



The Diocese of Banjul NEWSLETTER

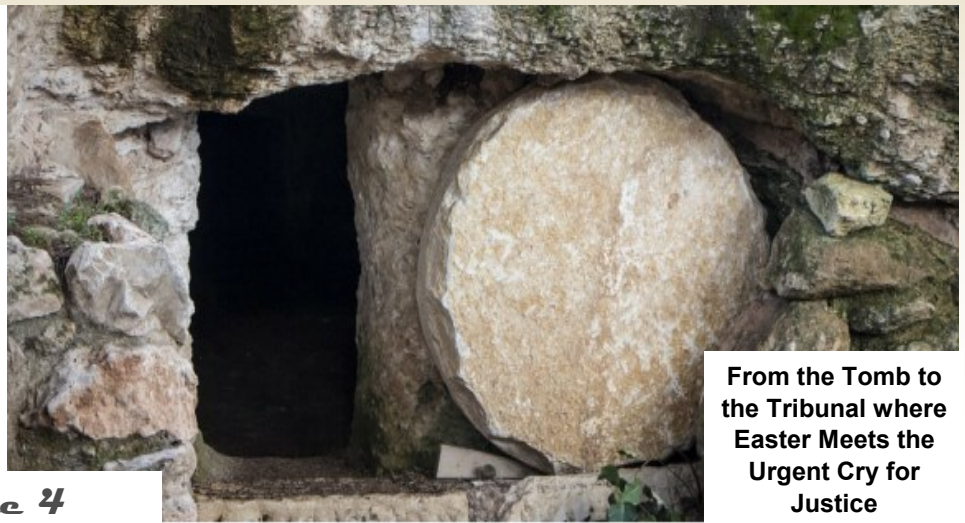
Incorporating The Catholic Newsletter



COVER STORY

OUR NATION NAILED TO THE CROSS

Every year, as March yields to April, Christians around the world pause in reverent stillness. Candles flicker in hushed churches, ancient hymns rise in a chorus of hope, and voices proclaim: "Christ is risen!" The reply reverberates across continents: "He is risen indeed!" This is Easter, not merely a day on the calendar, but a summons to reckon with the deepest truths of life, death, and justice.



From the Tomb to the Tribunal where Easter Meets the Urgent Cry for Justice

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Heaven's Urgent Call to a Broken World to Trust in God's Boundless Compassion

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A Call for Honest Leadership

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DIOCESE OF BANJUL NEWSLETTER

Our Mission and Vision


We entertain, we encourage, and we enlighten. More so, Diocese of Banjul Newsletter gives you the tools you need to feed your faith life, nurture our society and relationships, care for your family, and bring the light of Christ to others. We connect with our readers through personal stories of triumphs and struggles, joys and challenges, and the lighter side of Christian living.

Diocese of Banjul Newsletter is a source of support and encouragement for our society, especially those who love their faith, those who struggle with their faith, and those who long to learn more about the richness of Catholic tradition. More so, we strive to build a healthy society for the welfare of all.

Diocese of Banjul Newsletter seeks the positive in the world and in our Church. It emphasizes those things that our society is doing right and well, as a means of inspiring and encouraging others to do the same. It is hope-filled, optimistic, and forward-looking. In the main, the newsletter moves our readers beyond inspiration and toward action, and gives them the information, tools, and resources they need to answer God’s call to holiness and bring the light of Christ to others.



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**EDITORIAL
HINT**

Beyond The Half-Truths

A Call for Honest Leadership

Leadership dies the moment honesty is sacrificed for comfort. George Orwell once warned that “to see what is in front of one’s nose needs a constant struggle.” He was right. The struggle begins when those in power stop looking at reality, stop listening to voices of reason, and start believing their own propaganda.

For too long, The Gambia has lived in the fog of half-truths. Our leaders seem allergic to honesty. The reality on the streets is not the one in government reports. While officials clap for themselves in air-conditioned offices, market women count fading dalasi notes that buy less food each week.

Let us stop pretending. The people are suffering. Life in The Gambia has become unbearably harsh for the average person. Prices rise daily. Wages stay the same. Corruption flames in high places, and no one seems ashamed.

Those close to power disguise the truth with polite lies. They submit glossy reports and filtered data to the international development partners, hiding the hunger that stalks the nation. And rather than question these distortions, the government prefers applause. What kind of leadership listens only to praise and silence?

