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EDITORIAL



SECAM ADVANCES ITS 2025-2050 VISION THROUGH KEY INITIATIVES

The Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar (SECAM) is taking concrete steps to translate its 2025-2050 Vision into action through initiatives aimed at strengthening biblical evangelization, Catholic education and evidence-based pastoral planning across the continent.

Among other developments, three key initiatives emerged from the Symposium's second Standing Committee session of 2026, held in Nairobi, Kenya, from October 18 to 22, alongside the launch earlier in October of a pilot project to collect data on the Catholic Church in Africa.

Strengthening Evangelization through the Bible

On October 19, SECAM President, Fridolin Cardinal Ambongo Besungu, blessed the foundation stone for the new headquarters of the Catholic Biblical Centre for Africa and Madagascar (BICAM/CEBAM).

As SECAM's official body for the biblical apostolate, BICAM promotes biblical activities and the translation of the Bible into African languages.

Investing in Catholic Education

During the Nairobi session, SECAM established a Commission for Catholic Education, following recommendations from its 20th Plenary Assembly in Kigali in July 2025 and the First Continental Conference on Catholic Education in Africa, held in Addis Ababa in August 2026.

The Commission will strengthen collaboration among Episcopal Conferences, regional bodies, Catholic educational institutions, religious congregations and other ecclesial structures.

Building a Church that plans with reliable data

On October 8, SECAM launched a two-year pilot data collection project in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, in collaboration with the Catholic Bishops' Conferences of Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana.

The project seeks to establish a reliable database covering the Church's human resources, ecclesial structures, educational institutions, healthcare facilities and social services. Experience gained in these two countries will guide its gradual extension across Africa.

Reliable data will help the Church assess its realities, identify pastoral needs, set priorities and make informed decisions.

Together, these initiatives reflect SECAM's commitment to a coordinated, informed and mission-oriented Church. By strengthening the biblical apostolate, promoting Catholic education and developing reliable continental data, SECAM is laying practical foundations for its Vision 2025-2050: a Church better equipped to evangelize, form people and contribute to Africa's transformation

Rev. Fr. Rafael Simbine Junior

Secretary General of SECAM

POPE LEO HAS APPOINTED TWO BISHOPS FOR THE CHURCH IN AFRICA



Most Rev. Joseph Francis Janvier Badji

The Holy Father has accepted on October 24, 2026, the resignation from the pastoral care of the diocese of Kolda, Senegal, presented by Bishop Jean-Pierre Bassène. He is succeeded by Bishop Joseph Francis Janvier Badji, hitherto coadjutor bishop of the same diocese.



Most Rev. Jean Nicolas Rakotojaona

On October 25, 2026, the Holy Father has accepted the resignation from the pastoral care of the metropolitan archdiocese of Fianarantsoa, Madagascar, presented by Archbishop Fulgence Rabemahafaly. He is succeeded by Archbishop Jean Nicolas Rakotojaona, until now coadjutor archbishop of the same archdiocese. Jean Nicolas Rakotojaona was born on 18 January 1973 in Anosy Avaratra. He was ordained a priest on 3 August 2002 for the archdiocese of Antananarivo.

THREE AFRICAN THEOLOGIANS APPOINTED TO VATICAN'S INTERNATIONAL THEOLOGICAL COMMISSION



Gaston Ogui Cossi



Paul Béré



Patrick Mwania

On October 19, 2026, the Holy Father has appointed 24 members of the International Theological Commission and renewed the mandates of 6 others who served during its previous five-year term.

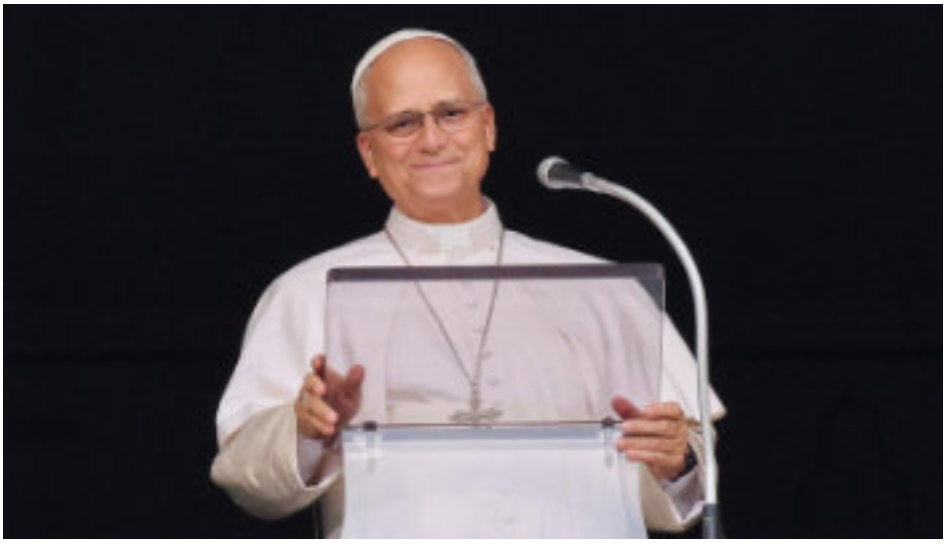
Among the new appointees are :

1. Fr Gaston Ogui Cossi of Benin, dean of the Bobo-Dioulasso University Unit of the Catholic University of West Africa;
2. Fr Paul Béré, S.J., of Burkina Faso, is dean of the Biblical Faculty of the Pontifical Biblical Institute at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome, Italy.
3. Fr Patrick Mwania, C.S.Sp., of Kenya, serves as vice-chancellor of Tangaza University in Nairobi.

