



# SECAM NEWS

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## TOWARD THE 2027-2028 SYNODAL ASSEMBLIES: AFRICA ON THE MOVE

*Catholic Church leaders from around the world met in Rome from June 23 to 25, 2026 to review the progress of the Synod on Synodality. The gathering focused on discerning the next steps toward the Ecclesial Assemblies scheduled for 2027-2028. On this synodal path, Africa is on the move, listening to the Spirit and walking together.*

Delegates from the Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar (SECAM) took actively part in this important meeting organized by the General Secretariat of the Synod, together with other continents synodal coordinators.

In the same perspective, the Church in Africa is taking a significant step forward in its synodal journey with the First Preparatory Seminar Towards the Synodal Assemblies of 2027-2028, scheduled for the coming weeks.

This Continental Itinerary towards the Ecclesial Assembly of 2028 will bring together pastoral agents and representatives from the various regions of Africa who have actively participated in the Synodal Process since its beginning. The gathering will serve as a privileged opportunity for prayer, discernment, dialogue, and reflection on the implementation of synodality across the continent and Africa's contribution to the universal Church.

Indeed, the seminar seeks to

review and evaluate the experience of the Synodal Process (2021-2024) throughout Africa while reflecting on the gifts and contributions the African Church offers to the global journey toward becoming a constitutively synodal Church. Participants will also discern concrete expressions of a missionary synodal Church emerging in Africa and identify new pathways for the future.

A key feature of the meeting will be the sharing of regional experiences, initiatives, and best practices that promote communion, participation, mission, and co-responsibility. Through presentations and exchanges, delegates will highlight significant synodal initiatives from their local Churches and regions, enriching the continent's collective discernment.

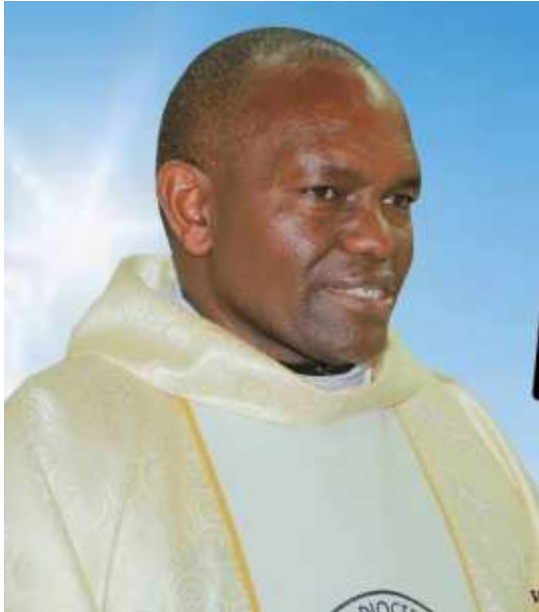
The outcomes of the seminar will contribute to the preparation of a continental working document that will guide the next stages of Africa's synodal journey toward the Ecclesial Assembly of 2028.

This landmark gathering underscores Africa's growing role in shaping a more participatory, missionary, and inclusive Church, rooted in listening, dialogue, and shared responsibility in the mission of evangelization.

*Rev. Fr. Rafael Simbine Junior  
Secretary General of SECAM*

# POPE LEO HAS APPOINTED SIX BISHOPS FOR THE CHURCH IN AFRICA

**Most Rev. John Mbua Mwandu**



On May 27, 2026, the Holy Father has appointed the Rev. Fr. John Mbua Mwandu, until now parish priest of Mulutu, as bishop of the diocese of Kitui, Kenya. The elected bishop was born on September 24, 1970. He was ordained a priest on December 8, 2001.

**Most Rev. François Halyday Mbouangui**



The Holy Father has accepted on June 1, 2026, the resignation from the pastoral care of the diocese of Nkayi, Republic of the Congo, presented by Bishop Daniel Mizonzo. The same day, Pope Leo XIV appointed Bishop François Halyday Mbouangui, until now coadjutor bishop of the same diocese to succeed him.

**Most Rev. Jeannot Martial Andrianandrainy**



On June 3, 2026, Pope Leo has appointed the Rev. Msgr. Jeannot Martial Andrianandrainy, of the clergy of Antsirabé, until now vicar general of the same see and rector of the preparatory seminary in Manantenaso, as auxiliary bishop of the diocese of Morondava, Madagascar, assigning him the titular see of Elephantaria in Mauretania. The bishop elected was born on January 13, 1976, in Befelatanana, Madagascar. He was ordained a priest on August 1, 2009, for the diocese of Antsirabé.