We see squandermania on display while hospitals run short of medicine and schools lack learning materials. Lavish spending continues; ministers travel in style; debt piles higher. What are we mortgaging our children’s futures for? Who benefits from this endless borrowing when there is no trace of real progress?

The truth is clear and painful: the government has grown comfortable in denial. But denial will not fix a broken system. Corruption will not clothe the poor. Half-truths will not lower food prices. Patriotism is not blind loyalty; it is the moral courage to hold power accountable.

Look around: young Gambians are leaving home in despair, risking their lives across deserts and seas. That is not ambition, it is a cry of hopelessness. It is the loudest indictment of failed leadership.

How much longer will we deceive ourselves? How much longer will those in power celebrate illusions while citizens bleed from poverty and neglect? Leadership is not a performance for international praise. It is a duty to tell and face the truth, no matter how bitter.

The Gambia does not need more slogans. It needs conscience. It needs leadership that listens to the cries of its people, not the whispers of its courtiers. Every act of waste is an act against the poor. Every unchallenged lie is a betrayal of trust.

It is time for honesty to return to public life. It is time for those in authority to face the truth they have long avoided and buried. Governance cannot run on pretense. A government that fears truth already fears its people. And once that fear takes hold, democracy itself begins to rot.

So let us speak. Let us demand answers. Let us resist the comfort of half-truths. The future of this nation depends on our collective courage to call things by their real names. No country ever rose on deception, and The Gambia will not be the first.

The time has come for the government to confront the hard truths it has long avoided. To lead responsibly means to listen fearlessly. A mature government does not fear criticism; it uses it as a mirror to correct its course. There can be no renewal of national life if those who hold power are comforted by deception and insulated from reality.

What The Gambia needs most today is not another round of soothing rhetoric, but a sincere reckoning with truth. The strength of a state lies not in what it hides, but in what it dares to confront openly. Our leaders must rediscover the courage to “see what is in front of their noses” and act upon it. Likewise, citizens must uphold their duty to speak truth to power respectfully, but firmly.

To resist half-truths is to protect our collective future. For no nation thrives on illusions; only truth, embraced with courage and humility, can build a Gambia that serves all her children.

ORDINATION NOTICE **FROM THE OFFICE OF THE BISHOP**

The Priestly Ordination of the only transitional deacon, Rev. Charles S. Mendy, originally from Peter's Parish, Lamin, currently ministering in Our Lady of the Assumption Cathedral, will take place on the 25th April, 2026, at the St. Peter's Senior Secondary School grounds in Lamin, 10am.



COVER STORY

OUR NATION NAILED TO THE CROSS

Every year, as March yields to April, Christians around the world pause in reverent stillness. Candles flicker in hushed churches, ancient hymns rise in a chorus of hope, and voices proclaim: “Christ is risen!” The reply reverberates across continents: “He is risen indeed!” This is Easter, not merely a day on the calendar, but a summons to reckon with the deepest truths of life, death, and justice.

Easter begins in the shadow of injustice. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, was arrested without cause, tried under false accusations, publicly humiliated, and executed despite his innocence. Pilate washed his hands; Caiaphas twisted truth; the crowd clamored for blood. This miscarriage of justice, recorded in Scripture, is more than a historical event. It is a mirror of the world we inhabit today.

The cross is not just a symbol of personal sacrifice. It is a symbol of systemic injustice. And so, it remains, until humanity answers the call to resurrection; to the triumph of mercy, justice, and truth.

The Spiritual Imperative: Resurrection as Moral Awakening

The empty tomb declares a profound reality: injustice does not have the final word. Death, tyranny, corruption, and oppression are temporary, for God’s justice endures. But resurrection is not abstract. It is not a distant promise for eternity alone. It is a moral and spiritual imperative for action here and now.

Easter teaches that suffering and oppression are never to be ignored. It calls the faithful to rise above fear, to confront injustice wherever it festers, and to embody mercy and accountability in all corners of society. It reminds us that faith without action is incomplete; it is, in fact, ‘dead’.

As St. Paul reminds us in Romans 12:21: “Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.” Christ’s resurrection is the ultimate template for this truth: the powerless can prevail, the voiceless can be heard, and the oppressed can be set free.

