

BY JANE NAFULA

KAMPALA. Jubilant members of the St Augustine Catholic Community at Makerere University, alumni, students, and a host of guests from all walks of life on Sunday gathered at the institution's Freedom Square to celebrate 85 years of faith, fellowship, and formation of the chapel.

The well-attended event kicked off at about 9am with the Vice President, Ms Jessica Alupo, who was the guest of honour, presiding over the ground-breaking ceremony for the St Augustine Chapel Students Centre extension estimated to cost Shs2 billion.

This was followed by a Holy Mass led by the Archbishop of Kampala Archdiocese, His Grace Paul Ssemogerere.

During the Mass, the archbishop confessed that he was excited by the huge number of young people who find time to participate in Church activities and also practice their faith, other than falling prey to practices that contradict the teachings of the Church.

"My heart is full of joy when I see

Makerere's St Augustine Chapel marks 85 years

many young people participating in the activities of the Church. The Episcopal Conference visited Rome, and we were able to visit the Pope. He knows our struggles and generosity. We are hosting many refugees. He is also aware that the youth are active members of the Catholic Church and commended the Uganda Martyrs in whose steps we are for sticking to their faith," he said amid thunderous applause from the congregation.

Archbishop Ssemogerere added: "The Pope gave us blessings and said we give them to you. Look at the young people who have come here because of faith. This is a true reflection of the vibe exhibited by the Uganda Martyrs despite difficult times. Every generation faces challenges, but I encourage you to remain brave and committed to your faith."

He described St Augustine Chapel as a shaping ground for several people.

"Many relationships were born and nurtured here. It remains a place where people come to seek unconditional love based on divine mercy and generosity," he said.

He expressed gratitude to Cardinal Emmanuel Wamala, who is now 99 years old, for ably serving as the first Ugandan chaplain of St Augustine Chapel between 1968 and 1973.

Archbishop Ssemogerere also commended the administration of Makerere University for its generous support of the chapel and the extension of the student centre.

Vice President Alupo said St Augustine Chapel has stood not merely as a building of worship, but as a spiritual home for generations of students, staff, and alumni for 85 years.

"Since its founding in 1941, St Augustine Chapel has faithfully enhanced

the academic life of Makerere University. It has been a place where intellect meets faith, where questions

meet prayer, and where the pursuit of knowledge is guided by the light of the Gospel. To the clergy and leadership, your stewardship ensures that this flame of faith continues to burn brightly for future generations," she said.

Ms Alupo commended the religious leaders for guiding citizens to ensure a peaceful 2026 General Election, but requested them to continue praying for politicians to serve Ugandans as expected. St Augustine Chapel was founded by the White Fathers and was completed in 1941.

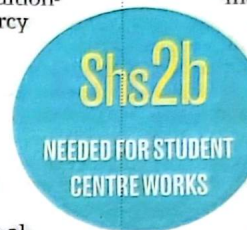
The chapel has been led by notable men of God such as Cardinal Emmanuel Wamala, the first native chaplain,

Monsignor Lawrence Kanyike, and the current chaplain, Fr Josephat Ddungu.

Fr Ddungu revealed that before the chapel was constructed, the Catholic community at the university was praying in lecture rooms.

He encouraged the faithful to contribute towards the Shs2 billion extension of the students' centre project.

He said about Shs250 million has so far been raised in cash and in pledges.



FUNDRAISING

At a fundraising drive held at the university during the 85th anniversary of St Augustine Chapel at the weekend, President Museveni, who was represented by the vice president, contributed Shs30 million and pledged more support towards the project.