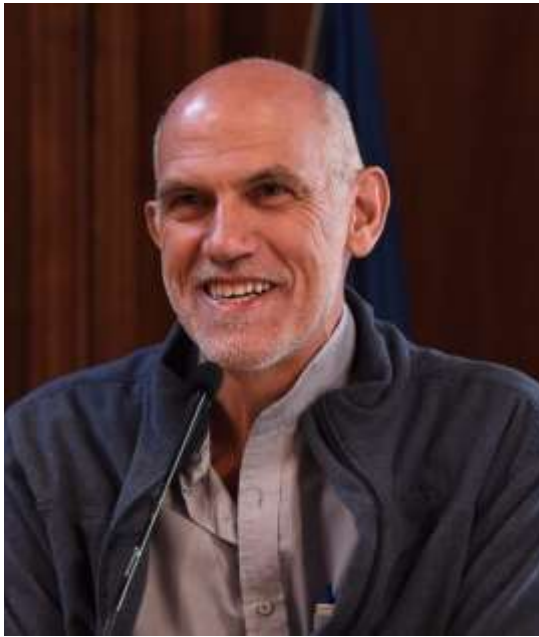
**Most Rev. Abune T. Tadesse Gebresilasie**



On June 12, 2026, Pope Leo XIV has accepted the resignation from the pastoral care of the archieparchy of Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, presented by His Eminence Cardinal Berhaneyesus Demerew Souraphiel, C.M. The same day, he has appointed Bishop Abune Tesfaye (Tesfasilasie) Tadesse Gebresilasie, M.C.C.J., until now

auxiliary of the same archieparchy, as metropolitan archbishop of the same see.

**Most Rev. Aurelio Gazzera**



Pope Leo has accepted on June 24, 2026, the resignation from the pastoral governance of the Diocese of Bangassou (Central African Republic) submitted by Most Rev. Juan José Aguirre Muñoz, M.C.C.J. He is succeeded by his Coadjutor Bishop Aurelio Gazzera, appointed the same day by the Holy Father. The elected-bishop was born on May 27, 1964, in Cuneo (Italy), and was ordained a priest on May 27, 1989.

**Most Rev. Edmond Yawo Amekuse**



On June 26, 2026, the Holy Father has accepted the resignation from the pastoral governance of the Diocese of Kpalimé (Togo) submitted by Most Rev. Benoît Comlan Messan Alwonou. The same day, Pope Leo XIV has appointed the Rev. Fr. Edmond Yawo Amekuse as Bishop of the Diocese of Kpalimé (Togo). He is a priest of the same Diocese, until now Secretary General of the Université Catholique de l’Afrique de l’Ouest (UCAO) in Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso). He was born on November 16, 1967 in Agou-Akoumahou, in the Diocese of Kpalimé, and was ordained a priest for the Diocese of Kpalimé on December 28, 1996.

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## **OTHER APPOINTMENTS**

### ***Dicastery for Evangelization***

*The Holy Father has appointed on June 30, 2026, Members and Consultors of the Dicastery for Evangelization, in the Section for First Evangelization and New Particular Churches, among whom Five Africans.*

**Members of the Dicastery for Evangelization, in the Section for First Evangelization and New Particular Churches:**

- Fridolin Cardinal Ambongo Besungu, O.F.M. Cap., Archbishop of Kinshasa (Democratic Republic of the Congo)
- Most Rev. Alfred Adewale

Martins, Archbishop of Lagos (Nigeria)

- Most Rev. Andrew Nkea Fuanya, Archbishop of Bamenda, Cameroon

**Consultors of the Dicastery for Evangelization, in the Section for First Evangelization and New Particular Churches:**

- Most Rev. Archbishop François Sylla of Conakry (Guinea)
- Rev. Fr. Wenceslaus C. Madu, C.M.F., Vice Chancellor of the Claretian University of Nigeria in Nekede.

**STATEMENT OF THE CATHOLIC BISHOPS OF AFRICA ON THE TRAGIC KILLING OF MOST REV. OSÓRIO CITORA AFONSO, BISHOP OF QUELIMANE AND APOSTOLIC ADMINISTRATOR OF THE ARCHDIOCESE OF BEIRA**

*“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied” (Mt 5:6).*



*Most Rev. Osório Afonso*

*The Catholic Bishops of Africa have received with profound shock, sorrow, and indignation the news of the violent killing of Bishop Osório Afonso in his episcopal residence in Quelimane, Mozambique.*

This heinous act, perpetrated against a shepherd of God’s people, constitutes not only an attack on the life and dignity of a devoted servant of the Gospel but also an assault on the values of peace, justice, human dignity, and religious freedom that are essential for the flourishing of every society.

We strongly and unequivocally condemn this barbaric crime. No religious leader, regardless of faith or denomination, should ever become the target of violence. Those who dedicate their lives to serving God and promoting reconciliation, solidarity, education, charity, and the common good deserve protection and respect, not persecution and death.

