



UGANDA COMMUNITY IN GREATER CHICAGO QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER: ISSUE 3: SUMMER 2011

The Martyrs of Uganda (St. Charles Lwanga and Companions (June 3rd))



By Fr. Leo Tinkatumire (Mbarara Archdiocese-Uganda) Currently a Chicago Resident.

Worldwide, the Catholic Church marks June 3rd as the feast of St. Charles Lwanga and Companions, the martyrs of Uganda, East Africa. St. Charles Lwanga is singled out because of his leading role as a catechist and animators of the martyrs. He even baptized some of them. In his introduction to African **Holocaust: the Story of the Uganda Martyrs**, Bishop Joseph Willigers explains, “Saints are special gifts which God makes to the world. They are given to us not merely to be objects of our admiration to be safely locked away in a shrine or as a source of national pride. They are in the first place meant to inspire us and spur us on to be in our own times and to our own living signs of God’s saving power.” Charles Lwanga and his companions lived lives much like our own, but had to make a choice that most of us will never face.

The Uganda Martyrs lived in the traditional kingdom of Buganda, in Uganda, East Africa. Their King (Kabaka), Mwanga II, gave them a choice: “Denounce Christianity or die.” Charles and his companions chose “to die rather than denounce their faith.” Between January 1885 and January 1887, Mwanga II had at least forty-five new Christian converts killed. The Church honors those who exhibit such courage, devotion, and selfless sacrifice for their faith as heroes, models of faith who intercede for the living before God.

The twenty-two Catholics who Kabaka Mwanga II killed for their faith were beatified by Pope Benedict XV, and on October 18, 1964, in the presence of Bishops from all over the world who had gathered in Rome for the Second Vatican Council, Pope Paul VI canonized them. They are: Joseph Mukasa Balikuddembe, Matthias Kalemba, Luke Banabakintu, Noe Mawagali, Andrew Kaggwa, James Buzabaliawo, Pontian Ngondwe, Bruno Serunkuma, Anatole Kirigwajjo, Athanasius Bazzekuketta, Adolphus Mukasa Ludigo, Gonzaga Gonza, Charles Lwanga, Achilles Kiwanuka, Ambrose Kibuka, Mukasa Kiriwawanvu, Mbaga Tuzinde, Gyavira Musoke, Mugaga Lubowa, Kizito, Denis Ssebuggwawo and Jean-Marie Muzeyi.

The first Catholic martyr, killed on 15th November 1885, was the king’s own majordomo,

Joseph Mukasa Balikuddembe, Matthias Kalemba, Luke Banabakintu and Noe Mawaggali were officials of the Chief of Ssinga. The martyrs included not only Catholics, but Anglicans as well. In October 1885 the Anglican Bishop James Hannington was murdered in Busoga. The Anglican faithful killed for their faith between 1885 and 1887 include: Joseph Lugalama, Mark Kakumba, Noe Seruwanga, Noe Muwanga Walukagga, Alexander Kadoko Omutebi, Moses Mukasa Omuzingiti, Fredrick Kizza, Elrias Mbwa, Robert Munyagabyanjo, Daniel Nnakabandwa, Kiwanuka Giyaza, Mukasa, Mukasa Lwakisiga, Lwanga, Mubi, Wasswa Odu of Gabunga, Kwabafu, Kifamunganja, David Muwanga, Muwanga Njigija, Omuwanga of Gabunga, Chief Muwanga, Kayizzi Kibuka, Muddwaguma, Musabatosi, Mayanja Kitogo, and Katikiro wa Nalinya.

BACKGROUND TO THE MARTYRDOM

The traditional kingdom of Buganda existed for more than

five hundred years. It was a religious realm, a monotheist kingdom that acknowledged one God, the creator – **Katonda** —and sub-deities (gods) known as **Balubaale**, a concept imported from their neighbors in the Sese Islands of Lake Victoria. The absolute authority of the monarch, the Kabaka, elevated him to the level of a god who wielded the power over life and death. By 1884 the Kingdom of Buganda had a highly centralized, sophisticated political organization with a parliament (Lukiiko), an army, political divisions (Miluka) and clans (Ebika) which created a chain of command. The events that led to the killing of the martyrs began under Mutesa I, an experienced and politically astute leader. Mutesa I welcomed Arabs, Europeans, and Americans, carefully balancing the benefits and influence these foreigners brought into the kingdom. He maintained a policy of welcoming any foreigners who sought refuge, were captured during wars, or desired to live in the kingdom, as long as they posed no threat to security. Arabs, who were Muslims, arrived fifty years before the Christian missionaries. Because they came not to satisfy political or religious ambitions, but purely for motives of trade, they were allowed to stay. Mutesa I also welcomed Anglican Christian missionaries from England and Catholics from France, not knowing about traditional rivalry.