The Gambian Cross: A Nation Nailed by Its Leaders

Indeed, and in truth, the current outlook of The Gambia portrays the structure of a people nailed to the cross by its leaders. Walk through the streets of Banjul, Serrekunda, and Brikama today, and the “Stations of the Cross” unfold before your eyes. Mothers queue for rice at triple last year’s price. Youths idle along the harbors, dreams drowned in unemployment, while sons and daughters depart in ‘backway’ boats toward Mediterranean graves.

Poverty grips nearly half of the population, not only in income but in access to sanitation, healthcare, and education. Youth unemployment is painfully high, 10.9% for young Gambians aged 15–24, while informal work dominates 81% of the labor market. Public debt approaches D120 billion, with interest payments consuming roughly 20% of the national budget. Health clinics struggle to



provide basic medicine, roads crumble, and yet leaders feast and flaunt wealth.

This is our crucifixion; not by Roman spears, but by systemic sins: corruption that devours public funds, impunity that silences accountability, debt that chains generations, and a failure to prioritize the welfare of the least among us.

Easter confronts this reality head-on. Christ did not die for abstract sins. He died for the widow’s last coin, the orphan’s cry, the marginalized and forgotten. In this country, the “least” are the market vendors in Serrekunda, the fishermen in Tanji whose catches dwindle, schoolchildren in Kerewan walking miles barefoot, and communities bereft of medical care. Their suffering is Christ’s suffering. Resurrection demands their liberation.

From Pilate to Present: Unmasking Modern Injustice

George Orwell wrote that “to see what is in front of one’s nose needs a constant struggle.” In our nation, that struggle is unending. Leaders hear polished reports that mask the truth. Roads crumble as luxury cars parade through city streets. National debt balloons, yet essential services are left to decay. Corruption scandals erupt and vanish into “investigations” that go nowhere.

Easter shatters this fog. Just as the stone rolled away from Christ’s tomb, exposing truth and light, so too must the stones of injustice in our nation be rolled aside. Christ rose to liberate the captives. Shall we continue to allow Pharaoh’s heirs to control Pharaoh’s playbook, or will we rise?

Resurrection Economics: Justice for the Poor

Easter is an economic as well as spiritual revolution. The first witnesses to the empty tomb were women, Mary Magdalene, the Samaritan outcast, and the socially marginalized. God upends hierarchies. Easter theology calls for redistribution, equity, and empowerment of the poor.

In our nation, where nearly half of the population lives below the poverty line, resurrection must translate into real economic justice. Early Church practices of shared wealth (Acts 2:44–45) offer a model. Tithes and offerings could fund cooperatives, skills training, and community development rather than only grandiose edifices. Religious

groups across the nation could partner with farmers in the rural communities for irrigation programs, train backway escapees in trades such as tailoring, welding, and information technology.

Pope Francis calls this the “preferential option for the poor.” Christ, crowned with thorns for the marginalized, embodies it. Easter 2026 offers a clarion call for Gambian religious and lay leaders alike to create microfinance programs for widows, vocational training for youth, and transparent support for struggling families.

Debt as Modern Bondage: Golgotha to Banjul

Debt binds the nation as surely as the cross bound Christ. With approximately D120 billion in national debt, interest payments devour critical funds for education and health. Easter reminds us that freedom is God’s gift; liberty for the debtor and the oppressed. Christian ethics demand that leaders negotiate debt relief, enforce transparency in borrowing, and empower citizens to reclaim agency over their futures. Faith communities can host debt forums and financial literacy programs, turning the resurrection into an actionable, collective liberation.

Social Justice as Resurrection in Action

If the cross represents injustice, then the resurrection represents the ultimate triumph of truth and moral vindication. For Gambians, this truth is urgent and immediate. The nation has experienced transformative moments, from the end of long-standing autocratic rule to democratic reform. These moments prove that systems can be challenged and changed, that injustice is not invincible.

Yet, resurrection is not a one-time event. It demands sustained courage, collective responsibility, and unwavering commitment. Social justice is not optional. It is the moral echo of the empty tomb.

Faith as a Force for Change

The Gambia is deeply religious, with Christian and Muslim communities coexisting peacefully. Faith communities can be catalysts for transformation. Churches, and mosques, are not merely spaces of worship; they are platforms for advocacy, education, and social action.

They and religious organisations can raise awareness of poverty and inequality, advocate for ethical policies, and provide direct support to vulnerable populations. Easter, therefore, is not confined to the sanctuary; it extends into streets, schools, markets, and corridors of governance.

