

CHURCH NEWS

Uganda best place in hospitality – Fr Chabanon

The former superior of the White Fathers (also called Missionaries of Africa), Fr Gerard Chabanon, has been appointed as the congregation's superior for Europe. **Mathias Mazinga** talked to him about this and other issues.

What is your impression of the Catholic Church in Uganda?

The church is well-grounded. The prayerful Christian communities and the millions of pilgrims who flock Namugongo, have always marveled me. The church's involvement in education and health is also a wonder.

What about Uganda as a country?

Uganda is a beautiful country with hospitable people. The whole world admires the hospitality of Ugandans.

Are you satisfied with the progress of ecumenism?

I am impressed by the achievements of the Uganda Joint Christian Council,



Fr Gerard Chabanon

although more needs to be done to strengthen this ecumenical dimension. The church also needs to promote inter-religious dialogue with religions like Islam, Buddhism and the African traditional faiths.

Can total unity be attained?

We have doctrinal differences that make absolute unity unlikely, but we can work and pray together because we worship one God. We need to see our differences as part of the richness of the Christian faith.

Can you comment on clerical rebellions?

It is normal to have conflicts in the church. We need to look for ways of solving the issues. As religious people, we have the responsibility to be loyal to the bishop, even if we do not agree with him. The common good of the church should take priority.

Has celibacy failed?

Just like marriage, celibacy has its challenges. If the priest puts the love of God first, celibacy can be an opening of freedom for ministry or pastoral work. Celibacy is a vocation which enriches your commitment to ministry if you are called to it.

Should Uganda have a second Cardinal?

It is an honour for the country to have one or more Cardinals. However, we should know that it is the Pope who decides to appoint Cardinals, if he sees it necessary and beneficial to the universal Church.

Is it true that Africans do not make good missionaries?

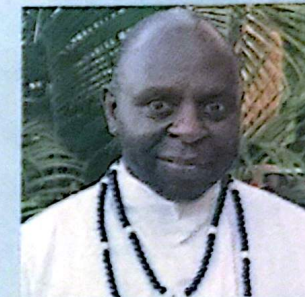
Missionary vocation is not linked to a tribe or nationality. We have many young Africans who are committed missionaries of Africa.

Why do you send missionaries to Muslim Countries?

REV. FR DR ALOYSIUS SSEKAMATTE

A member of the Missionary Society of White Fathers, Ssekamatte been elected by his confrères as the Superior of the congregation's Province of Eastern Africa, which covers Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania and Sudan.

- Born in 1968, Bukuumi, Kibaale district to Mary Immaculate and Aloysius Ssekamatte.
- Got priestly formation at Kahangala Major Seminary, Tanzania. Spiritual Year in Fribourg, Switzerland. Pastoral work in DR Congo and Theology in Totteridge, London, UK.
- 1999 was ordained a priest by Bishop Edward Baharagata.
- 2000-2003 he worked in Mozambique.
- 2003-2007 - Gregorian



University, Rome graduated with Licentiate in biblical theology.

- 2013-2015 served as lecturer and rector at the missionaries Major Seminary in Nairobi.
- 2015-2017 got a doctorate in biblical theology, in Rome and was appointed as the head of the Jerusalem formation house.

Christianity has to be present everywhere, even where there are no Christians.

What is the number of White Fathers?

We are 1,232 members. Those working in Uganda are 28. The native Ugandans are 25.

What are the requirements for becoming a White Father?

A prospective candidate applies to the Vocations director at Lourdel House, Nsambya. If selected, he will be trained as a priest for 11 years. Applicants must have completed S6.