



SECAM NEWS

YEAR 2026
SEPTEMBER
N°09

FIRST WEST AFRICA YOUTH DAYS IN GHANA

Pp. 4-7



Charles Ayetan



Charles Ayetan



SEASON OF CREATION: AFRICA IMMERSSES ITSELF IN LIVING WATER

The celebration of the Season of Creation, which began on 1 September with the World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation and concludes on 4 October, the Feast of St Francis of Assisi, patron saint of ecology, is gaining momentum across the world, particularly in Africa, the continent known as the cradle of humanity.

The Season offers Christians an opportunity to renew their relationship with the Creator and with all creation through celebration, conversion and commitment. We congratulate the Catholic Bishops and the entire Church in Africa and its islands, together with our sisters and brothers in the ecumenical family, for the prayers, initiatives and concrete actions being undertaken for our common home.

This year's theme, "Immersion in Living Water," invites communities into three movements: Contemplation, Immersion and Sending Out. Across Africa, these movements are being translated into prayer, environmental action, advocacy and solidarity.

Indeed, Catholic communities marked the Season of Creation through practical action. South Africa and Zambia promoted diocesan

participation and prayer. Kenya advanced clean-water, solar energy and agroecology projects, alongside tree planting. Cameroon raised awareness about river pollution, while Uganda mobilised religious communities and Laudato Si' members for environmental clean-up and advocacy.

The Season also calls communities to deepen their response through pilgrimages and prayer walks, encounters with communities affected by environmental crises, blessings of water, tree planting, clean-ups, youth activities and water-justice dialogues. Advocacy through petitions and digital campaigns can further amplify the voices of communities affected by water pollution and scarcity.

These initiatives remind us that ecological conversion is not merely spiritual reflection. Water, human dignity, livelihoods, food security, energy and the health of our common home are inseparable. May this Season lead us from contemplation to immersion and, finally, to action as true sources of life for creation and for one another.

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

MOROCCO: REV. FR. MARIO LEÓN DORADO, APPOINTED COADJUTOR ARCHBISHOP OF RABAT



Most Rev. Mario León Dorado

On September 12, the Holy Father appointed Rev. Fr. Mario León Dorado, O.M.I., until now apostolic prefect of the Western Sahara, as Coadjutor Archbishop of the Archdiocese of Rabat, Morocco.

The elected Archbishop has been serving as Apostolic Administrator of the Catholic Archdiocese of Rabat since August, after the Local Ordinary, Cristóbal Cardinal López Romero, temporarily withdrew from public and pastoral activities.

In a message to the people of God, Monsignor Dorado said he received the appointment with joy and humility, acknowledging both the weight of the new responsibility and his trust in God's call. "It is with joy, but also with 'fear and trembling,' that I receive the news of my appointment as coadjutor bishop of this dear sister Church," he said in his message.

Who is Bishop Dorado?

The appointed bishop Mario León

Dorado was born on 16 March 1974 in Madrid, Spain. After completing his studies in information technology at the Faculty of Information Sciences in Madrid, he was awarded a bachelor's degree in theology from the San Dámaso Faculty of Theology in Madrid.

He gave his first religious vows on 15 September 1996 in the Congregation of Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate. He was ordained a priest on 2 June 2001.

He has held the following offices: parish assistant in Jaén, Spain (2001-2004); in 2004 he was sent on mission in the Apostolic Prefecture of Western Sahara, and went on to serve as Apostolic Administrator (2009-2013).

Since 2013 he has held the role of Apostolic Prefect of Western Sahara, and since 2026, Apostolic Administrator of the Archdiocese of Rabat.

SECAM News

Source: Vatican Press & ACI Africa

Message of His Eminence Fridolin Cardinal Ambongo Besungu, President of the Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar (SECAM) to the Youth on the occasion of the first West Africa Youth Days



Card. Fridolin Ambongo Besungu

.Dear young people,

With joy and hope, I greet you in the Holy Name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Peace be with you all, dear young people of our beloved continent, especially the young people of West Africa.

It is with great joy that I learned that you are preparing to gather in Ghana for the first **West Africa Youth Days**, from 7 to 12 September 2026 in Accra, Ghana, where thousands of young people from across the Region are expected.