The Danger of Passive Faith

One of the greatest risks to a society is passive faith; a faith that praises resurrection in song but ignores the living, breathing crucifixion surrounding it. Celebrating Easter while tolerating injustice, inequality, and corruption is faith diluted. Easter demands active courage, moral clarity, and transformative action.

Faith must challenge the status quo. It must amplify the voices of the marginalized. It must confront entrenched systems of injustice with relentless resolve.

Stories of Hope and Resurrection

Despite profound challenges, The Gambia is not without stories of resurrection. Grassroots initiatives are improving access to education and healthcare. Advocacy organizations champion human rights and environmental protection. Communities share resources, skills, and hope.

These stories, while sometimes small in scale, demonstrate that resurrection is possible. Easter calls all citizens to become participants in this moral awakening, to

embody mercy, justice, and courage in daily life.

Leadership and Moral Responsibility

Leaders, whether in government, business, or civil society, are called to serve with humility and integrity. True leadership empowers communities rather than entrenching inequality. Policies must prioritize youth employment, education, gender equity, and sustainable development. Easter reminds leaders that power is a responsibility, not a privilege.

The Individual’s Call

Transformation begins with the individual. Each citizen must reflect: Am I perpetuating injustice, or am I challenging it? Do I act for the common good? Do I uphold dignity for all?

Easter demands that we answer these questions courageously. Social justice is not the burden of a few; it is a collective moral imperative.

Living the Resurrection

Easter is not a single day. It is a continuous journey. To live the Easter message is to rise above systemic injustice, to challenge inequality, and to build a society that reflects God’s love, mercy, and justice.

For The Gambia, this means confronting the structures that have nailed the people to the cross. It means rolling away stones of corruption, debt, and neglect. It means ensuring that every citizen, from market vendors to school children, experiences freedom, dignity, and opportunity.

The Final Trumpet

Easter Sunday dawns April 5, 2026. Alleluias echo. Yet, the truest celebration is in action. True alleluias arise when widows eat, youth thrive, leaders serve, and communities flourish. Christ is risen. The Gambia must rise.

From the tomb to the tribunal, from despair to hope, the resurrection summons every Gambian to act. The stone has rolled. The structures that nailed our people to the cross are visible. The question is no longer whether Christ is risen, but whether His resurrection will be mirrored in justice, mercy, and transformation across the land.

For the least, the last, the lost, for the widows, the orphans, the unemployed, the indebted, for all Gambians, resurrection is not a past event. It is an urgent call to rise. He is risen indeed.

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Morning and Evening
Prayer every day in
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and Lay-people
throughout the world?
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Heaven's Urgent Call to a Broken World to Trust in God's Boundless Compassion

Divine Mercy Is Here

Through the visions granted to Saint Faustina Kowalska, God has offered the world a powerful and timely devotion, one that is transforming lives, healing wounded hearts and nations, and calling Catholics everywhere into a deeper, more trusting relationship with His boundless compassion. At its core, the Divine Mercy devotion is not merely a set of prayers, but a profound encounter with the infinite mercy of God, revealed in an extraordinary way through private revelations that continue to echo across generations.

Between 1931 and 1938, Jesus appeared to the humble Polish nun, entrusting her with a message for the entire world. He revealed Himself as the “King of Mercy,” urging humanity to turn confidently toward His merciful Heart, which is greater than every sin ever committed. These encounters, faithfully recorded in her diary, *Divine Mercy in My Soul*, emphasize a radical shift from fear to trust. In one of His most striking declarations, Jesus assures that “the greater the sinner, the greater the right he has to My mercy,” opening the doors of hope even to the most burdened souls.

The Church, in her wisdom, formally affirmed this devotion in the Jubilee Year 2000, when Pope John Paul II canonized Faustina and established Divine Mercy Sunday for the universal Church. Deeply rooted in Sacred Scripture, from the parable of the prodigal son to the mercy shown to the repentant thief on the cross, this devotion stands as a powerful antidote to the despair, fear, and spiritual emptiness of the modern age. Today, from Kraków to Sydney and across Africa and the Americas, millions are drawn to this message, experiencing conversion, healing, and renewed faith.