On behalf of the Symposium of the Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar (SECAM), I call upon the Government of the Republic of Mozambique and all competent authorities to undertake an immediate, thorough, transparent, and independent investigation into this crime. We urge that all those responsible, whether direct perpetrators, accomplices, or masterminds, be identified, prosecuted, and brought to justice without delay. The people of Mozambique, the Catholic Church, and the international community deserve the truth.

We further call upon the Mozambican authorities to strengthen measures guaranteeing the protection and security of religious leaders, places of worship, and all persons engaged in pastoral and humanitarian service. Religious freedom is a

fundamental human right and a cornerstone of every democratic and peaceful society. The State bears a solemn responsibility to ensure that all citizens can practice their faith freely and safely, without fear of intimidation, violence, or persecution.

At this painful moment, we express our deepest condolences and spiritual closeness to the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of Mozambique, the clergy, religious, and lay faithful of the Diocese of Quelimane and Archdiocese of Beira the members of Bishop Osório Afonso’s religious congregation, his biological family, relatives, and loved ones and to all those whose lives were touched by his pastoral ministry and witness.

We join them in mourning the loss of a faithful pastor whose life was dedicated to the service of Christ and His Church. We pray that the Lord of Life may grant him eternal rest, reward his faithful ministry, and comfort all who grieve his passing.

May this tragic event become a renewed call for justice, peace, respect for human life, and the protection of religious freedom throughout Mozambique and across our continent.

Eternal rest grant unto him, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon him.

May he rest in peace!

*Accra, Ghana, 6 June 2026*

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

## TOWARD THE 2027-2028 SYNOD ASSEMBLIES, CHURCH LEADERS GATHERED IN ROME



*A session of this meeting/Synod.va*

*Church leaders from across the world have gathered in Rome from June 23 to 25, 2026, to evaluate progress on the Synod on Synodality and chart the next phase of the process. The discussions helped to prepare for the upcoming ecclesial Assemblies scheduled for 2027-2028.*

Organized by the General Secretariat of the Synod, the gathering brought together representatives from Latin America, Africa, Asia, Europe, Oceania, the Middle East, and North America, accompanied by coordinators of the Continental Synodal Teams. The President of the Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar (SECAM), Cardinal Fridolin Ambongo, Most Rev. Lucio Andrice Muandula, from Mozambique, and the Secretary General of SECAM, Rev. Fr. Rafael Simbine Junior, took part of this meeting.

On Tuesday, 23 June, Cardinal Mario Grech opened the proceedings by reflecting on the Synod's impact, noting the many initiatives launched by local Churches to promote participation, formation, listening, and discernment.

### **Synodal conversion**

However, he stressed that synodality's true success lies not in improving Church structures but in inspiring missionary outreach. Cardinal Grech emphasized that the goal is to proclaim

Jesus Christ, fostering communities that evangelize with joy, courage, and creativity. Without renewed missionary action that ignites hearts and brings people closer to the Gospel, synodal conversion remains incomplete.

For Cardinal Grech, "if synodality does not lead to a renewed missionary outreach, if it does not set hearts ablaze and move people to action, if it does not give rise to communities that proclaim Christ with joy and parrhesia, then it risks remaining incomplete."

The meeting continues with plenary sessions and working groups, including a time of sharing among participants on the principal developments in the implementation of the [Final Document](#) of the XVI Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops: significant experiences, challenges encountered, and pastoral priorities, as well as on the role of the continental bodies in accompanying local Churches and groupings of Churches, with particular attention also being given to the role of communication.

On the afternoon of Thursday, 25 June, Pope Leo XIV met participants and engaged in dialogue with them at the General Secretariat of the Synod. He encouraged all the Synodal Teams to continue the good work for a Synodal Church.

*SECAM News*



SYMPOSIUM OF EPISCOPAL CONFERENCES OF AFRICA AND MADAGASCAR

SCEAM/SG/2026/06/18

Accra, 1 de Julho 2026

**MENSAGEM DE FELICITAÇÕES PELA NOMEAÇÃO DE MEMBROS E CONSULTORES AFRICANOS PARA O DICASTÉRIO PARA A EVANGELIZAÇÃO**

O Simpósio das Conferências Episcopais de África e Madagáscar (SCEAM) une-se à Igreja Universal em ação de graças a Deus pela nomeação, feita pelo Santo Padre, o Papa Leão XIV, de cinco ilustres pastores africanos para o Dicastério para a Evangelização (Secção para a Primeira Evangelização e as Novas Igrejas Particulares).