The inspiring theme of this memorable gathering, *“Take Courage (John 16: 33): Catholic Youth as Actors and Agents of*

Peace and Hope in West Africa,” is very significant for our continent today.

This is truly a historic moment for our Church, for this region and for the whole of Africa. The Catholic Bishops of West Africa, through the Reunion of Episcopal Conferences of West Africa (RECOWA/CERAOWA), have made this gathering possible because they believe in you. They believe in your faith, your energy, your creativity and your capacity to transform society.

The West Africa Youth Days offer you a unique opportunity to experience the spirit of the World Youth Days here in this region. It is a very blessed occasion to encounter



Opening Ceremony/Charles Ayetan

young people from different countries and cultures, celebrating your faith together, and discovering that, despite our differences, we are one family in Christ and, above all, one human family.

Beloved young people, take courage! West Africa needs you. Our continent needs young people who are not afraid to dream, to serve and to build. Do not be afraid to be voices of hope and agents of peace in communities sometimes wounded by insecurity, violence, division and conflicts. We need your courage to face poverty, unemployment and the many challenges before you; your creativity, initiative and entrepreneurial spirit to create opportunities, not only for yourselves, but also for others. We also need your commitment to care for our common home and to respond courageously to the challenges of climate change.

Beloved young people, the Church in Africa believes in you and in the power of your dreams. We know that the challenges you face today do not have the final word. You are not merely the future of Africa; you are a living force in

Africa today.

Do not be afraid! With faith in Christ, courage in your hearts, creativity in your minds and solidarity with one another, you can overcome these challenges and become builders of a more just, peaceful and hopeful Africa. The Church walks with you, believes in you and entrusts to you the mission of transforming our continent.

“Like the first disciples, follow Jesus! Do not be afraid to draw near to Him.” (St. John Paul II, *Message for the 12th World Youth Days*, 1996). As Jesus Christ’s followers, during these Days in Accra, you will have several opportunities to deepen your faith through the celebration of the Eucharist, prayer, teachings, and faith and cultural celebrations.

Beyond all these activities, I invite you to see this gathering as a moment of encounter: an encounter with Christ, an encounter with one another.

May God bless you; may He bless the peoples of West Africa.

Thank you, and God bless you all.

CARDINAL AMBONGO URGES WEST AFRICAN YOUTH TO TAKE COURAGE AND BUILD PEACE



Participants enjoying this memorable event/Charles Ayetan/SECAM

The President of the Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar (SECAM), Fridolin Cardinal Ambongo Besungu, has urged young people across West Africa to take courage, embrace their role in society and become agents of peace and hope in a region facing insecurity, poverty, unemployment and conflict.

In a [message](#) to more than 3,500 young people gathered in the Achimota School in Accra, Ghana, for the first West Africa Youth Days, Cardinal Ambongo said the Church believes in the faith, energy, creativity and capacity of young people to transform society.

The Youth Days, organised by the Regional Episcopal Conference of West Africa (RECOWA/CERAOWA) from September 7 to 12, 2026, are being held under the theme “Take

Courage (John 16:33): Catholic Youth as actors and agents of peace and hope in West Africa.”

“Africa needs you”

Cardinal Ambongo described the gathering as a “historic moment” for the Church, West Africa and the continent, saying it provides young people with an opportunity to experience the spirit of World Youth Days while celebrating their faith across national, cultural and linguistic boundaries. “West Africa needs you. Our continent needs young people who are not afraid to dream, to serve and to build,” the SECAM President said.

He challenged the youth to become voices of hope and peace in communities wounded by violence, insecurity, division and conflict.

The President of SECAM, also Archbishop of Kinshasa, urged young



people to draw strength from their faith in Christ and solidarity with one another, insisting that the challenges confronting their generation “do not have the final word.”

Encounter with Christ and with one another

He encouraged participants to use the Youth Days as an opportunity for a deeper encounter with Christ through the Eucharist, prayer, teachings and cultural celebrations. Beyond the activities, he called on the youth to make the gathering a moment of genuine encounter with Christ and with one another.

The President of the Ghana Catholic Bishops’ Conference, Most Rev. Matthew K. Gyamfi, similarly stressed the importance of investing in young people, describing West Africa’s youthful population as a major resource for the region’s development.