The full list of this Commission also includes the six members confirmed for another five-year term: Msgr. Piero Coda, Secretary General; Fr Alberto Cozzi; Fr Simon Francis Gaine; Professor Reinhard Huetter; Sr Isabell Naumann; and Sr Josee Ngalula, from DR Congo.

Established by Pope Paul VI in 1969, the International Theological Commission advises the Holy See on important theological questions.

POPE LEO XIV RETURNS TO HIS PUBLIC ENGAGEMENTS FOLLOWING LUNG SURGERY



Pope Leo XIV / OSV News photo/Yara Nardi, Reuters

Pope Leo XIV resumed his public engagements on October 18, following surgery to remove the lower lobe of his right lung, leading the Angelus prayer before thousands of faithful gathered in St. Peter's Square.

The appearance marked his first scheduled public event since the operation on October 13 and his discharge from Rome's Gemelli Hospital on October 17. According to the Holy See Press Office, the surgery was successful and concluded without complications.

During the Angelus, the Holy Father reflected on Jesus' words, "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's," calling Christians to be truthful, free from hypocrisy and free to do good.

The Church in Africa has expressed its spiritual closeness to the Pope. In a message dated October 12, 2026, SECAM President Fridolin Cardinal Ambongo, Archbishop of Kinshasa, conveyed the solidarity and prayers of the Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar and the People of God throughout Africa and its islands.

SECAM assures Pope Leo XIV of its prayers

"Your Holiness, please be assured of the filial affection and constant prayers of the Church in Africa," Cardinal Ambongo wrote, entrusting the Pope to the maternal intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

He prayed that Mary would accompany the Holy Father through his operation and recovery, obtaining for him "renewed strength, good health, and a full and speedy recovery," so that he could continue his Petrine ministry in service of the universal Church.

The SECAM President also invited bishops, priests, consecrated persons and lay faithful across Africa and its islands to unite in fervent prayer for the Pope through Eucharistic celebrations, personal prayers and ecclesial communities.

"May this moment renew the Church in Africa in its love for the Successor of Peter and its commitment to pray for Your ministry," the message stated.

SECAM News, with Vatican News

SECAM MESSAGE OF FILIAL CLOSENESS AND PRAYER FOR THE HOLY FATHER, POPE LEO XIV





Cardinal Fridolin Ambongo Besungu (Left) to Pope Leo XIV

Your Holiness,

Upon learning of Your Holiness's forthcoming surgery, I wish, on behalf of the Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar (SECAM) and the entire People of God throughout Africa and its Islands, to express our heartfelt closeness and prayerful solidarity.

The news has naturally caused concern among the faithful across our continent. Yet, with hope and trust in God's providence, we pray that the Lord, for You.

Your Holiness, please be assured of the filial affection and constant prayers of the Church in Africa. We entrust You to the maternal intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of the Church. May she accompany You through the operation and recovery, and obtain for You renewed strength, good health, and a full and speedy recovery, so that You may continue Your Petrine ministry in the service of the universal Church.

I also invite all bishops, priests, consecrated persons, and lay faithful throughout Africa and its Islands to unite in fervent prayer for the Holy Father. May our Eucharistic celebrations, personal prayers, and ecclesial communities express our communion with You. May this moment renew the Church in Africa in its love for the Successor of Peter and its commitment to pray for Your ministry.

Entrusting Your Holiness to the loving care of God, we assure You of our continued prayers and filial solidarity. May the Lord bless You, protect You, and grant You a full and speedy recovery.

Yours faithfully in Christ,

Accra, 12 October 2026

✠ Fridolin Cardinal Ambongo

Archbishop of Kinshasa

President of SECAM

CARDINAL AMBONGO CALLS FOR INCLUSIVE DIALOGUE TO BUILD PEACE IN THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO



Cardinal Fridolin Ambongo Besungu, Archbishop of Kinshasa and President of the Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar (SECAM), has called for inclusive political dialogue as the essential path to peace in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), warning that military force alone cannot resolve the country's conflict.

Speaking at the international meeting for peace organised by the Community of Sant'Egidio in Assisi, Italy, from 25 to 27 October, His Eminence Fridolin Cardinal Ambongo Besungu addressed the Forum's question, "What Kind of Peace in an Age of Force?" The gathering marked 40 years since Pope St John Paul II invited representatives of different religions to Assisi to pray for peace in 1986.

"Without dialogue, there will be no peace"

Drawing on the experience of a Church that has witnessed decades of conflict, Cardinal Ambongo challenged the growing reliance on military power and the belief that preparing for war guarantees peace.

"Without dialogue, there will be no peace," he declared, insisting that resolving the conflict in the DRC requires an inclusive political process rather than military solutions alone.

