

THE AFRICA REPORT

125 YEARS OF FAITH IN MALAWI

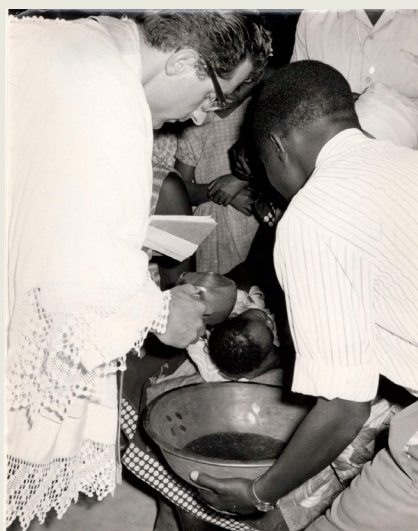
Father Barthelemy Bazemo, M.Afr.
Provincial of the Americas and President of the Missionaries of Africa, Inc.

When Catholics in the United States think about the beginnings of the Church in our own country, we remember the Franciscan, Dominican, and Jesuit missionaries who first proclaimed the Gospel in Spanish Florida, the Southwest, and later in the English colonies. Their sacrifices laid the foundation for the Catholic Church we know today.

Malawi has a similar story, though it began centuries later.

This year, the Catholic Church in Malawi is celebrating 125 years since the arrival of the first Missionaries of Africa and the establishment of the Church in 1901. It is an anniversary not simply of missionary activity, but of the birth and remarkable growth of a local Church.

The first attempt came in 1899, when Missionaries of Africa entered the region from neighboring Zambia. They hoped to establish a permanent mission, but encountered such hostility from the local chief that they were forced to withdraw before a mission could be established. Rather than abandon the people of Malawi, the bishop responsible for the vast region, Missionaries of Africa Bishop Joseph Dupont, sought help. While in France, he persuaded the Montfort Fathers (Company of Mary) to join the effort. Together they returned in 1901, and this time they gained a lasting foothold.



Father Reinhard Hohmann, M.Afr. (1937–2020), baptizing a baby in Malawi in 1967.

From those humble beginnings, the Church steadily took root. Mission stations became parishes. Schools educated generations of children. Hospitals and clinics cared for the sick. A diocesan seminary was established to prepare local vocations, and in 1937 the first indigenous Malawian priests were ordained.

Today, the fruits of those early missionary efforts are unmistakable. Malawi is home to more than 5.6 million Catholics worshipping in 220 parishes. The Church is served by 12 bishops, 675 priests, 72 religious brothers, and 1,299 religious sisters. Catholic ministries include 1,806 educational institutions, 93 health facilities, and 22 social service institutions.

The Missionaries of Africa continue to share in the life of this vibrant local Church. Today, the Society serves in seven communities across five dioceses, providing parish ministry, hospital chaplaincy, justice and peace ministry, formation, administration, and the renowned Kungoni Centre of Culture and Art at Mua.

Perhaps the most fitting reflection on this anniversary comes from Archbishop Thomas Luke Msusa of Blantyre:

“The Church is ours. It belongs to us. It is no longer a missionary Church where we expect priests and religious missionaries to come from other countries, especially Europe and America. The Church is ours, and we have to be proud of that.”

His words capture the true meaning of this anniversary. The goal of every missionary is not to create dependence, but to help establish a Church that is strong enough to stand on its own. In Malawi, that vision has become a reality.

One of the fruits of that growth is Father Lowrent Kamwanza, M.Afr. A native of Malawi, Father Lowrent answered the same missionary call that first brought the Missionaries of Africa to his homeland more than a century ago. He served as a missionary in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and today serves the Society in Rome as Coordinator for Integrity in Ministry. His journey from Malawi to missionary service in the Congo and now to service of the worldwide Society is a living example of how far the seeds planted 125 years ago have grown.

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The missionary story has come full circle. The Society that first helped establish the Church in Malawi has given rise to Malawian vocations that now serve beyond their homeland. Today, 20 Malawian Missionaries of Africa are serving outside Malawi, bringing the Gospel to new communities just as the first Missionaries of Africa brought it to Malawi 125 years ago.