He called for young people to be formed in faith, integrity, service, leadership and responsible citizenship, urging participants to carry the spirit of the Youth Days back to their communities by promoting peace,

reconciliation, justice and hope.

Friendships beyond borders

The Apostolic Nuncio to Ghana, Archbishop Julien Kaboré, told the youth that Africa and the Church need them now, not tomorrow. Echoing the call for regional unity, he urged them to “walk together” and build friendships that go beyond borders.

Representing President John Dramani Mahama, Ghana’s Vice President, Prof. Jane Naana Opoku-Agyemang, also highlighted the role of young people in West African integration. She warned that anger, prejudice and falsehood can spread rapidly across borders through digital platforms, but said technology can also connect communities, spread knowledge and create opportunities.

As the first West Africa Youth Days continue in Accra, Cardinal Ambongo’s central message remains clear: young Catholics are called not simply to inherit Africa’s future, but to courageously shape its present by becoming “builders of a more just, peaceful and hopeful Africa”.

Charles Ayetan

LIVING WATER: CATHOLIC COMMUNITIES ACROSS AFRICA TURN THE SEASON OF CREATION INTO ACTION



Participants at the Season of Creation workshop in Lusaka, Zambia/LSA

Across Africa, the 2026 Season of Creation, celebrates from 1 September to 4 October under the theme “Living Water,” is inspiring Catholic communities to combine prayer, advocacy, partnerships and practical environmental action.

South Africa: The Southern African Catholic Bishops’ Conference encouraged dioceses and Catholic communities to participate in the Season of Creation. St Mary of the Angels in Athlone, Cape Town, South Africa, also welcomed the Season of Creation.

Zambia: The Zambia Conference of Catholic Bishops opened the Season with a Mass in Lusaka. Its Secretary General, Fr Francis Mukosa, highlighted clean water as a matter of life, justice, development and human dignity.

Kenya: Laudato Si’ Movement Africa and JPIC Franciscans Africa received a water purification machine donated by Bondh E. Shams. Communities in Olepolos, Olemunyak and Reto are benefiting from clean water, agroecology and solar energy.

The Pope John XXIII Community installed a solar-powered pump drawing water from a 110-metre-deep well, providing safe drinking water and aiming eventually to connect the village directly

to the water supply.

The Laudato Si’ Movement Kenya Chapter joined the Consolata Shrine for prayer and the Mass of Creation. The Franciscan family also launched the Season during a symposium at the Catholic University of Eastern Africa, Nairobi, focusing on ecological stewardship, renewable energy, sustainable finance, drought and water scarcity. Furthermore, many bishops participated in tree planting.

Cameroon: Sr Solange Lomessoas of the Dominican Sisters of Blessed Imelda released an awareness video highlighting pollution of the Kadei River associated with gold extraction.

Uganda: The Association of Religious of Uganda and Laudato Si’ Movement communities participated in National Cleaning Day. LSM Uganda Coordinator Alfred Okumu also used Radio Maria to encourage environmental action.

Together, these initiatives show integral ecology in practice: recognising that access to water cannot be separated from human dignity, livelihoods, energy, food and the health of our common home.

*SECAM News,
with Laudato Si Movement*

BURUNDI: EDUCATORS TRAINED ON THE CHALLENGES OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE



A session of this training on AI challenges

In Burundi, the Episcopal commission for priestly and religious vocations, seminaries, and novitiates, acting through the Gitega National Vocations Center, organized a training seminar on artificial intelligence from 7 to 12 September.

Organized for educators at minor and major seminaries, institutes of philosophy and theology, and clerical institutes, this seminar focused on the role of artificial intelligence in the formation of future priests and in pastoral work.

In response to the rise of AI in society, the Church in Burundi seeks to navigate this transformation with openness, yet also with discernment and vigilance. Participants reviewed the history of human communication and technological evolution before examining these changes in light of the Church's Magisterium, specifically the documents *Inter Mirifica*, *Antiqua et Nova*, and *Magnifica Humanitas*.