"A dialogue that excludes those with whom one is at war is not a dialogue: it is a monologue," he said, urging political leaders to engage even those regarded as enemies. For the Congolese Cardinal, genuine peace emerges when adversaries are willing to recognise one another as brothers and sisters.

Peace Begins with Disarming Hearts

Cardinal Ambongo also emphasised that dialogue is not a sign of weakness but an expression of inner strength.

He further called for a peace that is "disarmed and disarming," beginning with the rejection of ethnic hatred, dehumanising language and the manipulation of religion to justify violence.

The Cardinal made three appeals: to political leaders in the DRC and the Great Lakes region, to reopen dialogue without exclusions or impossible preconditions; to the international community, to move beyond declarations and address the trade that finances armed conflict; and to believers of all religions, to become agents of peace in their words, communities and choices.

Charles Ayetan

SECAM MESSAGE OF SOLIDARITY TO THE ZAMBIA CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS



Cardinal Fridolin Ambongo, President of SECAM

H. E. Ignatius Chama,

Archbishop of Kasama,

President of Zambia Conference of Catholic Bishops (ZCCB)

Your Grace,

On behalf of the Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar (SECAM), we wish to express our fraternal solidarity and prayerful closeness to the Zambia Conference of Catholic Bishops (ZCCB), and in a particular way to His Grace Dr. Alick Banda, Archbishop of Lusaka, at this challenging moment in the life of the Church in Zambia.

We have learned with great concern of the recent proceedings involving Archbishop Banda,

following his appearance before the Drug Enforcement Commission of Zambia on 28 September 2026 in connection with ongoing investigations.

We take note with appreciation of the **clarification provided by the Zambia Conference of Catholic Bishops** that Archbishop Banda is not accused of involvement in the alleged disposal of the vehicle and that the vehicle in question was surrendered to the State in December 2023.

As the judicial process continues, the Catholic Bishops of Africa reaffirm the fundamental importance of justice, fairness, human dignity and due process. We trust that the competent institutions will discharge their responsibilities in accordance with the law, with respect for the rights and dignity of all those concerned, and in a manner that contributes to truth, justice and the common good.

We assure Archbishop Banda and the Zambia Conference of Catholic Bishops of our continued prayers and fraternal support. We encourage the Catholic faithful in Zambia to remain calm, united and prayerful, placing their trust in God as the judicial process unfolds.

May the Lord grant Archbishop Banda strength and peace, guide all those entrusted with the proceedings, and sustain the Church in Zambia in her mission of proclaiming the Gospel and serving the people with truth, justice, peace and compassion.

As we enter, on 1 October, the Month of the Holy Rosary, we entrust Archbishop Banda, the Zambia Conference of Catholic Bishops and the entire Church in Zambia to the maternal intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God and Mother of the Church. May she obtain for them strength, peace, courage and hope during this time of trial, and may she accompany the Church in Zambia with her maternal care and protection.

Fraternally in Christ.

Accra, 01 October 2026

✠ Fridolin Cardinal Ambongo

Archbishop of Kinshasa,

President of SECAM

IN NAIROBI, SECAM LAYS THE FOUNDATION STONE FOR THE NEW HEADQUARTERS OF ITS BIBLICAL CENTRE



A significant step for the Bible Apostolate in Africa

The Standing Committee of the Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar (SECAM) held its second session of 2026 from October 18 to 22 in Nairobi, Kenya. A key moment during the meeting was the blessing of the foundation stone for the new headquarters of the Catholic Biblical Centre for Africa and Madagascar (BICAM/CEBAM).

Chaired by His Eminence Fridolin Cardinal Ambongo Besungu, Metropolitan Archbishop of Kinshasa and President of SECAM, the meeting brought together bishops members of the Standing Committee, as well as the Symposium's secretaries general.

Foundation stone for the new BICAM Centre

The proceedings covered various aspects of the life and mission of SECAM and the Church Family of God. Participants reviewed the implementation of the Symposium's action plan, assessed its ongoing activities, and examined reports presented during the session. The meeting also provided an opportunity to share insights on the life of the Church and social realities across the various regions of Africa and its Ilands.

A highlight of the session took place on Monday, October 19, when SECAM President Cardinal Ambongo blessed the foundation stone for the new BICAM Center.

Promoting the Biblical Apostolate in Africa

Currently directed by Fr Anselm Kamuyu, a priest of the Archdiocese of Nairobi, BICAM serves as the official body of SECAM tasked with promoting, coordinating, and organizing the biblical apostolate, as well as the translation of the Bible into African languages.

The Catholic Biblical Centre for Africa and Madagascar is part of the SECAM Commission for Evangelization and brings together, among others, the biblical apostolate structures of regional and national episcopal conferences, diocesan bodies, and various organizations engaged in the biblical apostolate across the African continent and its islands.

SECAM News

EDUCATION

SECAM ESTABLISHES COMMISSION FOR CATHOLIC EDUCATION



Participants of the first Continental Conference on Catholic Education in Africa/SECAM (Archives)

The Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar (SECAM) has decided to establish a Commission for Catholic Education to strengthen coordination and collaboration among ecclesial actors in the education sector. The decision was taken during the second session of its Standing Committee in 2026, held in Nairobi, Kenya, from October 18 to 22.