Em nome dos membros do Simpósio das Conferências Episcopais de África e Madagáscar (SCEAM), tenho a alegria de apresentar as nossas mais calorosas felicitações a:

**MEMBROS**

**Sua Eminência Fridolin Cardeal Ambongo Besungu, OFM Cap.**, Arcebispo de Kinshasa (República Democrática do Congo);

**Sua Excelência Reverendíssima Alfred Adewale Martins**, Arcebispo de Lagos (Nigéria);

**Sua Excelência Reverendíssima Andrew Nkea Fuanya**, Arcebispo de Bamenda (Camarões).

**CONSULTORES**

**Sua Excelência Reverendíssima François Sylla**, Arcebispo de Conacri (Guiné);

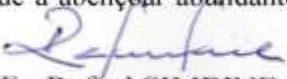
**Rev.do Pe. Wenceslaus C. Madu, CMF**, Vice-Chanceler da Universidade Claretiana da Nigéria, em Nekede (Nigéria).

Estas nomeações constituem um claro reconhecimento do vosso generoso serviço à Igreja e do crescente contributo da Igreja em África para a missão evangelizadora em todo o mundo. Refletem igualmente a confiança que o Santo Padre deposita na vossa sabedoria pastoral, competência teológica, espírito missionário e liderança eclesial.

Ao assumirdes estas importantes responsabilidades ao serviço da Igreja Universal, asseguramos-vos a nossa proximidade e o nosso apoio na oração. Que o Espírito Santo continue a iluminar-vos e a fortalecer-vos, para que o vosso ministério contribua cada vez mais para o anúncio do Evangelho, o crescimento das Igrejas particulares e o fortalecimento da missão evangelizadora da Igreja.

Que a Santíssima Virgem Maria, Rainha de África, vos acompanhe com a sua materna intercessão no desempenho desta importante missão que vos foi confiada pelo Santo Padre.

Mais uma vez, recebi as mais sinceras felicitações e os melhores votos de toda a família do SCEAM. Que o Senhor continue a abençoar abundantemente o vosso ministério ao serviço da Igreja e da sua missão.

  
Fr. Rafael SIMBINE Junior  
SECAM Secretary General



# IN NAIROBI, INTERNATIONAL COLLOQUIUM ON RABBINIC AND AFRICAN BIBLICAL HERMENEUTICS



*Some participants of this International Colloquium*

*Scholars from Africa, Europe, and North America gathered from June 8 to 10, 2026 for the International Colloquium on Rabbinic and African Biblical Hermeneutics, an academic forum dedicated to exploring the diverse ways biblical texts are interpreted across cultures and traditions.*

On June 10, final day of the International Colloquium on Rabbinic and African Biblical Hermeneutics, the agenda proposed presentations on inculturation, contextual and decolonial interpretations, biblical interpretation through drama, reception aesthetics, and integrated African approaches to Scripture. The day concluded with a general debate, evaluation session, and closing remarks delivered by Rev. Fr. Anselm Kamuyu, Director of Biblical Centre for Africa and Madagascar (BICAM), a service of the Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar (SECAM).

The colloquium underscored the growing importance of intercultural dialogue in biblical studies, bringing together Jewish and African perspectives to enrich contemporary understanding of Scripture. Participants reflected on how biblical texts can be interpreted through historical, linguistic, cultural, and contextual lenses, making them more meaningful for today's faith communities.

## **The role of orality in biblical interpretation**

A central theme throughout the meeting is the role of orality and communication in biblical interpretation. Presentations highlighted the oral origins of many biblical traditions and emphasized the importance of listening, performance, storytelling, and traditional modes of communication in understanding Scripture. Scholars also explored pragmatolinguistic and ethnostylistic approaches that integrate language sciences into biblical exegesis.

The colloquium featured extensive discussions on Jewish interpretive traditions, including studies of the Dead Sea Scrolls, Philo of Alexandria, rabbinic ritual practices, atonement theology, and Greek interpretations of the Bible in the Greco-Roman world. These contributions demonstrated the diversity and enduring relevance of early Jewish biblical thought.

## **African biblical hermeneutics**

During the discussions, African biblical hermeneutics occupied a prominent place. Indeed, researchers examined inculturation, intercultural mediation, African oral traditions, proverb-based interpretations, and contextual readings of Scripture addressing contemporary challenges such as poverty, conflict, gender inequality, and cultural identity.

*SECAM News*

# IN ZIMBABWE, A CONFERENCE ON DIALOGUE AND MEDIATION IN MINING-AFFECTED AREAS



*Participants of this meeting in Harare, Zimbabwe*

**More than 30 participants from across Zimbabwe gathered in Harare, Zimbabwe, from 3-4 June 2026 for a Conference on Dialogue and Mediation in Mining-Affected Areas, aimed at promoting peace, environmental justice, and community resilience in mining communities.**

Organized by the Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar (SECAM) in collaboration with the Inter-Regional Meeting of the Bishops of Southern Africa (IMBISA) and the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops' Conference, the conference took place at Africa Synod House in Harare under the theme, "Promoting Peace, Environmental Justice, and Community Resilience."