Opportunities and limitations of AI

The seminar identified the opportunities offered by AI in philosophical and theological research, while also highlighting its limitations. Participants emphasized that AI possesses neither

faith, nor conscience, nor moral discernment. In the pastoral domain, its use can support catechesis or homily preparation; however, certain essential dimensions remain exclusively human, notably the seal of the confessional, spiritual accompaniment, and being present with those who are suffering. A specific session also addressed the detection of AI-generated content to safeguard academic integrity.

Another component of the seminar was dedicated to institutional communication and digital culture. Discussions underscored the importance of communication grounded in listening, co-responsibility, and synodality, as well as in transparency and proactive crisis management. Internally, this approach shapes a synodal governance based on active listening and co-responsibility, transforming information into a tool for communal discernment among formation teams. Externally, it ensures the credibility of these Church institutions through administrative and financial transparency, the formalization of decision-making processes, and proactive crisis management.

***SECAM News,
with Fr. Dieudonné Niyibizi***

DRC: ARCHDIOCESE OF BUKAVU PAYS TRIBUTE TO 27 CHILDREN WHO PERISHED IN A FIRE



The celebration was an opportunity to show solidarity with the families affected by this tragedy

On Thursday, September 17, 2026, Catholic-affiliated schools in Bukavu paid tribute to the 27 children who lost their lives in a fire on September 10, a blaze that destroyed several homes and two schools in the Cimpunda area of the Kadutu commune.

A memorial Mass for the victims was celebrated at the Notre-Dame de la Miséricorde parish church. The service was led by Fr. Patrice Mukata Bayongwa, the diocesan and provincial coordinator for Catholic-affiliated schools in the Archdiocese of Bukavu, joined by three other priests, including the parish priest, Fr. Jean-Marie Bukassa.

Addressing thousands of students and their teachers, Fr. Bayongwa urged the faithful to hold fast to faith and hope despite their grief, reminding them that, in the Christian faith, death is viewed as a birth into eternal life. "Death plunges us into silence, for we will no longer see our loved ones. We mourn their absence, yet we must not forget that God is present," he stated.

Candles were lit before the altar in memory of the children who died while on their way to school to prepare for their futures. The celebrant also encouraged the congregation to pray that the city of Bukavu might be spared from recurring fires.

The ceremony also provided an



opportunity for students to show solidarity with the families affected by the tragedy. Food aid was distributed to those impacted by the disaster.

Among the 27 victims, who attended schools such as the private Ujamaa and Furaha institutions, several were active in pastoral life. They used to participate in the activities of the Kizito and Anuarite children's pastoral ministry, the "Ange du Ciel" (Angels of Heaven) group, and the children's choir.

Following the service, a message of compassion was conveyed on behalf of the Archbishop of Bukavu, Most Rev. François-Xavier Maroy Rusengo, as well as on behalf of all the schools under his authority.

The 27 children had been laid to rest on September 13, 2026, at the Ruzizi cemetery.

ACEAC Communications

Source: DIA Magazine

CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC: ARCHDIOCESE OF BANGUI OPENS 2026-2027 PASTORAL YEAR FOCUSED ON COMMUNION



The diocesan assembly was "a moment of grace given by God"

The Catholic Archdiocese of Bangui in the Central African Republic has opened its 2026-2027 pastoral year with a diocesan session focused on communion, collaboration and shared responsibility in the life and mission of the Church.

Held from September 22 to 27 at Our Lady of Fatima Parish, the gathering brings together priests, religious men and women, and lay faithful as part of the Archdiocese's ongoing synodal journey. In his opening address, Coadjutor Archbishop of Bangui, Most Rev. Joseph Samedi, described the assembly as "a moment of grace given by God" and an opportunity for the faithful to "build the Church together."

He stressed that the diocesan assembly should not be viewed as a parliament or merely a management body. Rather, it should be a space for prayer, listening, dialogue and discernment. He emphasized that communion is central to the identity of the Church and essential for carrying out its mission effectively.

Ecclesial decisions through collective discernment

Archbishop Samedi also called for

renewed structures and attitudes that recognize the responsibility of every baptized person in the life of the Church. He stressed that ecclesial decisions should not be based solely on majority voting but should emerge through collective discernment, prayer and openness to the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The session also addressed conflict prevention and resolution.

Two conferences marked the opening day. Fr. Gildas Gbeni reflected on the "The Most Holy Trinity", highlighting the relationship between divine communion and Christians' call to love, service and collaboration. Fr. Blaise Kongomatchi presented the theme "Mission is Made through Communion."