The meeting was chaired by His Eminence Fridolin Cardinal Ambongo Besungu, Metropolitan Archbishop of Kinshasa and President of SECAM. It brought together the bishops who are members of the Standing Committee, as well as the Symposium's Secretaries General.

The establishment of the Commission is in line with the SECAM Vision 2025-2050, which calls for renewed missionary commitment, the integral formation of the human person, and greater responsibility on the part of the Church for the future of the continent.

The decision follows the orientations of SECAM's 20th Plenary Assembly, held in Kigali, Rwanda, in July 2025, as well as the conclusions of the First Continental Conference on Catholic Education in Africa, held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, from August 5 to 8, 2026. The Addis Ababa Declaration, adopted on August 7, specifically recommended the establishment of this Commission and the development of a continental framework for Catholic education.

Strengthening the Church's Educational Mission

As a permanent continental body of SECAM, the Commission will be responsible for promoting, coordinating and strengthening Catholic education in Africa and Madagascar, in service of evangelization, integral human formation and the transformation of society in the light of the Gospel.

It will foster collaboration among Episcopal Conferences, regional bodies, Catholic educational institutions, religious congregations and other relevant ecclesial structures, while respecting the principle of subsidiarity and the specific responsibilities of each institution.

The Act establishing the Commission was signed in Nairobi on October 20, 2026, by Cardinal Fridolin Ambongo Besungu on behalf of SECAM's Standing Committee.

SECAM News

SECAM LAUNCHES A PILOT DATA COLLECTION PROJECT



Group photo at the Launch of this Project in Abidjan

The Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar (SECAM) launched a pilot project on October 8 in Abidjan-Cocody, Côte d'Ivoire, to collect data on the Catholic Church in Africa. The two-year pilot Project will cover Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana, conducted in collaboration with the Catholic Bishops Conferences of both countries.

The initiative aims to establish a reliable and up-to-date database on the continent's human resources, ecclesial structures and Church institutions. According to Rev. Fr. Rafael Simbine Junio, Secretary General of SECAM, the lack of consolidated statistics makes it difficult to determine accurately the number of clergy, religious men and women, as well as Catholic educational and healthcare institutions.

He also stressed the need for the African Church to generate reliable information about its own realities rather than depend primarily on external sources. The experience gained during the pilot phase will serve as a reference for gradually extending the project to other African countries.

Rev. Fr. Émile Kélignon, Secretary General of the Catholic Bishops Conference of Côte d'Ivoire (CECCI), welcomed the initiative, highlighting its strategic importance for planning and organizing ecclesial activities.

Data collection will be carried out by six religious sisters, three in each country, and will focus on five priority areas: human resources and the Catholic population, ecclesial structures, education, healthcare and social services. The exercise will cover bishops, priests, seminarians, catechists, dioceses, parishes, schools, hospitals, orphanages and retirement homes, among other institutions.

For Rev. Fr. Zéphirin Moubé, First Deputy Secretary General of SECAM in charge of Evangelization, the project will enable Africans to present their Church more accurately to the world, including partners and the Holy See.

Beyond statistical data collection, the initiative is intended to serve as a decision-making tool, helping the Church identify its needs, establish pastoral priorities and strengthen its evangelizing mission across Africa.

Training sessions in Nairobi and Accra prepared Catholic sisters from Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana for the field data collection phase, helping ensure reliable and consistent data for the continental project.

SECAM News,
with Marcel Ariston Blé

WORLD YOUTH DAY 2027: POPE LEO XIV INVITES YOUNG



Participants of the Preparatory Meeting of the 2027 World Youth Day

Pope Leo XIV has invited young people worldwide to register for World Youth Day (WYD) Seoul 2027, which will take place in South Korea from August 3 to 8, under the theme, "Take courage! I have overcome the world" (John 16:33).

In a video message released on October 22, 2026, the Holy Father described the gathering as a pilgrimage of faith, friendship and hope, encouraging young people to deepen their relationship with God and encounter fellow Christians from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds. He emphasised that their diversity can strengthen unity as members of the one Body of Christ.

Recalling Saint John Paul II's appeal, "Do not be afraid. Open wide the doors for Christ," Pope Leo XIV urged young people to bring their dreams, hopes, struggles and wounds to this encounter, where Christ calls each person to renew their hope and discover the fullness of life and joy.

SECAM Coordinates African Participation

Meanwhile, the Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar (SECAM) is coordinating African participation to ensure a strong, united and meaningful presence at WYD Seoul 2027.

In September 2026, a SECAM delegation led by Rev. Fr. Zephirin Moube participated in a preparatory meeting in Seoul, laying the groundwork for the African Church's involvement in the international gathering.

SECAM's coordination aims to establish a clear roadmap for effective participation, strengthen collaboration among African countries and national episcopal conferences, and encourage young people to become artisans of peace and hope in their communities.

Beyond participation, the initiative seeks to deepen the contribution of African youth to the Church's mission, with Christ as the source of peace, reconciliation and renewed missionary commitment across the continent.

