence in Buganda, these first converts were executed by King Mwanga for refusing to renounce their faith. Among them were 22 Catholics and 23 Anglicans.

The Ugandan Martyrs' Day is one of the largest annual Christian gatherings on the continent, attracting millions of pilgrims and visitors from Africa and beyond.

Vaticannews.va

MAIDEN WEST AFRICA YOUTH DAYS CELEBRATION



Ghana is hosting the historical West Africa Youth Days. Started in various dioceses of the country, the main celebration will take place in Accra, from 7th to 11th September 2026. Over 4000 youths are expected to attend.

The World Youth Day (WYD) is a Catholic youth festival first introduced by the late St. Pope John Paul II in 1984/85. It is usually held at international, national, diocesan, and parish levels. Despite the many benefits of participating in the international WYD, many West African youths are unable to attend due to high ticket prices and sometimes visa difficulties. Therefore, a regional WYD offers youth the opportunity to experience the international WYD on a smaller scale.

The Catholic Bishops of West Africa, through their regional body, the Reunion of Episcopal Conferences of West Africa (RECOWA/CERAO), decided to host the first West African Youth Day (WAYD) in Ghana. This presents a welcome opportunity for West African Youth to experience the international World Youth Day within their own region.

“Take Courage”

The event is scheduled from 7th to 11th September 2026 at the Achimota School in Accra, Ghana. Over 4000 youths are expected to attend, under the theme “Take Courage: Catholic Youth as Actors and Agents of Peace and Hope in West Africa.”

Activities planned include faith-building events such as Masses and Bishop-led teachings; leadership sessions on topics like peacebuilding, entrepreneurship, and climate justice; and social activities, including performances showcasing the cultures of participating countries.

The event was officially launched in Accra on 22nd November 2025 at Kordiabe during the Accra Archdiocesan World Youth Day celebration. At the launch, the celebration's logo was unveiled. The logo was designed by a Ghanaian youth, Augustine Ahado. The WAYD cross and the icon of Our Lady of Perpetual Help were also unveiled and are currently touring some selected dioceses in Ghana in anticipation of the event.

SECAM News

TANGIER: ANNUAL MEETING OF RELIGIOUS IN MOROCCO



Participants of this Annual Meeting

Consecrated persons from the dioceses of Rabat and Tangier held their annual meeting on May 1st at the Archbishop's Palace in Tangier. Marked by the joy of reunion, the day brought together 120 participants around the theme: "Consecrated for Peace."

Among the dignitaries present were Archbishop Emilio Rocha Grande, OFM, of Tangier; Cardinal Cristóbal López Romero, SDB, of Rabat; and his Vicar General, Father Marc Helfer.

At the opening, Sister Celina Luz María Pérez, from Nador, President of the Conference of Consecrated Life in Morocco (COVICOMA), officially welcomed the assembly and commended everyone for their attendance.



A plenary session of this Annual Meeting

Fr. Stéphan Delavelle, OFM, introduced the theme by outlining the state of violence in the world: wars, migrations, poverty, verbal violence in politics, and disinformation. He invited the consecrated persons to reflect: "What do these images and figures mean to us? How do they affect us? How can we be peacemakers amidst this reality?"

Sharing and concrete suggestions

In small groups, the participants reflected and shared experiences of raising awareness. Anne Balenghien, a facilitator, summarized the discussions. She offered suggestions for confronting violence, inviting each person to discern their own perspective: from their "deep conscience," an inner compass open to transcendence, or from the mind and emotions that close us off to Being.

Fr. Rolando Ruiz, SX, then led a time of silent prayer, punctuated by images, words, and music, before the Eucharistic celebration at the cathedral.

The day continued with a fraternal meal in the archbishop's cloister, with everyone bringing something to share. Visits were also offered: the Diocesan Archives of Tangier, the Franciscan Friars of the White Cross House, and the Missionaries of Charity House of Mother Teresa.

40 YEARS OF GROUP A IN CASSIS: A COLLECTIVE FIGHT AGAINST DISTRESS AND DRUG ADDICTION



Most Rev. Jean Michaël Durhône (middle) called “for collective action” against drug addiction

The activities marking the 40th anniversary of Group A in Cassis kicked off in early May in an atmosphere filled with emotion, attentive listening and hope. On this occasion, the Bishop of Port Louis, Most Rev. Jean Michaël Durhône, met with parents of drug addicts, current and former users of illicit substances, as well as the staff of ‘Lakaz A’.

After listening to the testimonies and heartfelt pleas of the participants, Bishop Durhône expressed his deep concern about the current situation: “I am extremely aware of all the distress that currently prevails in our society.”

The Bishop of Port Louis highlighted the various initiatives already undertaken by the diocese to support vulnerable individuals and families in difficulty: “At our level, within the diocese, we have launched programs and projects within society, the community, our parishes, and through centers like ‘Lakaz A’ and the Terre-Rouge Reception Center (CaTR), in order to be

closer to affected and struggling families.”

A social emergency

Bishop Durhône also addressed the painful realities facing the country, such as homelessness, sex work, and overdose deaths, before declaring: “This is a situation that demands our full attention. Not just in the diocese, but in the entire Mauritian nation.” Faced with this social emergency, he called for collective action.

Through this celebration of its 40th anniversary, Groupe A de Cassis reaffirms its mission of listening to, accompanying, and supporting people affected by drug addiction, while also emphasizing the importance of solidarity and everyone's commitment to restoring hope to grieving families.

Diocese of Port-Louis

BISHOPS OF THE SACBC CONDEMN VIOLENCE AGAINST MIGRANTS



A demonstration against xenophobic violence in South Africa, in Johannesburg, in March 2022 (Siphiwe Sibeko)

The Southern African Catholic Bishops' Conference (SACBC), through a Pastoral Letter, condemned the violence against migrants in South Africa and appealed to politicians not to exploit the migration crisis for political purposes, especially in view of the upcoming municipal elections in the country.

By mid-May, tensions and violence against migrants in South Africa continue to spread to various parts of the country. In this context, the President of the Southern African Catholic Bishops' Conference (SACBC) issued a Pastoral Letter condemning attacks against foreign citizens and asking political leaders not to exploit the migration crisis for political gain in view of the municipal elections.

In a Pastoral Letter dated May 20, 2026, signed by Cardinal Brislin, the bishops described the violence, intimidation, and displacement of migrants and refugees as “a grave attack on human dignity and a betrayal of the values that should define our society.”

“We unequivocally and unambiguously condemn the acts of violence, intimidation, and displacement directed against migrants and refugees,” the bishops

wrote.

Created in the image of God

On May 19, dozens of foreign nationals, including women and children, sought refuge at the Durban Central Police Station after allegedly receiving threats from members of the communities where they live and work. Some migrants spent the night outdoors, despite the cold, fearing further attacks.

The Pastoral Letter points to persistent unemployment, inequality, poor public services, corruption, and weaknesses in immigration management as factors fueling resentment in the most vulnerable communities.

Invoking the teachings of Pope Francis and his encyclical *Fratelli Tutti*, the bishops reaffirmed the Christian conviction that every person is created in the image and likeness of God and therefore possesses an inviolable dignity that must be protected.

The bishops conclude the letter by calling for “justice, ethical leadership, solidarity and social responsibility,” and warning that without these values “there can be no lasting peace.”

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CCEE-SECAM SEMINAR IN LUXEMBOURG



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