### **Ecological justice**

The gathering brought together Church leaders, government representatives, civil society organizations, mining stakeholders, and community representatives to address the growing social, environmental, and economic challenges associated with mining activities. Participants highlighted concerns including land conflicts and displacement, environmental pollution, tensions between communities and mining companies, youth unemployment, and weak community consultation mechanisms.

### **Voices of mining-affected communities**

Inspired by the teachings of Pope Francis, particularly the encyclical *Laudato Si'*, the conference emphasized dialogue, ecological

justice, and the protection of vulnerable communities. A key feature of the event was a session dedicated to the voices of mining-affected communities, where women, youth, and local leaders shared firsthand experiences of the environmental and social impacts of extractive activities.

### **Balancing economic development with social justice**

Other sessions examined legal and policy frameworks governing mining, including presentations by the Zimbabwe Environmental Law Association, and a multi-stakeholder dialogue panel on balancing economic development with social justice and environmental protection.

The second day focused on structured dialogue, mediation, and action planning through thematic roundtables. The conference concluded with the adoption of a [communiqué](#) containing recommendations and commitments aimed at strengthening community participation, environmental stewardship, accountability, and regional cooperation in mining governance.

Participants described the conference as a significant step toward ensuring that natural resources contribute to peace, human dignity, and sustainable development across the IMBISA region.

*SECAM News*

# WISDOM CALLS: STRENGTHENING AFRICAN CATHOLIC SISTERS IN STORYTELLING



*From left, front, Dr. Peter Monthienvichienchai, Archbishop Musonde of Mombasa followed by his coadjutor Dominic Kimengich, and Sr. Adelaide Ndilu*

***Eleven Catholic Sisters from nine African countries took part in a capacity-building workshop in Mombasa, Kenya, from June 3-4, 2026. This workshop aimed at strengthening their storytelling skills and increasing the visibility of their contributions to society and the Church.***

Organised under the “Wisdom Calls Africa” initiative of SIGNIS, the World Catholic Association for Communication, in partnership with the Hilton Foundation, this workshop brought together eleven sisters from Burkina Faso, Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Tanzania, Togo and Zambia.

SIGNIS Secretary General, Dr. Peter Rachada Monthienvichienchai, said the work of Catholic sisters often receives little attention in mainstream media despite its significant impact. “We hear sisters doing a lot of work, and the stories are not out there in the secular media,” he said, urging participants to embrace authentic storytelling and solutions journalism as tools for evangelisation and social transformation.

Sr. Adelaide Ndilu, local coordinator of Wisdom Calls Africa for English-speaking countries, encouraged the sisters to take ownership of their narratives. “For a long time, our stories were told about us,” she said. “People decided what our

lives meant. They missed the faith, the joy and the struggle that only you know from the inside.”

### **Sharing stories**

“My heart is filled with joy and gratitude for the beautiful experience lived and shared during this workshop, which has profoundly edified me,” said Sr Scholastique de la Joie Djarba, from Togo. For Sr Anastácia Sebastião Simbe, from Mozambique, and many other participants, this workshop was “a fantastic experience that will help us to share our stories.” Sr. Joyce Mboya, a Tanzanian participant, said that sharing their stories, will also encourage other young women to consider religious life.

Topics covered included Solutions Journalism, Media Literacy, Misinformation, Media Ethics, Artificial Intelligence, social media, Public Speaking, Media Relations And Interview Techniques.

During a visit to the workshop, Archbishop Martin Kivuva Musonde of Mombasa said communication was essential to the Church's mission. “The Church, a huge body like the Church, without communication, would be like a huge elephant without a voice,” he said.

***SECAM News, with SIGNIS***

## GREAT LAKES REGION: BISHOPS PLEAD FOR PEACE



*Bishops at this Extraordinary plenary of the National Episcopal Conference of Congo (CENCO)*

### IN THE DRC, THE BISHOPS SAY NO TO CHANGING THE CONSTITUTION.

Meeting in an extraordinary plenary assembly from June 18 to 20, 2026, in Kinshasa, the bishops of the National Episcopal Conference of Congo (CENCO) are raising the alarm about the security situation and warning against changing the Constitution.

In a message entitled “The Nation is in Peril! Let Us Stand Tall and Take Stronger Action,” they denounce the threats to peace, national unity, and the stability of the Democratic Republic of Congo.

CENCO expresses its concern about the campaign to revise the 2006 Constitution, which risks further weakening national cohesion and exacerbating political and social tensions.