Although he did not convert, the Kabaka allowed his subjects to choose whichever creed they wanted. He did not like the painful adult circumcision that Islam demanded, or the monogamy required for Christianity. Nevertheless, he allowed the Muslims, the Anglicans, and the Catholics to compete for converts and for influence in his kingdom, a situation that fueled events that led to persecution of either religion.

The untimely death of Mutesa I in 1884 brought to power his son, Mwanga II. The young king inherited a kingdom deep in confusion because of multiple challenges. Their traditional enemy to the north, the Bunyoro, pushed by the Khadive of Egypt, put great pressure on Buganda.

From the southern territories of Karagwe, the Germans were posing a threat. Within the kingdom, the clans in the Buvuma islands were revolting, and the foreigners struggled among themselves for recognition by the King and his council. The French Catholic missionaries, the English Anglican missionaries, and the Arabs who previously had no religious ambitions now felt the need to acquire members. There even was a plot to replace the young king with a Muslim prince. Within the

palace, the traditional religious leaders and the conservative elders resisted these dominating foreign ways.

A TIME OF CRISIS AND MARTYRDOM

The crisis escalated, culminating in the killing of those who accepted foreign religion, and some of their leaders. Historians suggest many motivations that led Mwanga II to order these executions, but the most probable reason is the Christians' unwavering faith. Their firm belief that in God they would receive everything allowed them to feel free from any kind of fear. In Greek, martyr means "witness." In witness to Jesus Christ, Charles Lwanga and his companions gave their lives. The Christian religion denounced traditional religious practices like divining and other forms of healing that went with it, the inheritance of siblings' spouses, and polygamy. Christianity emphasizes the worship of one almighty God. The converts' total loyalty to God created conflict with the traditional religious leaders and the authority of the king. Finally, the king felt compelled to order his subjects, beginning with those in higher offices, to denounce the Christian God or be put to death. The martyrs were subjected to gruesome torture in the most public, humiliating, and terrifying manner, with the intention of scaring all other Christians. At Nakivubo Joseph Mukasa Balikuddembe was beheaded and burnt; at Old Kampala Matthias Kalemba Mulumba was dismembered and left to die; at Ttaka Jjunge near Munyonyo Pontian Ngondwe was speared and hacked to pieces; Andrew Kagawa had his arm cut off, was beheaded, and hacked into pieces; Noe Mawaggali was speared and savaged by dogs. On June 3, 1886 at Nnamugongo near Kampala, Uganda, many were tied in bundles of dry reeds and burnt to death slowly. Nevertheless, as Tertullian said, "The blood of the martyrs is the seed of Christianity." The numbers of Christians multiplied more than a hundredfold and have become the majority in Uganda.

These martyrs are heroes not only for Uganda or for Africa, but for the whole world of believers because they chose to die rather than denounce their faith. They showed no regret, and even prayed for their executioners. At Nnamugongo, where many were burnt to death, amidst the flames they were heard singing praise to God. We honor them and emulate their example in their journey of faith and in ours on this 125th anniversary.

WHY A MOTHER'S HAPPINESS MATTERS



By Jude Ssempungu (UCIGC Newsletter Managing Editor)

Why a Mother's Happiness Matters

When we examine all the responsibilities that come with being a mother, can we really expect her to be happy? Maybe we're asking for too much. And yet, happiness is important. Generally, happiness benefits not only individuals, but communities and the society at large. Psychology teaches that happiness creates higher incomes, stronger relationships; more friends, deeper social interactions; greater self-confidence, better physical health and a longer life.

Many mothers may have thought that their happiness had to be put on hold, but they still want it for her children. They try to pick the best preschool, feed them the healthiest food, arrange play dates and pretty much do everything they can to make sure they have all those things that happiness brings. The love for their children is so deep that they often fear that if they focus on their own happiness they may be taking something away from them. Part of their job as mothers is to teach their children about the world they live in. Albert Einstein once said there is only one important question in life, "Is the Universe that we live in friendly or unfriendly?" Mothers ask yourselves, are you having a good time being here in the universe? Do you feel safe, secure and happy? Your answers to that question impact your child because you are the filter through which they perceive the world. Once your children move out of your homes and beyond your direct influences, the world becomes their home and whether they believe it to be friendly or unfriendly will greatly affect the quality of their life.

Your children are constantly looking to you for permission on how good their life can be. They are naturally filled with joy, but how much are they allowed to live? As you grow and expand your capacity for joy, your children are freed up. Yet, if you begin to contract and shrink, a lid gets put on their joy. Notice how your children's level of happiness reflects your moods. If being happy and joyful is a priority of yours, your children will naturally maintain a higher level of happiness. When you are happy, your children like to be around you. You're nicer, you're easier to be with and you're more fun. This may not sound appealing when your children are very young and you can't get a second to yourself, but very soon you'll be grateful for that strong connection you have with your children.