As we celebrate this milestone, we give thanks for the missionaries who first planted the seeds of faith, for the generations of Malawian catechists, priests, religious, and lay faithful who nurtured that faith, and for a Church that continues to bear fruit both in Malawi and throughout the world.

Father Lowrent Kamwanza, M.Afr., a native of Malawi, now serves the Society in Rome.



MISSIONARY OF AFRICA NAMED BISHOP OF KABALE



Pope Leo XIV has appointed Msgr. Bonaventure Bosco Gubazire, M.Afr., as Bishop of Kabale in Uganda. A native of Kabale, Bishop-elect Gubazire joined the Missionaries of Africa in 1994, made his perpetual vows in 2002, and was ordained a priest in 2003.

His missionary journey has taken him far from home. He served in parish ministry and adult education in Mozambique and later in formation and education in Malawi, the Philippines, and Ghana. Most recently, he has served as Rector of St. Martin of Tours Formation House in Ejisu, Ghana, helping prepare future Missionaries of Africa for priesthood and service in the Church.

Now, after more than two decades of priestly and missionary ministry, Bishop-elect Gubazire is returning home to serve the Church that first nurtured his vocation. His episcopal consecration is expected to take place in October.

Bishop-elect Msgr. Bonaventure Bosco Gubazire, M.Afr.

TWO NEW MISSIONARIES APPOINTED TO THE UNITED STATES

Two Missionaries of Africa have received new assignments in the United States.

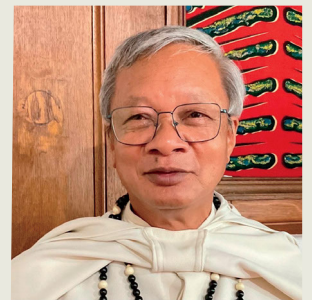
Father Biju John, M.Afr., has been appointed Parochial Vicar at Our Lady of Light Parish in the St. Albans neighborhood of Queens, New York. His previous missionary assignments have included service in Tanzania, Kenya, and India.

Father Angelo Lee, M.Afr., will join the Provincial Community at the Missionaries of Africa headquarters in Washington, DC. His previous missionary assignments have taken him to Zambia, Brazil, France, and Mexico.

Father Biju and Father Angelo bring years of international missionary experience to their new assignments and to the work of the Missionaries of Africa in the United States.



Father Biju John, M.Afr



Father Angelo Lee, M.Afr.

WA, GHANA CATHOLIC WOMEN LEAD LIFE-SAVING OUTREACH



Missionaries of Africa donors in the United States are helping the Diocesan Council of Catholic Women in the Diocese of Wa bring life-saving health care to rural communities. Working with parish staff, local health professionals, and community leaders, the Council organized breast and cervical cancer education and screening in four rural parishes. Awareness campaigns in churches, schools, marketplaces, and villages reached more than 6,000 women with life-saving health information.

The outreach also provided cancer screenings for 2,724 women and identified hundreds who needed additional medical care. Women with abnormal findings received referrals for further testing and treatment, allowing many conditions to be detected early. The project also trained 40 local health volunteers who will continue educating women and supporting follow-up care in their communities.

By empowering women to care for one another, the Diocesan Council of Catholic Women has strengthened both the health of families and the life of the Church. The Council now hopes to expand this ministry to additional rural parishes across northeastern Ghana.

A nurse conducts an initial health screening for a woman in northeastern Ghana.

KINDU, DR CONGO RELIABLE WATER FOR MISSION AND MINISTRY



A reliable supply of clean water is transforming daily life for the Missionaries of Africa community in Kindu, Democratic Republic of Congo. Supported by Missionaries of Africa donors, the project included a renovated well, a solar-powered pumping system, two 3,000-liter water tanks, and a new water tower.

The project was not without challenges. The large water tanks had to be purchased in Kisangani and transported by boat to Kindu, a journey that took nearly a month. Parishioners also contributed by repairing the well and providing labor and construction materials.

Today, the community has dependable water for the missionaries, visitors, and the many people who gather for meetings and formation. During the dry season, the community is also able to share clean drinking water with nearby families. As one missionary, Father Isaac Kinda, wrote, “We shall not worry anymore about water.”

Father Isaac Kinda, M.Afr., holds the final pipe before it is connected to the community’s new water system.