The gathering aimed to strengthen cooperation among clergy, religious and lay faithful and to promote a united, participatory Church that valued the diverse charisms and responsibilities of all the baptized.

SECAM News, with ACI Africa

CATHOLIC CHURCH IN EGYPT AT THE 11TH MIDDLE EAST ECUMENICAL INSTITUTE



A great sign of ecumenism/Catholic Media Office

The Catholic Church in Egypt participated in the opening of the 11th session of the Middle East Ecumenical Institute, held at the Saint Augustine Center in Kafra, Beit Mery, in Lebanon. The session brings together 24 students from seven Arab countries, Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Palestine, Iraq, Sudan and Egypt, representing more than 11 church families, theological institutions, and Christian youth movements.

The program began with prayer and an opening address by Dr. Zahi Azar, President of the Institute, who highlighted its motto, "Knowledge, Love, Prayer," as the foundation of its ecumenical formation. Executive Director Elsie Wakil subsequently introduced the program and encouraged dialogue and active participation among the students.

On the second day, students from the Coptic Catholic Church led the morning prayer, followed by a biblical reflection from Fr. Camille William. Dr. Azar then presented a session on the ecumenical movement, emphasizing that Christian unity is rooted in the work of the Holy Spirit and in the call of Christians to

build bridges of communication across different churches and communities.

He stressed that ecumenism goes beyond theological or doctrinal discussions. It also involves deeper mutual understanding, respect for different Christian identities and traditions, and a willingness to live out one's faith while remaining open to others. At its heart, he described ecumenism as an expression of love centered on Jesus Christ.

Fr. Pierre Blanza also joined the program online for a session on "Ecumenism and Building a Society of Justice and Peace," examining the contribution of Christian unity to justice, peace, cooperation, and solidarity.

Interactive group activities allowed participants to explore different church traditions and share their experiences, fostering dialogue and mutual understanding. Established in 2015, the Institute seeks to form young people capable of promoting Christian unity, dialogue, cooperation, justice, and peace throughout the Middle East.

Source: Lemessenger-online.com

AMECEA CONGRATULATES MALAWI ON 125 YEARS OF EVANGELIZATION



Archbishop Gervas John Mwasikwabhila Nyaisonga/AMECEA

As the Catholic Church in Malawi prepares to mark 125 years since the Catholic faith took permanent root in the country, the Association of Member Episcopal Conferences in Eastern Africa (AMECEA) has extended its warmest congratulations on the evangelization mission among the people.

In a congratulatory message to the clergy, religious and the lay faithful of Malawi, dated 16th September 2026 and addressed to the Chairman of the Malawi Conference of Catholic Bishops (MCCB), Most Rev. Martin Mtumbuka, the AMECEA Chairman, Archbishop Gervas John Mwasikwabhila Nyaisonga of Mbeya Archdiocese, Tanzania, “expressed warmest congratulations as you celebrate one hundred and twenty-five (125) years since the Catholic faith took permanent root on Malawian soil.”

Sharing on behalf of the region, the Chairman recalled the historic arrival of the Montfort Missionaries in Malawi on 25th July 1901, to plant what would become Malawi’s first enduring Catholic mission among the Ngoni people of Nzama.

Archbishop Nyaisonga noted that from that small and fragile beginning, the

Church in Malawi has since grown into a body comprising ‘Archdioceses, Dioceses, major seminaries, schools, hospitals, and a vibrant community of the faithful across the nation.’

To mark the jubilee, MCCB has organized a national celebration at St Mary’s Nzama Parish in the Diocese of Dedza on Saturday, September 19, the very site where the missionary seed was first planted.

Archbishop Nyaisonga said the choice of venue is “itself a profound act of gratitude and a renewal of missionary courage for the next hundred and twenty-five years.” He added that Malawi’s jubilee is “a source of joy for the entire AMECEA region and the universal Church.”

The AMECEA Chairman connected Malawi’s 125th anniversary milestone to AMECEA’s own ongoing commitment to synodality and mission across its nine-member Conferences, narrating that Malawi’s witness is “an encouragement to every Church in our region.”