Under the call "Youth on the journey: One faith, One mission," SECAM invites continued prayer, support and participation to help make WYD Seoul 2027 a significant moment for African youth, the Church and the continent.

SECAM News

SECAM TRAINS CHURCH LEADERS IN PEACEBUILDING AND ELECTORAL ENGAGEMENT IN GUINEA-BISSAU



Rev. Fr. Rafael Simbine Junior, SECAM Secretary General (1st Left), with participants

The Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar (SECAM), in collaboration with the Regional Episcopal Conference of West Africa (RECOWA) and Catholic Church structures in Guinea-Bissau, held a two-day capacity-building workshop for local Church leaders on peacebuilding, election observation and democratic transitions on October 28-29, 2026, in Guinea-Bissau.

The training brought together Church leaders and representatives to strengthen their capacity to contribute to peaceful electoral processes, prevent conflict and support democratic transitions while upholding non-partisanship and respect for electoral laws and institutional independence. The SECAM delegation was led by Fr. Rafael Simbine Junior, SECAM Secretary General.

Addressing participants on behalf of Bishop Andrew Karnley of Cape Palmas, Liberia, President of the RECOWA Justice, Peace and Development Commission, Rev. Fr. Vincent de Paul Boro, First Deputy Secretary General of RECOWA, expressed support for the "timely initiative" and urged participants to translate their learning into practical action in dioceses, parishes and communities.

Mediation and violence prevention

The workshop addressed key challenges surrounding electoral periods, including political tensions, misinformation, disinformation and social polarisation. Participants from many regions of the country explored practical approaches to conflict analysis, early warning, dialogue, mediation and violence prevention, alongside the principles and ethical standards of credible election observation.

Particular attention was given to engagement with African Union Election Observation Mission stakeholders. Discussions focused on the African Union's election observation framework, appropriate channels for information-sharing and the respective responsibilities of Church actors and formal election observers.

Through presentations, case studies, group discussions, role-playing and practical simulations, participants examined ways to document electoral incidents objectively, verify information and communicate responsibly during sensitive electoral periods. The sessions also highlighted the Church's role in promoting peaceful civic participation, post-election dialogue, reconciliation and social cohesion.

The Church's contribution to peace

A key expected outcome was the development of practical action plans to translate the training into initiatives at diocesan and community levels. These plans focus on peacebuilding, early warning, community outreach, responsible communication and collaboration with relevant electoral and civil society stakeholders.

SECAM News

ACEAC

MEDIA PROFESSIONALS FOR PEACE IN THE GREAT LAKES REGION



A session of this Seminar

From October 1 to 4, 2026, the Association of Episcopal Conferences of Central Africa (ACEAC) brought together media and communication professionals from Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), and Rwanda in Muyinga, Burundi. The meeting marked the launch of the process to establish the Regional Network of Media and Communication Professionals of the Great Lakes (REPROMEC-GL), aimed at promoting peace, reconciliation, and social cohesion across the sub-region.

Discussions focused on structuring the network, strengthening collaboration among its members, defining joint activities, and adopting an ethical charter. The initiative responds to a recommendation made by ACEAC bishops during their 15th Plenary Assembly, held in Kinshasa from December 10 to 14, 2025. The bishops had emphasised the need for responsible, ethical, and constructive communication to support pastoral initiatives and help address regional challenges.

At the opening ceremony, Archbishop Joachim Nthahondereye, President of ACEAC, and Father Jean-Pierre Badidike, Secretary General of the Association, highlighted the essential role of media professionals in promoting peace, reconciliation, and social cohesion.

In a region facing numerous challenges, accurate and responsible reporting can encourage dialogue and bring communities closer together. Conversely, misinformation and stigmatising narratives risk aggravating tensions and deepening divisions.

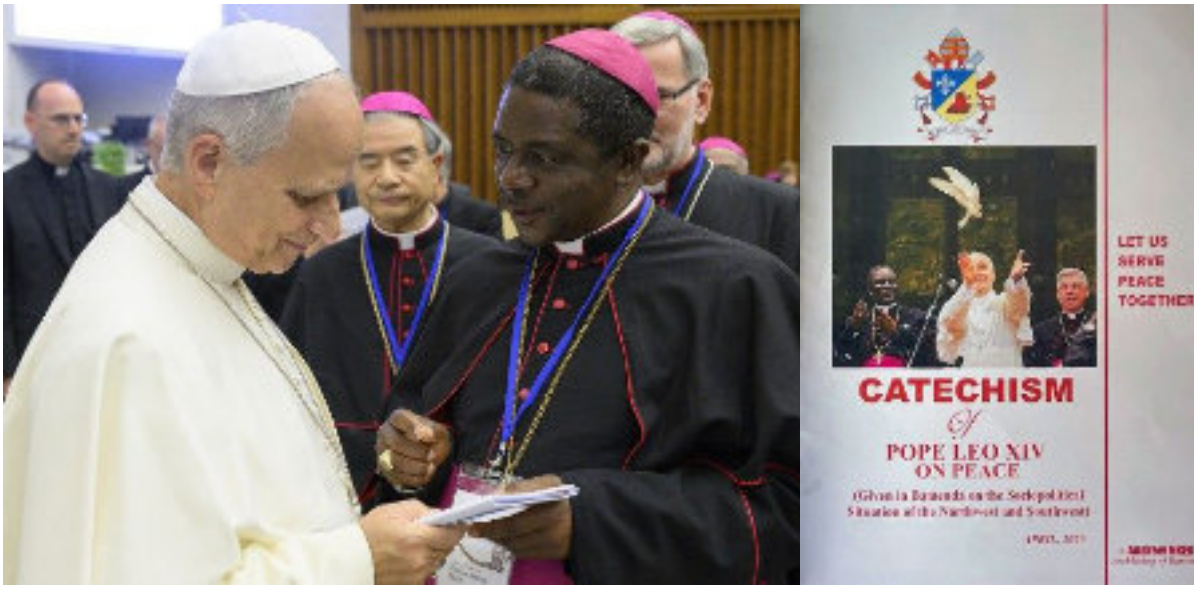
REPROMEC-GL therefore seeks to provide a sustainable platform for exchanges, training, experience-sharing, and coordination among professionals from the three countries. It also aims to develop joint media initiatives and strengthen the professional skills of its members.