The essence of Divine Mercy can be beautifully summarized in three simple yet demanding calls: ask for God's mercy, be merciful to others, and trust completely in Jesus. These pillars invite daily prayer, active charity, and total surrender. Central to the devotion is the Divine Mercy image; Jesus with rays of red and pale light streaming from His Heart, symbolizing the life-giving sacraments of the Eucharist and Baptism. Beneath it is the powerful prayer that defines the devotion: “*Jesus, I trust in You.*”

Among its most cherished practices is the Chaplet of Divine Mercy, prayed on ordinary rosary beads, pleading for mercy “on us and on the whole world.” Catholics are especially encouraged to pray it at 3 p.m., the Hour of Mercy, commemorating the moment of Christ's death, when divine mercy triumphed over sin and justice. The Novena, beginning on Good Friday, prepares the faithful for Divine Mercy Sunday, a feast overflowing with promised graces.

Theologically, Divine Mercy is not a novelty but the very heartbeat of the Gospel. Scripture repeatedly proclaims that God is “rich in mercy,” and great theologians like Saint Thomas Aquinas affirm mercy as the highest expression of God's love. In this devotion, justice is not denied but fulfilled through love. Jesus Himself



promised extraordinary graces on Divine Mercy Sunday, assuring complete forgiveness of sins and punishment to those who approach with sincere trust, confession, and Holy Communion.

The fruits of this devotion are visible across history and in our present time. During the horrors of World War II, many clung to the Chaplet and found the strength to endure unimaginable suffering. In more recent times, countless testimonies speak of healing, conversions, reconciled families, and renewed purpose. From prisoners finding repentance to communities in Africa overcoming fear and division, the message of mercy continues to bear powerful fruit. As Pope Francis reminds us, mercy is not weakness—it is the force that “changes the world” by restoring human dignity.

To live this devotion fully, one must move beyond prayer into action. Jesus calls for deeds of mercy expressed through actions, words, and prayers: feeding the hungry, comforting the sorrowful, and interceding for others. In a world fractured by conflict, injustice, and division, the practice of mercy becomes a revolutionary act of healing. Whether in personal struggles, such as loss, addiction, or hardship, or in societal tensions, the simple invocation, “*Jesus, I trust in You,*” becomes a lifeline of hope.

The global spread of this devotion is a testament to its urgency and relevance. From its humble beginnings in Poland, it has become a universal movement embraced by the Church's highest authorities. Pope John Paul II called it “the path to peace,” while his successors have affirmed it as a gift uniquely suited for our troubled times.

Yet, like many spiritual treasures, Divine Mercy is sometimes misunderstood or underestimated. Some dismiss it as merely a private revelation, while others fear it promotes an easy or superficial grace. But the message is clear: mercy does not replace repentance; it demands it. It calls each person to conversion, humility, and a sincere return to God.

Thus, the path forward is one of deeper understanding and faithful practice. Let parishes teach the riches of Faustina's diary. Let the devotion be lived in harmony with the Eucharist and the Rosary. Let families, communities, and nations rediscover the transforming power of mercy.

In the end, Divine Mercy is not simply a devotion; it is a mission. It is God's urgent appeal to a wounded world: return, trust, and be healed. And for those who respond, the promise remains certain; mercy will triumph.

One of the most powerful and accessible means of responding to this divine call is the faithful and unceasing recitation of the Divine Mercy Chaplet, together with the veneration of the Divine Mercy Image, as entrusted to Saint Faustina Kowalska. In her revelations, Jesus made extraordinary promises attached to these practices, emphasizing not superstition, but trust in His infinite mercy. He declared that the Chaplet has the power to obtain great graces, especially when prayed with

confidence and offered for sinners and the dying. “Through the Chaplet,” He said, “you will obtain everything, if what you ask for is compatible with My will.”

The Chaplet, simple yet profound, is a prayer that immerses the soul in the Passion of Christ, continually offering His Body and Blood to the Eternal Father “in atonement for our sins and those of the whole world.” When prayed daily—especially at the Hour of Mercy, 3 p.m., the moment of Christ’s death—it becomes a spiritual lifeline, not only for the one who prays, but for the entire world. It is, in essence, an act of intercession that draws down divine mercy upon families, nations, and humanity at large.

Equally significant is the veneration of the Divine Mercy Image, bearing the inscription “Jesus, I trust in You.” The rays flowing from Christ’s Heart—red and pale—symbolize the blood and water that gushed forth at the crucifixion, representing the life of the sacraments and the outpouring of grace. Jesus promised that souls who venerate this image with trust would not perish, but would find refuge in His mercy, especially at the hour of death. The image is not merely artistic; it is a visual Gospel, a constant reminder that mercy is always available, no matter how great the sin or how deep the wound.