***Sr. Jecinter Antoinette Okoth
(AMECEA)***

PACTPAN CALLS FOR STRONGER RETIREMENT PLANNING FOR CATHOLIC PRIESTS IN NIGERIA



Rev. Fr. Hyacinth Ichoku (Right) and other panelists

The Pan-African Catholic Theology and Pastoral Network (PACTPAN) has brought attention to the need for Catholic dioceses in Nigeria to establish sustainable welfare and retirement provisions for priests. The issue was discussed during a September 16 palaver on the priesthood in Nigeria, focusing on “Caring for the Future: Welfare, Sustainability, and Retirement.”

Presenting the topic, Fr. Hyacinth Ichoku, Vice Chancellor of Veritas University Abuja, noted that the steady growth in priestly vocations means that increasing numbers of priests will eventually reach retirement age. He urged dioceses to anticipate this reality and establish funding mechanisms to support priests after active ministry.

Fr. Ichoku cited the Catholic Diocese of Awka, where priests are enrolled in the National Contributory Pension Scheme, as an example that could be considered by other dioceses. He suggested that dioceses or individual priests could make regular contributions to national pension schemes or establish dedicated retirement funds.

The discussion also examined the broader welfare needs of priests,

including healthcare, emergency support, fair remuneration and financial sustainability. Fr. Ichoku stressed that healthcare costs can become particularly challenging when priests retire or develop serious illnesses before reaching the canonical retirement age.

He also explored possible retirement arrangements, including diocesan retirement homes, returning to family homes and priests maintaining their own residences. Each option, he noted, presents challenges, ranging from possible feelings of abandonment in retirement homes to financial pressures and family tensions.

The researcher emphasized that priestly retirement does not mean abandoning the priesthood or leaving the Church, but rather recognizing the limits of active physical ministry with advancing age.

Fr. Ichoku concluded by stressing the importance of ensuring that retired priests can live with dignity rather than depending on charity. He called for dioceses to begin planning and investing now to meet the growing welfare and retirement needs of their clergy.

SECAM News, with ACI Africa

TUNISIA: THE CHURCH CALLED TO BUILD COMMUNION AND REACH OUT TO OTHERS



Mgr Nicolas Lhernould/Church in Tunisia

In a pastoral message, September 2026, regarding the next steps of the diocesan journey, Archbishop Nicolas Lhernould of Tunis reflects on the diocesan gathering held on June 6, 2026, in Sousse. This meeting brought together the work accomplished by various communities based on the guidelines set out in his pastoral letter, "Like a Tree by the Water-side" (Comme un arbre au bord des eaux), published on September 16, 2025.

The June 6 diocesan day provided an opportunity to review the journey taken so far and to discern, in a synodal spirit, the calls of the Holy Spirit for the future. It also revealed a desire to deepen listening and communion.

Three priorities emerged clearly from the discussions: growing as disciples to deepen one's roots, building communion to better radiate faith, and reaching out to others to live out the Gospel more fully. These three "longings", outlined in the day's summary document, now serve as a compass guiding the life of

the diocese.

Reflecting on experiences

To put these guidelines into practice, parishes are invited to implement five specific actions. At the diocesan level, a shared biblical program focused on the Acts of the Apostles will also be offered. This will allow communities to reflect on their own experiences in light of the first fifteen chapters of the book and the life of the early Christian community.

The program will unfold in five stages: the first four will take place in parishes, with meetings held every two months, while the final stage will coincide with another diocesan gathering in June 2027.

Finally, Archbishop Nicolas invites all members of the Church in Tunis, both long-standing and new, to participate in this shared journey with joy and conviction, remaining attentive to the calls of the Holy Spirit.

SECAM News

37TH ASSEMBLY: MESSAGE FROM THE BISHOPS OF THE EPISCOPAL CONFERENCE OF THE INDIAN OCEAN TO THEIR CHURCHES



Bishops present at this Assembly

Let us walk together: listening, discerning, and caring for one another

Dear brothers and sisters,

We gathered in Mauritius for our 37th assembly, joined by His Eminence Cardinal Maurice Piat and in communion with Bishop Landry Philippe Rasamison, the new Bishop of Port-Victoria (Seychelles), who is currently undergoing formation in Rome. Also present were the Chargé d’Affaires of the Apostolic Nunciature, Rev. Fr. José Cruz Israël Escarraman, along with our vicars general, priests, religious, and laypeople from all our islands. Members of the Theology and Pastoral Commission facilitated our assembly.