The bishops of the 47 dioceses of the CENCO (National Episcopal Conference of Congo) call upon the President of the Republic, politicians, young people, and the entire population to prioritize dialogue, peace, and respect for the constitutional order.

The prelates emphasize the economic difficulties and address the ongoing war in the east of the country, where violence perpetrated by armed groups continues to claim thousands of lives and displaced persons.

### IN BURUNDI, THE BISHOPS CALL FOR THE PRESERVATION OF PEACE



*Bishops members of CECAB*

Meeting in Ordinary Plenary Assembly from June 1st to 5th, 2026, in Kiriri, the members of the Conference of Catholic Bishops of Burundi (CECAB) reviewed the state of the Church and the socio-political situation in the country.

The bishops welcome the general climate of peace and security in the country. However, they expressed their concerns about persistent challenges: the recurring discovery of bodies whose perpetrators remain unknown, the prolonged detention of individuals who have already served their sentences or been acquitted, the advanced state of disrepair of road infrastructure, fuel shortages, a lack of basic necessities, and the exodus of many young professionals abroad.

They thanked Cardinal Luis Antonio Tagle, Pro Prefect of the Dicastery for Evangelization, for his visit to Burundi on the occasion of the 75th anniversary of the Saint Peter Claver Major Seminary in Burasira.

*SECAM News*

## CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC: BISHOPS CALL FOR BUILDING “A NEW HEAVEN AND A NEW EARTH”



*Group photo of participants*

*The Catholic bishops of the Central African Republic, gathered in Ordinary Plenary Assembly from June 15 to 22 in Berbérati, launched a fervent appeal for hope, peace, and civic engagement.*

In a message entitled “I have seen a new heaven and a new earth” (Rev 21:1), they invite the faithful and all men and women of goodwill to participate in the transformation of the country through justice, reconciliation, and environmental protection.

Drawing inspiration from the vision of the Apostle John in the Book of Revelation, the prelates emphasize that this promise of a renewed world is neither an illusion nor an invitation to inaction. On the contrary, it constitutes a call to act now to build a more fraternal, equitable society that respects creation.

The bishops welcomed the dynamism of the Church in the Central African Republic and commended the growing importance of the synodal process in dioceses and Christian communities.

At the national level, the CECA (Episcopal Conference of Central

Africa) welcomed the gradual return to peace after years of crisis and violence. However, it urged the authorities to strengthen good governance, respect for human rights, and access to essential public services.

The bishops emphasized the need for “an ethic of truth, good governance, and accountability.” They particularly urged Catholic lay people involved in politics and public administration to translate their faith into action, in accordance with the principles of the Gospel and the social teaching of the Church.

They also called for an “integral ecological conversion” in the face of environmental challenges such as deforestation, flooding, and the overexploitation of natural resources. Finally, they invite Central Africans to promote truth, integrity, youth education and fraternity in order to bring about, starting today, this “new heaven and this new earth”.

*SECAM News*

## CHURCH IN EGYPT: FR. RAFIQ GREISH CALLS FOR A REVIVAL OF PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS



Rev. Fr. Rafiq Greish

*In his editorial for [Lemessenger-online.com](http://Lemessenger-online.com) published on June 21, 2026, Reverend Father Rafiq Greish urges the Church in Egypt to revive initiatives in support of vocations. Below is his editorial translated from Arabic.*

Faced with a shortage of priests and a lack of vocations to consecrated life and service to God and His people, we are called by Jesus to prayer, not to grumble and complain about the lack of consecrated persons.

The Lord calls us to prayer, reminding us that the Church is His Church, the harvest is His harvest, and the laborers are His laborers as well. Every disciple, whatever their circumstances, not just priests, monks, or nuns, is sent into the “field” of this world to proclaim and build the Kingdom of God.

For the Kingdom is the logic of a new life bestowed by God, founded on love, fraternity, justice, and peace. A Kingdom that transforms the world from within, just as yeast leavens the whole batch of dough.

Today we offer our prayers for every priest: for those who serve in silence, and for those who await the Lord to open a new door of service for them. We pray that no gift may remain buried, and no vocation left unfulfilled. The Church

needs the zeal of all its members, and the harvest is plentiful.

In the recent past, our Church in Egypt dedicated a novena to prayer for vocations, beginning on November 21, the Feast of the Presentation of the Virgin Mary in the Temple, and continuing until November 30, the Feast of Saint Andrew the Apostle. This novena encompassed Catholic schools, parishes, and various activities, in addition to a general activity in each diocese. Each year, special banners, drawings, and prayers were created, all centered on the theme of vocations from the Gospels. I don't know why this practice has faded. I hope it will be revived and this activity will return this year, for there is still time.