Beyond its professional objectives, the network promotes a human-centred approach to communication, grounded in respect for human dignity, dialogue, and the rejection of prejudice.

Through this initiative, ACEAC seeks to empower media professionals to become genuine agents of peace, capable of contributing to a more united and reconciled Great Lakes region, committed to promoting peaceful coexistence.

ACEAC Communications

CATECHISM OF POPE LEO XIV ON PEACE PROMOTES RECONCILIATION IN CAMEROON



Pope Leo receiving a copy of Catechism of Pope Leo XIV on Peace, from Archbishop Andrew Nkea of Bamenda in the Vatican on 7th October 2026 (© Vatican Media)

Archbishop Andrew Nkea has emphasized that the Catechism of Pope Leo XIV on Peace conveys the message of peace delivered by Pope Leo XIV to the people of Cameroon during his visit to Bamenda.

The Pope received the book with appreciation and said he was "happily surprised" to see it. He expressed hope that many people, especially children, would read it and grow in a culture of peace. He also thanked Archbishop Nkea and the team in Bamenda for transforming his visit into a concrete pastoral resource.

Bamenda, in Cameroon's English-speaking region, has been severely affected by the ongoing civil war, which has claimed thousands of lives, displaced many people, and destroyed public and private property, as well as essential infrastructure.

During his visit to Cameroon, Pope Leo repeatedly appealed for dialogue and reconciliation. According to Archbishop Nkea, the catechism seeks to preserve and strengthen this message beyond the papal visit.

The book contains 100 questions and answers designed to help people understand, teach, and practise the culture of peace promoted by the Pope. Copies will initially be distributed to parishes and Catholic schools in Bamenda before reaching other dioceses across Cameroon. The Peace and Justice Commissions of Catholic dioceses will also use the publication for community formation.

Archbishop Nkeam President of the National Episcopal Conference of Cameroon, stressed that the book does not mark the end of the Pope's visit but rather the beginning of a way of life rooted in peace. For communities living in conflict-affected areas, he explained, peace must be a daily choice reflected in attitudes and actions.

He expressed hope that the catechism would inspire Cameroonians to become promoters and messengers of peace, putting into practice the Pope's appeal for dialogue, reconciliation, and peaceful coexistence.

SECAM News,
with Vatican News

AHCE

PATRIARCH IBRAHIM ISAAC CONCLUDES THE CONGRESS OF THE LEGION OF MARY OFFICERS IN EGYPT



Participants of this gathering

On October 17, Patriarch Ibrahim Isaac, Patriarch of the Coptic Catholic Church of Alexandria, concluded the conference for the higher and local councils of the Legion of Mary officers in Egypt, held at the Major Seminary in Maadi.

The conference took place from October 15th to 17th. It was organized by the Major Seminary in Maadi, represented by its Rector, Fr. Romany Fawzy, and the seminary's council member, with the participation of Fr. Hadaya Tamer, Pastoral Vicar for the Patriarchal Eparchy in Cairo and spiritual director of the "Mary, Queen of the World" Regional Council of the Legion of Mary.

The first day included the welcoming of participants and an introductory tour of the seminary, during which Fr. Romany provided an overview of the institution's history, as well as its architectural and library heritage.

Additionally, Fr. Antonios Zakka delivered the conference's first lecture, as part of a formation program designed to support the mission of the Legion of Mary and its service to the Church. The program included spiritual and liturgical activities, such as participation in the Divine Liturgy and daily liturgical prayers within the seminary chapels. It also featured devotional prayers and Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, offering participants an opportunity to deepen their spiritual lives and renew their commitment to service.

The conference also included a session titled "Journeying Together," presented by Sister Margaret, alongside fraternal gatherings, free time, and opportunities for participants to share their experiences.

The conference concluded with the celebration of the Divine Liturgy, presided over by His Beatitude Patriarch Anba Ibrahim Isaac. In his address, he offered words of encouragement to those present, emphasizing the importance of faith and the role of the Legion of Mary within the life of the Church, while urging participants to continue their service with a spirit of love and dedication.