Additionally, to ignore the Hour of Mercy is to overlook one of the most urgent invitations of Christ to our generation. In the revelations given to Saint Faustina Kowalska, Jesus specifically requested that souls pause at 3 p.m., the very hour of His death on the Cross, to immerse themselves in His Passion and draw deeply from the ocean of His mercy. It is not merely a devotional suggestion; it is a divine appeal rooted in the moment when salvation was won, and mercy triumphed over sin.

At this sacred hour, the veil between heaven and earth is, in a profound spiritual sense, opened. Jesus promised that in this moment, graces of immense value would be made available to those who approach Him with trust. He said, “In this hour, I will refuse nothing to the soul that makes a request of Me in virtue of My Passion.” This is an extraordinary assurance, not of automatic fulfillment of every desire, but of divine generosity toward every sincere prayer offered in union with His suffering.

To observe the Hour of Mercy is to enter into the very heartbeat of the Gospel. It requires no elaborate preparation, only a willing heart. Whether at home, at work, or on the move, one can pause, even briefly, to recall Christ’s suffering, to whisper the words, “Jesus, I trust in You,” or to pray the Divine Mercy Chaplet. What matters is not the length of prayer, but the depth of trust.

In a restless and distracted world, this daily pause becomes an act of spiritual resistance. It interrupts the noise, the anxiety, and the indifference that often define modern life. It anchors the soul in something eternal. It transforms ordinary time into a sacred encounter.

For individuals, the Hour of Mercy is a source of strength, peace, and renewal. For families, it becomes a moment of unity and shared faith. For nations, it is a quiet but powerful force capable of invoking divine intervention

in times of crisis, injustice, and uncertainty.

To heed this call is to align oneself with heaven’s timetable of grace. It is to stand at the foot of the Cross each day, not as a distant observer, but as a participant in the mystery of redemption. And in doing so, one becomes not only a recipient of mercy, but a channel through which that mercy flows into the world.

The invitation is simple, yet profound: pause at the hour of His death, remember His sacrifice, and trust in His mercy. For in that sacred hour lies a wellspring of grace waiting to be drawn by those willing to respond.

In a world burdened by fear, injustice, and moral confusion, these practices are not optional extras, they are urgent spiritual remedies. To recite the Chaplet and to venerate the Image is to participate actively in God’s plan of mercy, to stand in the gap for a suffering humanity, and to become instruments of healing in a broken world.

Thus, the call is clear: let the Chaplet be heard in our homes, our churches, and our communities. Let the Divine Mercy Image be enthroned in our hearts and displayed in our spaces. Let trust replace fear, and mercy overcome judgment. And let the afternoon’s 3 O’clock hour of mercy be non-negotiable and observed daily by all.

In embracing these sacred practices, we do not merely honor a devotion; we answer a divine invitation. And through that response, mercy will indeed triumph.

Call to Worldwide Renewal

Therefore, Catholics everywhere are called to embrace Divine Mercy with renewed urgency, for the times demand a deeper return to God’s compassion. As Jesus lamented through Saint Faustina Kowalska, “Mankind prefers justice to mercy,” a warning that underscores the need for a spiritual reawakening rooted in trust and love.

This call is not passive but deeply active: let parishes be filled with the prayer of the Chaplet, let the Divine Mercy image be publicly venerated, the afternoon’s 3 O’clock hour devotion becomes part of our daily routine, and let every believer strive to live a life marked by mercy even amid the chaos of the modern world. Communities should form Mercy apostolates where young people intercede for peace, and families consecrate their homes, making them centers of prayer and forgiveness. Church leaders are urged to promote Divine Mercy Sunday with renewed zeal, fostering a global revival that could, in time, see this feast embraced with a fervor rivaling even the greatest celebrations of the Church.

At the heart of this devotion is daily prayer; offering to the Eternal Father the Body and Blood of Christ for the sake of sinners, the suffering, the dying, the consecrated, and the entire Church. Such prayer, made with sincere trust, opens the floodgates of grace.

Above all, believers are called to surrender completely in trust, confident that immense graces await those who rely on God’s mercy. Let this message spread like a living fire across the world: **Jesus, I trust in You.** In that trust lies the hope of humanity, and through it, mercy will ultimately triumph.