KITABI, UGANDA APIARY SUPPORTS RETIRED MISSIONARIES

A new apiary with 60 modern beehives is laying the foundation for a more self-sustaining retirement community for the Missionaries of Africa in Kitabi, Uganda. The project also provided the equipment needed to safely manage the hives and harvest honey.

Already, bees have begun occupying the hives, an encouraging sign that the first honey harvest is on the horizon. The honey will be used in the retirement community kitchen and sold to help support the community’s ongoing needs. The apiary will also produce beeswax, pollen, and other bee products.

Supported by Missionaries of Africa donors, this project will provide a sustainable source of food and income for the retirement community while also benefiting nearby gardens and farms through increased pollination.



A local beekeeper places new hives at the Missionaries of Africa retirement community in Kitabi, Uganda.

ATAKPAMÉ, TOGO SOLAR POWER STRENGTHENS PARISH LIFE



Frequent power outages had become an increasing challenge for Our Lady of Africa Parish in Atakpamé, Togo. As drought reduced the country’s hydroelectric power supply, interruptions to electricity affected the lighting and sound system used for Masses and parish activities.

The new solar power system has changed that. Installed this spring, it now provides reliable electricity for the church’s lighting and sound system. An additional gift funded the connection of the church’s ceiling fans, making worship more comfortable for the congregation. Today, the parish relies primarily on solar energy, with the national electrical grid serving as a backup.

“We wish to express our sincere and profound gratitude for your financial contribution toward the installation of solar power in our church,” wrote Fr. Emmanuel Adeboa, M.Afr., pastor of Our Lady of Africa Parish. “Your assistance has greatly improved the pastoral life and liturgical activities of our parish community.”

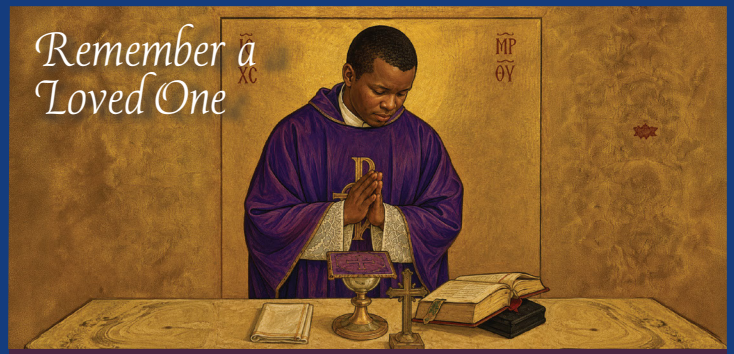
Rev. Fr. Emmanuel Adeboa, M.Afr., blesses the parish’s new solar power system.

REMEMBERING LOVED ONES AT MASS

Each year on November 2, the Church celebrates the Commemoration of All the Faithful Departed, more commonly known as All Souls' Day. On this sacred day, Catholics around the world pray for those who have gone before us, especially our family members and friends. Through the celebration of the Mass, we commend them to God's mercy and ask that they share in the joy of eternal life.

One of the most meaningful ways to remember a loved one is to request that a Mass be offered for them. If you would like the Missionaries of Africa to celebrate Mass for a deceased loved one or another special intention, simply use the enclosed Mass request card or visit our website to submit your request. All intentions entrusted to us will be remembered in a special way on All Souls' Day and throughout the month of November by our Washington community.

Your Mass requests provide spiritual support for those remembered in prayer while also supporting the ministry of Missionaries of Africa priests. Throughout Africa, our missionaries celebrate Mass daily, bringing Christ's presence to communities where the Eucharist remains the heart of the Church's life.



WAYS TO SUPPORT OUR MISSION . . .

- Join our Friends of Hope monthly giving plan.
- Make a Memorial Gift in memory of a loved one.
- Celebrate a birthday, wedding or anniversary with a donation to our works in Africa.
- Donations of stock, securities, bonds or annuities provide the same benefit as a cash gift.
- Life Insurance: consider naming the Missionaries of Africa as a beneficiary.
- Bequests: an estate gift to support the ongoing work of the Missionaries of Africa.

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**Questions? Contact Christopher Anderson at
canderson@missionariesofafrica.org.**