Source: Lemessager-online.com

UGANDA MARKS 108 YEARS OF THE MARTYRDOM OF BLESSED DAUDI OKELLO AND BLESSED JILDO IRWA



Bishop Sabino Ochan Odoki of Arua Diocese, during this Celebration



Blessed Daudi Okelo (1902-1918) and Jildo Irwa (1906-1918), celebrated on 20th October

Catholic faithful from Uganda and beyond gathered at Wipolo Martyrs Shrine in Agago District, Gulu Archdiocese, on 20 October to commemorate the 108th anniversary of the martyrdom of Blessed Daudi Okello and Blessed Jildo Irwa, two young catechists killed in 1918 for their steadfast witness to the Christian faith.

This year's celebration was held under the theme: "Rooted in the Eucharist, United with St Joseph, Blessed Daudi Okello and Jildo Irwa."

A Celebration of Faith and Witness

The event brought together bishops, priests, religious, pilgrims, local leaders, representatives of Catholic movements and associations, and Christians from across Uganda. Pilgrims from Austria and Germany also joined the annual commemoration.

The principal celebrant, Bishop Sabino Ochan Odoki of Arua Diocese, welcomed the congregation and acknowledged the groups gathered to honour the Paimol Martyrs.

Bishop Odoki recalled the lives and service of Blessed Daudi Okello and Blessed Jildo Irwa, who served the people of Paimol before giving their lives for the faith. He expressed hope that the pilgrimage would bear spiritual fruit for all participants.

Martyrs as Models of Perseverance

Reflecting on their witness, Bishop Odoki described the two martyrs as enduring examples of conviction, courage and perseverance in the Christian faith.

He encouraged the faithful to remain committed to doing good despite difficulties, suffering or opposition. Christians, he said, should not fear suffering when it results from doing what is right, but should recognise the opportunity to share in Christ's suffering.

The annual celebration at Wipolo commemorated the sacrifice of the two catechists, whose witness continues to inspire Christians across Uganda and beyond.

Blessed Daudi Okello and Blessed Jildo Irwa were beatified by Pope John Paul II on 20 October 2002, in St Peter's Square at the Vatican, during the celebration of World Mission Sunday.

SECAM News,
with Fr. Isaac Ojok (Vatican News)

CERAO/RECOWA

FIRST WORKSHOP FOR RECOWA DIRECTORS OF COMMUNICATION: "UNITING OUR VOICES, STRENGTHENING



Participants of this Workshop

The communications officers of the eleven episcopal conferences belonging to the Regional Episcopal Conferences of West Africa (Recowa/Cerao), representing sixteen countries, gathered at the Recowa Pastoral and Mission Center in Abidjan from October 13 to 15, 2026, for a regional training workshop focused on collaboration, synergy and communion.

The meeting implements a decision taken by the bishops during the fourth plenary assembly of the West African Bishops' Conferences, held in Abuja in May 2022. They called for stronger collaboration among national secretariats and communications directors to coordinate activities and share information. However, financial constraints delayed the implementation of the initiative.

Representing Cardinal Ignace Bessi Dogbo, Archbishop of Abidjan, Fr Hervé Djézou welcomed the participants and emphasized the need to establish coordination mechanisms and tools to improve the Church's visibility and effectiveness.

Fr Paul Dah, Recowa's Communications Director, stressed that the initiative seeks to strengthen the sharing of socio-pastoral activities across the region, ensuring that pastoral care is not limited by geographical, historical or linguistic boundaries. The institution encompasses 160 dioceses and archdioceses, nearly 419 million people, including approximately 51 million Catholics, and 232 bishops.

The workshop also addresses longstanding challenges arising from linguistic divisions and the colonial legacy. The merger of Francophone and Lusophone episcopal structures with their Anglophone counterparts culminated in the constituent assembly in Yamoussoukro in 2012, following earlier efforts to promote unity.

Fr Hubert Kedowidé, the lead training coordinator, highlighted the importance of mastering new communication technologies to support the Church's mission. Technical training, he explained, should serve the proclamation of the Gospel and the promotion of the Church's social doctrine.

The First Deputy Secretary General, Fr Vincent de Paul Boro, emphasized that communication must go beyond technological tools to embrace its theological and pastoral dimensions. Artificial intelligence is also among the areas of interest of the Episcopal Commission for Social Communications, one of Recowa's eight commissions.

The workshop aims to equip participants with practical skills and essential tools to strengthen collaboration, promote a unified ecclesial voice and improve communication throughout West Africa.

SECAM News, with Fr Gomis

CERNA

JOURNEYING TOGETHER: STRENGTHENING THE BRIDGE BETWEEN TWO SHORES



Agents of Charity and Peace

The partnership between Caritas Tunisia and the Caritas organizations in Sicily reached a new milestone with a visit to Sicily beginning on September 28, marking the conclusion of the project's first phase, a period dedicated to mutual discovery.

The Tunisian delegation, consisting of four permanent staff members from Caritas Tunisia, accompanied by their bishop and the director of Caritas, received a warm welcome. This visit is part of an ongoing initiative launched in 2024, which will be followed by a visit from Sicilian bishops to Tunis in September 2025, and subsequently by a visit from seven directors of the Sicilian Caritas branches in April 2026.