Let us ask the Lord of the harvest to send laborers into his harvest and to unite us all in one heart and one service (Matthew 9:37-38).

*Source: Lemessenger-online.com*

## PASTORAL AGENTS IN KENYA'S EMBU DIOCESE ENLIGHTENED ON AI AND HUMAN RESPONSIBILITY



Participants

***People should embrace Artificial Intelligence (AI) as a useful tool while ensuring it does not replace human intelligence and moral judgment, Sr. Jecinter Antoinette Okoth, in charge of the AMECEA Online Newsletter, said during an AI training for priests in Kenya's Embu Diocese.***

Speaking during a day-long workshop held at John Cardinal Njue Pastoral Centre on Tuesday, June 16, Sr. Jecinter cautioned against overreliance on AI, noting that the technology lacks human feelings and can sometimes generate inaccurate information.

Addressing about 45 Priests, including the Local Ordinary Bishop Peter Kimani Ndung'u, the member of the Franciscan Sisters of St. Anna (FSSA) said AI should help people generate ideas, but should never replace critical thinking, ethical decision-making, and human responsibility.

The religious sister focused on the Catholic Teachings on AI and warned that the growing use of technology has also accelerated the spread of fake news, misinformation, and disinformation, making it necessary for users to verify AI-generated content before relying on it. Sr. Jecinter outlined four principles for responsible AI use: human-

centeredness, transparency, accountability, and inclusivity, urging the clerics to champion ethical use of technology while protecting the dignity of every person.

On his part, Mr. Bernard Mberere, the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) officer at the Association of Member Episcopal Conferences in Eastern Africa (AMECEA), dwelt on the practical applications of AI and shared more on the AI tools. He enlightened the clergy on the use of ChatGPT, Microsoft Copilot, and the equivalents, Claude, AI Video creation for digital evangelization, and speech-to-text tools, among others.

Rev. Fr. David Ileri, a priest of the Diocese of Embu and a student at Tangaza University pursuing a Degree in Youth Ministry, thanked the Bishop for facilitating the training, saying it would help priests understand and guide young people in the digital age.

He urged parents not to leave children to be shaped by technology alone but to instil values, ethics, and critical thinking skills from an early age.

***Muriithi Triplem/AMECEA***

## IN NIGERIA, BISHOPS CALL FOR THE RELEASE OF KIDNAPPED TEACHERS AND STUDENTS



*The Catholic bishops of the Ecclesiastical Province of Ibadan, Nigeria, have issued an urgent appeal for the immediate release of 39 students and 7 teachers abducted on May 15, 2026, during an attack by armed bandits on schools in the Oriire area of Oyo State.*

In a statement released on June 22, entitled “They have been gone for too long, bring them home now,” they denounce the prolonged captivity of the victims, some of whom are very young children as young as two years old.

The prelates describe the conditions of their detention as extremely harsh: lack of shelter, insufficient food, and exposure to the elements in the forest. They also recalled the brutality of the kidnapers, accused of killing a teacher and a motorcyclist during the attack, and then beheading another teacher, describing these acts as barbaric.

Beyond this tragedy, the bishops severely criticized the inability of the federal and Oyo state authorities to stem the growing insecurity plaguing Nigeria. According to them, repeated promises

from the government are no longer sufficient to alleviate the suffering of the families, who have been plunged into anguish and uncertainty for over a month. They believe this situation constitutes a serious violation of human dignity and social order.

The Catholic leaders drew a parallel with the abduction of the 276 Chibok schoolgirls in 2014, some of whom have still not been freed. They fear that the Oriire case could become another unresolved tragedy.

Finally, they call for strengthened cooperation between federal and local authorities, improved security in forests, enhanced intelligence and community policing, and rigorous prosecution of kidnapers. They conclude by urging all Nigerians to unite against terrorism, support the security forces, and remain vigilant against the criminal threat.

*SECAM News, with CERAO*

## “LOOK UP”: MEDITERRANEAN ENCOUNTERS IN BARCELONA



*Pope Leo XIV at the Olympic Stadium Barcelona, during his apostolic visit*

**The Mediterranean Encounters “MED26” continue to offer wonderful surprises, exceeding expectations. Young people were invited from June 6 to 16, and other participants joined them from June 9 to 12.**

This year, the Mediterranean Encounters brought together in Barcelona more than 200 participants from 25 countries, representing diverse cultures and religious backgrounds: 70 young adults, aged 18 to 30; 60 bishops, representing dioceses from across the Mediterranean basin; and 70 civil society actors.

The aim of this event is to promote dialogue, peace, and fraternity among the five shores of the Mediterranean, starting with the realities closest to home.