This year, we sought to live out the spirituality of the synod by practicing "conversation in the Spirit." We wanted to deepen our "walking together" by listening to our Churches, discerning calls, and opening paths to care for the People of God.

In doing so, we put synodal spirituality into practice within our Churches. We listened to the challenges they face.

We observe a weakening of social and family structures, economic instability, difficulties in passing on the faith, scourges affecting our youth, such as addictions, as well as ecological issues and the phenomenon of migration.

Faced with these challenges, we took time to discern what the Spirit is saying to us and to hear the calls to become, more than ever, a Church that cares.

The Church in our islands is on the move; the synodal dynamic is at work. The Spirit is

blowing, inviting us to let ourselves be carried and stirred by the divine impulse that already dwells within our hearts. To respond to the calls we have heard and to continue caring for others, we must be willing to die like the grain of wheat, to undergo conversion, and to overcome our resistance, so that we may bear fruit in the society in which we live.

In the midst of this changing world, having listened to God speak through His Word and mindful of the realities within our Churches, we wish to continue walking together and allowing the Holy Spirit to lead us, driven by the desire to share the "joy of the Gospel."

Together with Mary, who leads the way, and inspired by the hope of the Risen Lord, let us continue our journey with patience, perseverance, and joy.

Most Rev. Jean Michaël Durhône, Bishop of Port-Louis, Mauritius, President of CEDOI

Most Rev. Pascal Chane-Teng, Bishop of Saint-Denis de La Réunion, Vice-President of CEDOI

Most Rev. Michel Moura, Bishop of the Apostolic Vicariate of Rodrigues

Most Rev. Charles Mahuza Yava, Bishop of the Apostolic Vicariate of the Comoros Archipelago

Rev. Fr. Eric Léon, Vicar General of the Diocese of Port-Victoria, Seychelles, on behalf of Bishop Landry Philippe Rasamison

SOUTH AFRICA: GAUTENG FAITH LEADERS URGE RESPECT FOR WOMEN AND HUMAN LIFE



Members of the Gauteng Interfaith Leadership Council (GILC)

Faith leaders in South Africa's Gauteng province have condemned the killing of women in Ekurhuleni and called for a sustained effort to rebuild respect for human life, beginning in families and extending to religious communities, schools, government and wider society.

The call came as the Gauteng Interfaith Leadership Council (GILC) gathered on Tuesday, 22 September, to respond to the deaths of nine women whose bodies were discovered in different parts of Ekurhuleni District since July. The statement by the Interfaith Leadership was read by Cardinal Stephen Brislin, Archbishop of Johannesburg and a member of the GILC, in the presence of representatives of several faith traditions.

At the beginning of the gathering, Cardinal Brislin named the women identified by the South African Police Service: Busisiwe Mahlangu, Itumeleng Kekana, Nomfesane Mjobo, Gracious Nkomo, Elizabeth Moselakgomo, Dineo Motapane and Jabulile Ntimba. Two other victims had not yet been publicly identified. "These women are not statistics," the GILC statement says. "They are daughters, sisters, mothers, friends, neighbours, and beloved members of our

communities."

The council condemned violence and femicide as a grave moral failure that violates human dignity and the sanctity of life.

Respect starts at home

Drawing on the Document on Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together, signed in Abu Dhabi in 2019 by Pope Francis and the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar, Ahmed Al-Tayeb, the faith leaders reaffirmed the God-given dignity of every human person. They called for the investigations to be pursued diligently and for perpetrators to be brought to justice.

The council brings together representatives of different Christian denominations and other faith traditions, including Muslim, Hindu and the International Society for Krishna Consciousness.

"Respect starts at home," the discussion emphasised, with faith leaders calling for parents, schools and religious communities to work together in forming children who respect the dignity of others.

SECAM News, with Sheila Pires

SECAM Secretariat

No 4 Senchi Street,
Airport Residential
Area, Accra,
P.O. Box KA 9156,
Accra, Ghana
Tel. 0302778868 /
0302778873,
www.secam.org