

**Universal: Young People in Africa**  
 That children and teenagers in Africa are able to go to school and find jobs in their own countries

*We are invited to consider how we might stand in solidarity with young people in Africa and how we can support their right to education and opportunity*



**Country Focus: Mali**

Do you think you could live on less than \$1.90 a day? For almost 9 million people in Mali, half the country's population, \$1.90 a day is all they earn to purchase basics; such as food, clothing, shelter, and medicine.

Once one of the richest and most powerful empires in Africa, Mali is now one of the poorest. This west African nation is half the size of Texas and home to about 18 million people.

The country suffers from drought, and when it rains, the sandy soil causes floods. Many people do not have permanent homes because of this and school closures are common.

Many who can go to colleges

and vocational training cannot find jobs in Mali and often leave their country in search of work.

The primary religion in Mali is Islam introduced in the 11th century. The Catholic faith is relatively new, with the first Catholic parish being founded in 1888. Although only 2% of the population, the Roman Catholic faith is very much alive, getting its first Cardinal in 2017.



**Promoting Knowledge of Faith**

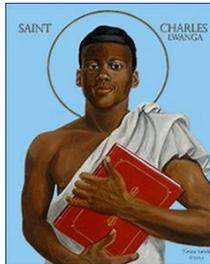
**God's Word for Mission**

*"There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female for you are all one in Christ Jesus."*  
 (Gal. 3:28)

*"Solidarity is not a feeling of vague compassion or shallow distress at the misfortunes of so many people, both near and far. On the contrary, it is a firm and persevering determination to commit oneself to the common good; that is to say, to the good of all and each individual."*  
 (St. John Paul II, Sollicitudo rei Socialis, # 38).

**Education for Community Life**

**A Saint for Mission: St. Charles Lwanga**



If you were considered the most attractive person in your country and one of the best athletes, what do you think the future would hold for you? Professional sports contracts, or a successful career in the movies?

About 125 years ago in Uganda, Charles Lwanga had just such a reputation. But instead of using his reputation for personal fame and fortune, he chose to devote his life to Jesus. Charles first heard about Jesus from evangelists in the King's court where he worked as a page. He was so inspired that he quickly gave up the pagan faith of his birth and was baptized into the Catholic Church.

Charles was instrumental in introducing many of his friends to Catholicism. Being a Christian during his time in Uganda was awfully difficult as the King was very corrupt. Charles had to work hard to protect his friends from the King. One day, the King decided to outlaw Christianity in all of Uganda. Charles and his friends refused to give up their faith in Jesus when ordered to do so by the King and chose death rather than abandoning their faith.

But this is not the end of Charles' story. His courage and steadfast faith in the face of death inspired many other Ugandans to follow the teachings of Christ. When Christianity became legal again, many people chose to be baptized. The Catholic Church in Uganda continues to flourish today largely because of the bravery of St. Charles Lwanga and his friends.

**St. Charles Lwanga is the patron saint of African Catholic Youth Action. His feast day is June 3.**

## Call to Family, Community and Participation



MINUSMA in Mali

One very important aspect of this Catholic social principle teaches us that the **right to participate** in the economic, political, social and especially the religious life of society and family is a fundamental right for everyone. It is wrong for anyone or group to prevent certain citizens from getting a job, attending a school or worshipping in their chosen church. Indeed, it is a teaching of the Catholic Church that all people are assured a minimum level of participation in their community institutions. Our failure to do this says that some people count less than others.

MINUSMA stands for United Nations Multi-Dimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali. It is a long acronym to

remember, but the important thing to know is what it is doing to help people in Mali.

Because of the many fighting groups in Mali, thousands have lost their homes, schools and jobs. They can no longer participate in the economic, political and culture life of communities and families. Although they are risking their lives on a daily basis, members of MINUSMA, including many young people, have chosen to participate as peace keepers at a grassroots level. From their efforts, a number of positive projects have begun, including a soap making program that employs handicapped adults and the distribution of solar power kits to provide electricity to over a thousand families.

## MINUSMA: Securing Peace in Mali

Watch the video about MINUSMA in Mali, [Click Here>>](#)

1. What are some of the challenges and risks facing members of MINUSMA and the people of Mali?
2. Given these challenges and risks, why are young people interested in being a part of a group such as MINUSMA?
3. What are some things you can do as students to help support those people in our own communities who are unable to participate in our society because they lack housing, education, health care or other essential needs?



Working with Children

## Mission Petitions

- ✚ Let us pray for our global human family, that we may work together for the most vulnerable and those most in need
- ✚ Let us pray for our brothers and sisters, that they may have access to the resources to participate in their communities
- ✚ Let us pray for the leaders and elected officials in the world, that they may work together to create just societies
- ✚ Let us pray for all MINUSMA members, that they may carry on their important work without fear of danger

Dear Lord,

We thank you for St. Charles Lwanga, a teacher and witness to the Catholic faith by the example of his own life. May we also remain courageous and unshakable in our own faith during times of great temptation and remember that we are called upon to live as Christ in word and deed. Amen