*The Diocese of Banjul Newsletter wishes the Christian
community a HAPPY EASTER.*

The Pope's Prayer Intentions 2026

APRIL - For priests in crisis.

Let us pray for priests going through moments of crisis in their vocation, that they may find the accompaniment they need and that communities may support them with understanding and prayer.

MAY - That everyone might have food.

Let us pray that everyone, from large producers to small consumers, be committed to avoid wasting food, and to ensure that everyone has access to quality food.

CONTRIBUTION OF 25% OF FUNDS FROM PARISH FEASTS OF 2025					
Name of Parish	Feast Day	Amount Paid Ecobank (D)	Name of Parish	Feast Day	Amount Paid Ecobank (D)
Mary Mother of God Parish - Soma	15-Feb	15,500.00	St. Peter's Parish - Lamin	29-Jun	378,161.25
Holy Cross Parish - Brusubi	2-Mar	105,100.00	St. Francis Parish - Kunkujang		24,060.00
St. Michael's Parish - Njongon	3-May	40,000.00	St. Therese's Parish - Kanifing	5-Oct	240,000.00
St. Joseph's Parish - Basse	4-May	30,190.00	St. Martin's Parish - Kartong	16-Nov	62,500.00
St. Kizito's Parish - Bakoteh	25-May	99,846.00	Blessed Sacrament Parish - K/Estate	9-Nov	177,950.00
Resurrection Parish - Brikama 2025	1-June	57,500.00	Our Lady of the Assumption Parish - Banjul		46,006.00
Resurrection Parish - Brikama 2024		15,000.00	Sacred Heart Parish - Bansang		35,484.00
Catholic Diocesan Youth Committee	5-June	43,925.00	Star of the Sea Parish - Bakau	28-Dec	61,000.00
St. Charles Lwanga Parish - Fajikunda	8-June	93,642.00	Christ The King Parish - Darsilami	23-Nov	31,011.50
St. John The Baptist Parish - Farafenni	14-June	30,000.00	Our Lady of Fatima - Bwiam	29-Nov	97,110.00
St. Anthony's Parish - Kololi	15-June	65,590.00	Holy Spirit - Banjul	30-Nov	98,153.75
Nights of Sts. Peter & Paul (2024)	31-Dec	48,298.75	O.C.M.D		86,187.50
Nights of Sts. Peter & Paul (2025)	20-June	146,920.00			
TOTAL RECEIVED IN SOLIDARY ACCOUNT					2,129,135.75

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REVISED RATES FOR THE SACRAMENTS IN THE DIOCESE OF BANJUL 2025	
1. Mass Stipend - D100	/ 2. Baptism - D200
3. Holy Communion - D300	/ 4. Confirmation - D400
5. Marriage - D500	

Powerful Heavenly
Intercessors

DEVOTION TO ST. JUDE THADDEUS

The Saint that Solves Impossible Problems

(Saint of the Impossible)

In the Diocese of Banjul, where faith amid trials defines our daily walk, we turn our hearts to the saints who intercede for us before the throne of God. St. Jude Thaddeus, one of the Twelve Apostles and a kinsman of our Lord Jesus, stands as the mighty patron of desperate causes, those moments when human hope fades, but divine power surges forth. Known also as Jude the Obscure or Thaddeus (meaning "the amiable one"), his life and legacy invite us into deeper devotion, reminding us that no plea is too impossible for heaven's ear. This profile launches our column under "Powerful Heavenly Intercessors," calling Gambian Catholics to embrace St. Jude's powerful intercession through prayer, novenas, and trustful surrender.



Who Was St. Jude? A Faithful Apostle and Kinsman

St. Jude Thaddeus, brother of St. James the Less and relative of Jesus and Mary, emerges from the Gospels as a humble yet fervent disciple. In the Synoptic Gospels, he appears as "Judas, son of James" (Luke 6:16; Acts 1:13), while John 14:22 records his poignant question at the Last Supper: "Lord, how is it that you will reveal yourself to us, and not to the world?" This reveals a heart yearning for intimacy with Christ, a trait that defines his appeal to us today.