Mothers, remember, the gift of parenting goes beyond getting it right for your children. As parents, you are incredibly blessed to live with and witness the development spiritually, emotionally and physically

of another human being. You are at the beginning of the journey. Enjoy it, savor it. And if you do, you will have the luxury of living without

HOW TO PROTECT YOUR CHILD FROM ABUSE AND NEGLECT

By SCHOLASTICA NAKITTO: IL. Child Protection Investigator

The Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) is mandated by Illinois law to maintain a 24 hour Child abuse and Neglect Hotline, 1-800-25-abuse or 1-800-252-2873 to receive reports from the public and from mandated professionals about abuse and neglect of children.

Illinois law defines an “abused child”, as a minor under the age of 18, who is being harmed by any person responsible for the child’s welfare, which includes: parent, a family member, babysitter, school officials, boyfriend, or day care provider. Harm to the child may be physical or emotional injury, serious risk of injury, excessive punishment, and sexual offenses or torture. Tip: Avoid corporal punishment as a form of discipline, since there is always a chance of going too far and cause severe injuries to the child, with marks and bruises left on the child and that is then considered abuse.

Illinois law defines a “neglected child” as any child whose parent or persons responsible for the child’s welfare does not provide necessary support as required by law, medical or other care for the well being of the child or such necessities as adequate, clothing food, and shelter. Neglect occurs for reasons other than poverty.

Tip:

- If your child has medical conditions that require medications from time to time, make sure that the school has that medication and make sure that the child takes that medication as prescribed.
- Never leave a child in a car under no conditions.
- Provide adequate supervision to your child on parties and other public places to ensure safety of your child.

Emotional Abuse: refers to refection, intimidation and humiliation of a child that undermines his/her sense of self esteem and well being and it may include withholding love and affection to the child.

Child Sexual Abuse: refers to general term to a child being forced or tricked into sexual activity by an adult or older child.

Case: Infant girl about a year old suddenly stops breathing: 911 is called. Later she is diagnosed with brain dead. Life support is removed six days later. Paramedics reported suspicious lacerations and bruising to the child’s head, and “cloudy whitish fluid dripped

From the anus”.

MAJOR CAUSES OF ABUSE AND NEGLECT

I. Family stress II, Domestic violence in the home, III, Sexually abused children will most likely abuse children when they become adults.

Step family members sometimes do not feel obligated to the children they find in the home and may abuse them physically or sexually.

Drugs and alcohol in the family adds to the family stress.

CONSEQUENCES OF ABUSE AND NEGLECT OF A CHILD

The results of abuse and neglect to children, creates children that feel violated, humiliated, dirty, and guilt ridden. Their sense of safety and well-beings is shattered, along with self worth and confidence and the symptoms often manifest when they become teenagers. As adults, they exhibit more signs of hopelessness, neurosis and timidity and depression and drug and alcohol dependency and anxiety even multiple personalities.

In 1985, the Los Angeles Times conducted a study to determine how many children were molested or raped as children and the results were 22 percent of all Americans. The study also revealed that one out of four females will be sexually abused or raped by the age of 20. It was also revealed that people who molest or rape children are either friends of the family or members of the family. As a result, it is important that parents pay a close look at the people they include in the children’s lives.

Tips:

Teach the child about good touching and bad touching and increase their knowledge as they get older.

Never put a computer in the child’s bedroom, and use parental controls on the computer, and limit the time the child spends on the computer.

Pay attention to someone who shows greater than normal interest in your child. Do not allow people you do not know so well to be alone with your child.

Do not allow your child to go to a sleepover, and the only person you know in that home is the child, you need to know the parents of that home and the type of supervision they will give to your child.

While choosing a day care, choose a center where you can drop in anytime, without notice. Be sure to make occasional surprise visits, and if the day care is not comfortable with the idea, find out why, and make your decision after you talk to the parents bring children to this day care.

UCIGC NEWSLETTER: ISSUE 3, SUMMER 2011

Create a positive dialog with your teenager, and always remind him/her that in case of an emergency, the first person to call is you.

As a parent or caretaker, there is a chance that you will do a mistake in the process of raising your child and if that happens, the best thing is to tell your child that you made a mistake, that way the child will know that you are not perfect all the time, and you build trust that way with your child.

It takes a village to raise a child to Adulthood, but be very careful as you select that village for your child.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Child Lures- 802-985-8458 www.childlures.org

Mothers against sexual abuse-tel 704-895-0489 www.aqainstsexualabuse.org

Prevent child abuse in America tel312-663-3520 www.preventabuse.org

Child Help USA www.childhelpusa.org 800422-4453

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