A highlight of the week was the meeting with bishops from the Episcopal Conference, as well as with the directors and heads of Caritas from Sicily's 18 dioceses. These discussions fostered a deeper mutual understanding and helped identify common ground between Tunisia and Sicily, an essential foundation for developing concrete projects.

Field visits focused primarily on migration and the challenges surrounding integration. In Monreale, a presentation explored the various facets of human mobility. In Palermo, participants learned about the realities of integrating minors and heard from a Tunisian woman who assists migrants with legal status in navigating administrative processes.

The "Orto solidale" (Solidarity Garden) project, which allows migrants to cultivate their own plots of land, drew parallels to the experiences of women in Mornag. Meanwhile, in Pozzallo, the "Mensa dell'incontro" (Table of Encounter) hosts communal meals twice a week. In Modica, the "Crisci Ranni" educational center fosters interaction among families of various nationalities through play, sports, and creative activities. In Marina di Acate, former beneficiaries have themselves become agents of solidarity.

The delegation also explored Sicily's religious and cultural heritage, including its cathedrals and sites associated with Saint Agatha.

At the end of the visit, the participants shared their reflections and identified potential avenues for developing joint projects.

SECAM News,
with Enrica Gilardi

CEROI

MADAGASCAR: JUSTICE AND PEACE COMMISSION CALLS FOR UNITY AND RESPONSIBILITY



Most Rev. Benjamin Marc Ramaroson, president of Justice and Peace Commission

The Justice and Peace Commission of Madagascar has drawn attention to the persistent challenges facing the country, including insecurity, corruption, environmental degradation, and difficulties in accessing healthcare and quality education.

In a statement released on October 15, 2026, following its annual meeting held in Antananarivo on October 13 and 14, the Commission acknowledged certain efforts made by the authorities, such as road rehabilitation, a reduction in power outages, and improvements to the water supply. Nevertheless, it maintains that further measures are still required.

The declaration denounces the ongoing prevalence of violence and theft, as well as the exploitation of natural resources, the benefits of which fail to reach the Malagasy population to a sufficient degree. It also highlights the environmental consequences of mining activities and bushfires.

A call for responsibility, unity, and hope

Signed by Bishop Benjamin Ramaroson, the Commission's president, and Fr Germain Rajoelison, its secretary general, the message, expresses concern regarding the decline in the quality of education, the spread of misinformation on social media, and the lack of tangible results in the fight against corruption. The Commission also points to inadequate public awareness efforts concerning the "Izaho Tokana" biometric identification card, as well as uncertainties surrounding the national consultative process.

In light of these concerns, the Commission calls upon leaders to fulfill their responsibilities in pursuit of the common good, to strengthen dialogue, and to improve both the education and healthcare systems. It also urges citizens to safeguard national unity and to resist divisions, in solidarity. Drawing inspiration from Galatians 6:9, "Let us not grow weary in doing good," the Commission further urges the Malagasy people to maintain hope and to pray for the country's future, in union with Our Lady of the Rosary.

SECAM News

BISHOPS OF IMBISA VISIT REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT CAMP AND PRAY FOR PEACE IN CABO DELGADO



IMBISA Standing Committee Members during this visit

Bishops members of the Standing Committee of the Inter-Regional Meeting of the Bishops of Southern Africa (IMBISA) visited the "Três de Fevereiro" resettlement Camp in Pemba on October 1st, 2026, to follow the dramatic route of migrants and refugees concentrated there. Being on the ground and side by side with the refugees, the Bishops stopped at several houses to listen to stories of suffering, loss and hope, offering spiritual comfort.

The Bishops visit was held in collaboration with the local commissions for Social Pastoral Ministry of Caritas of the Diocese of Pemba. Their dialogue with the refugees focused on listening directly to their humanitarian, spiritual, and social needs, promoting a culture of encounter and respect for human dignity. The visit also served to raise awareness and renew the call for continued action, so that the plight of internally displaced persons and refugees does not fall into oblivion among society and governments.

At the end of this visit, the Prelates once again called upon the faithful to join in a chain of prayer for peace, reconciliation, and harmony throughout the country. At the Cathedral of St. Paul, patron saint of the Diocese, they condemned the acts of violence and attacks against communities and churches in Cabo Delgado Province and prayed together for peace throughout the world, particularly in Cabo Delgado.

In his homily, Archbishop José Manuel Imbamba, president of the Episcopal Conference of Angola and São Tomé, recalled that war and hatred destroy human dignity and appealed for dialogue, urging political leaders and citizens to choose the path of negotiation and reconciliation. The Archbishop stressed that Christian hope is not a utopia, but an anchor rooted in eternal life, enabling people to face suffering and adversity with courage and joy.

The Bishop of Pemba, Most Rev. Juliasse Sandramo, stressed that, in the face of the tragedy and suffering endured by the population, prayer remains the "only force" and a possible response. The end of the armed violence and terrorism affecting northern Mozambique was among the appeals made by the Bishops, who highlighted love as a pillar for building a more humane society.

SECAM News

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