“There were five of us representing Tunisia: our archbishop, Mgr. Nicolas Lhernould, three young people – Dhia, Taher, and Anwer – and me,” says Olivia. According to her, the days were “intense and edifying,” filled with plenary sessions, mixed working groups, sector-specific workshops, and, at the heart of it all, participation in meetings with Pope Leo at the Olympic Stadium and in the Sagrada Família Basilica during his apostolic visit to Spain from June 6 to 12, 2026.



*MED26 Participants as One Family*

“In Barcelona, the young people became one, united by love, friendship, and collaboration,” describes Taher Saidane.

And Dhia Boussetta adds: “For the first time in my life, I found myself surrounded by people of such diversity, both culturally and religiously, in their ways of thinking and their lifestyles.” “I visited places that, as a Muslim, I never imagined I would have access to, from churches to synagogues, and I was able to better understand and learn more about other religions,” said Anwer Seddik. He added, “This experience makes me want to continue promoting dialogue, encounter, and understanding between people of different cultures and beliefs.”

***Source : [Eglisecatholiquetunisie.com](http://Eglisecatholiquetunisie.com)***

## MAURITIUS: INDIAN OCEAN INTERFAITH LEADERS UNITE THEIR VOICES FOR PEACE



*Participants of this Symposium*

***The 4th Interreligious Symposium of the Indian Ocean Islands was held from May 18 to 20, 2026, in Mauritius under the theme “Shared Sacred Flourishing: From Dialogue to Action.”***

Members of the Indian Ocean Interreligious Network from Madagascar, Mauritius, Seychelles, and Réunion, gathered in Pailles, Mauritius, and adopted a joint declaration in support of peace, fraternity, and sustainable development in the region.

This meeting brought together members of various faiths around a shared conviction: interreligious dialogue remains essential for strengthening social cohesion, national unity, and regional stability.

The “Straw Declaration” builds upon the commitments made at previous symposia in Port Louis (2009), Victoria (2012), and Saint-Denis (2016). Delegates reaffirmed their commitment to promoting a culture of peace based on mutual respect, spirituality, and

fraternity among the peoples of the Indian Ocean.

Over three days, participants discussed several key issues, including regional cooperation, cultural diplomacy, building a harmonious future, and integrating spiritual values into development policies.

Seven resolutions were adopted. These include a call to political leaders to make the Indian Ocean a true zone of peace, increased mobilization against the effects of climate change, and a collective commitment to combating poverty, violence, corruption, drugs, racism, and xenophobia.

The symposium also emphasized the importance of youth, encouraging the creation of spaces for interreligious dialogue aimed at younger generations. Finally, the participating organizations decided to develop a joint charter to strengthen their cooperation and coordinated actions.

***Source: Diocèse de Port-Louis***

## FINAL TRIBUTE TO BISHOP OSÓRIO, ASSASSINATED IN MOZAMBIQUE



*Most Rev. Osório Citora Afonso*

*The Catholic Church in Mozambique paid a final tribute to Bishop Osório Citora Afonso of Quelimane, who was assassinated in circumstances that remain unclear. Found dead on June 6, 2026, at his episcopal residence in Quelimane, he was buried on June 13 after a funeral Mass presided over by Bishop Inácio Saure, President of the Mozambican Episcopal Conference.*

The previous day, a requiem Mass was celebrated in Our Lady of Deliverance Cathedral by the Apostolic Nuncio to Mozambique, Archbishop Luís Miguel Muñoz Cárdbaba, in the presence of Mozambican President Daniel Chapo, numerous bishops, priests, religious, and faithful.

In a message to the Mozambican Church, Pope Leo XIV expressed his profound sorrow at this tragedy and his solidarity with the family of the deceased, the Consolata missionaries, the clergy, and the faithful. He also expressed his hope that the circumstances of this crime would be fully investigated.

During his homily, Archbishop Cárdbaba denounced “an unjust and cowardly murder” and paid tribute to the memory

of a pastor admired for his courage, humanity, and commitment.

The nuncio recalled that, shortly before his death, the bishop had been calling for peace, dialogue, and tolerance. According to him, “they have killed a man of peace and reconciliation.” Comparing this tragedy to the biblical murder of Abel by Cain, he denounced the violence plaguing the contemporary world and called for the building of a “civilization of love” founded on justice, forgiveness, and fraternity.

In a statement released on Saturday, June 6, 2026, the Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar (SECAM) expressed its outrage following the assassination and called for an immediate, rigorous, and transparent investigation by the Mozambican authorities. SECAM also urged them to intensify their efforts to guarantee the protection and security of religious leaders, places of worship, and all those engaged in pastoral and humanitarian missions.”

*SECAM New, with Vatican News*

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## TOWARD THE 2027-2028 SYNOD ASSEMBLIES, CHURCH LEADERS GATHERED IN ROME



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