

Mission Intention

May 2016 - 2017

Christians in Africa
That Christians in Africa, in imitation of the merciful Jesus, may give prophetic witness to reconciliation, justice and peace.

During this month we consider places in the world, especially in Africa, that are divided by civil unrest and religious conflict. We remember the risen Jesus who greeted his disciples with peace, forgiveness and the call to reconciliation. The Christian witness of mercy is needed today more than ever.

Country Focus: Tanzania



Tanzania is located on the east coast of Africa on the Indian Ocean and has long been a location for contact with peoples from the Middle East and Europe. It is the home of Lake Victoria, the largest lake in Africa and Mount Kilimanjaro, the tallest mountain in Africa. Tanzania is also known for its national parks with exotic animals that draw many visitors every year.

Tanzania had been a colony of Germany, followed by the British, until 1961 when it gained independence. Today, Tanzania commerce is rapidly growing relying on agriculture, fishing, tourism and minerals.

Religion is very important in the lives of people of Tanzania. Many faiths coexist together. Catholics make up one-fourth of the population and the Church is organized in what are called small Christian communities.

These communities of 10-50 families form the nucleus of the Churches' activities, teaching and pastoral care. The Church is developing and maturing quickly and taking more responsibility for being a mission-sending community.

There is much to be excited about and hopeful for what God is doing in Tanzania.

God's Word for Mission

Promoting Knowledge of Faith

"Jesus said, 'Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.' And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, 'Receive the Holy Spirit. Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them, and whose sins you retain are retained'" (John 20:21-23).

"All this is from God, who has reconciled us to himself in Christ and given us the ministry of reconciliation...So we are ambassadors for Christ" (II Cor. 5:18; 20).

A Saint for Mission: St. Joseph Mukasa

Education for Community Life



St. Joseph Mukasa was born in 1860 in East Africa in the kingdom of Buganda. He became a page of the king and was recognized early for his leadership ability. It was in the court of the king that he met Christian missionaries, and influenced by the Gospel message, was baptized in 1880.

When the Christian missionaries were forced out of the kingdom, Joseph assumed leadership of the small Catholic community. After three years, missionaries were allowed to return to find that their small community had doubled in size.

Joseph worked hard to increase freedoms for the young Christian community enabling them to practice their faith. He received the nickname, "Balikuddembe" - meaning "they are at liberty" - in memory of the freedoms he won for them.

Joseph spent the remainder of his life trying to reconcile his loyalty to his homeland with the Christian faith he lived. Eventually, he was falsely accused of treason and condemned to death in 1885. His prophetic witness as a martyr was followed by others - known as the Ugandan Martyrs - and has inspired many in East Africa. His feast day is June 3rd.



Dignity of Work

Catholic Social Teaching



Dignity of work and dignity of the worker, regardless of the position, are important Catholic social teachings. Whether miners in Tanzania or fast food workers in the U.S., all positions serve a function in society and should be respected for the benefits they provide.

The Curtis quintuplets are all employed at a McDonald's in Pottersville, Michigan. The two girls and three boys each have their own responsibilities which they carry out with great enthusiasm. The manager recognizes the gift she has in the kids as they are hardworking, dependable and take pride in their work. They function as a team to deliver quality customer service...and the customers notice.

The quintuplets demonstrate how hard work with a generous attitude produces respect for them and what they do. Regardless of the type of job or occupation, all work can be dignified and should be respected by society. See a video about the quintuplets: *Quintuplets work at McDonald's*



Daily Offering

Missionary Initiative

Dear God, I offer you my joys and sorrows, my work and my play, and all that I am this day. Help me to be an instrument of your mercy and peace with all I meet today. Help me to imitate the life of Jesus who shared your love with us. And I know that you are always with me. Amen.

Dignity of Work

Moral Formation

After watching the video, think about the questions below and discuss.

1. Why is the story of the Curtis quintuplets so important given that many people may not consider a job in a fast food restaurant as respectable as many other jobs in our society?
2. What examples in the video illustrate that the quintuplets are responsible workers appreciated by their manager and customers?
3. Why do you think Jesus used farmers and vineyard workers as subjects in his parables?
4. Does this story and Jesus' parables change your opinion of fast food employees and others who work in lower-paid service industries? Why?



Petitions for Mission

Liturgical Education

- ✦ Let us pray that Christians in Africa will be prophetic witnesses to God's mercy, justice and peace.
- ✦ Let us pray for reconciliation and healing among families, communities and nations.
- ✦ Let us pray for all those who witness to Christ's mercy in places of conflict and division.
- ✦ Let us pray that we will each share the gifts we have received to build up the Kingdom of God.
- ✦ Let us pray that we may be strong witnesses to Christian values at home, school, work and in the world.



CENTER for MISSION

Society for the Propagation of the Faith / St. Paul and Minneapolis