Born in Galilee, likely from a family of farmers in Judea, Jude left earthly labors to follow the Master. Tradition holds he was married, with children who became early Church leaders, underscoring his role as patron of families and workers. After Pentecost, empowered by the Holy Spirit, Jude preached the Gospel boldly in Mesopotamia, Syria, and Persia (modern Iran). Partnered with St. Simon the Zealot, he converted kings, tribes, and multitudes through miracles and unwavering doctrine, defending the Faith against heresies. His Epistle in the New Testament, a brief, fiery letter, warns against false teachers while urging perseverance in divine love: "Keep yourselves in the love of God; look forward to the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Jude 21). Martyred around 65 AD in Persia, tradition says he was clubbed to death and beheaded, his blood sealing his witness.

Why does this apostle shine as a "powerful heavenly intercessor"?

Unlike the infamous Judas Iscariot, whose betrayal overshadows the name "Jude," our saint was overlooked for centuries. Desperate souls alone invoked him, shunning confusion with the traitor. Yet, in God's irony, this obscurity fueled his eagerness to respond, making him the go-to saint for "lost causes." Visions to St. Bridget of

Sweden and St. Bernard confirmed: Christ declared Jude "the amiable one," most willing to aid the impossible.

The Miraculous Image of Edessa: Proof of His Power

One of Jude's most celebrated feats predates his martyrdom, linking him to the early Church's wonders. King Abgar V of Edessa, plagued by an incurable illness, wrote to Jesus seeking healing. Our Lord replied with a promise: "I will send one of my disciples." Post-Ascension, Jude arrived bearing a cloth imprinted with Christ's face, the holy Mandylion, precursor to the Shroud of Turin. Laying hands on the king, Jude cured him instantly; thousands converted, and Edessa became a Christian stronghold. This miracle, recorded by historian Eusebius, depicts Jude holding the image in art, symbolizing his role as bearer of Christ's saving presence.

Such power persists. In 1923, Irish-American priest Fr. Edward Murphy built Chicago's St. Jude Shrine after his own "hopeless" parish thrived through the saint's aid. Pilgrims flooded it with thanksgivings for healings, jobs, reconciliations, and despairs turned to joy. Today, testimonies abound: a woman prays a novena amid terminal cancer, only to receive sudden remission; a family on the brink of eviction finds unexpected provision. "I prayed to Saint Jude Thaddeus for help... solutions seemed so far. Thank you, St. Jude, for always helping," shares one devotee. In our Gambia, where economic hardships, illnesses, and spiritual battles rage, Jude's Edessa triumph whispers: "Invoke me, and see God's hand move."

Why Catholics Honor St. Jude: Scripture, Tradition, and Need

Catholic devotion to saints flows from Hebrews 12:1—"a cloud of witnesses surrounds us", and Revelation 5:8, where their prayers rise as incense. Jude embodies this: as apostle, martyr, and relative of Jesus (possibly son of Joseph's brother), his intercession carries unique weight. His patronage arose organically: medieval pilgrims to his relics reported "singular help in grave necessities," earning him the title "Helper in Desperate Cases."

In our Gambian context, St. Jude resonates deeply. Our diocese faces poverty, health crises like malaria, family breakdowns, and faith tested by secularism. Jude preaches to the "barbarous nations" like our West African forebears, converting through miracles amid hostility. His epistle combats modern errors; relativism, and moral drift, urging: "Contend for the faith once delivered" (Jude 3). Popes from Leo XIII to Francis have championed him; St. John Paul II called him "apostle of hope." No wonder October 28, his feast (shared with Simon), draws global throngs.

Stories That Ignite Devotion: Modern Miracles

Countless tales prove St. Jude's ear is attuned. During the Great Depression, devotion exploded in America as the jobless turned to him, and factories revived overnight. In 1949, the National Shrine in Baltimore tallied thousands of favors: a diabetic child walks; a bankrupt business rebounds.

Personal witnesses stir the soul. "I prayed the Novena... the impossible became miraculously possible," recounts O.F., whose estranged contact responded amid grief. Another: a mother's hardened heart softens through Jude's plea, healing family wounds. In our own Gambian society, faithful report addictions broken, barren wombs became fruitful, court cases won. These are not just coincidences, they are "visible and speedy help where help is almost despaired of."

Consider Diane, a 2020s testimony: Being bankrupt and suicidal, she prayed novena to St. Jude, and days later, a forgotten inheritance surfaced, restoring her life. Such stories echo Jude's Persian missions, where "numberless children of Jesus Christ" entered the fold.

Invoking St. Jude: Prayers and Practices for All

To boost devotion, start simple. His novena, which is just nine days of prayer, rooted in Pentecost's vigil, unleashes power. Offer Masses (triduum or novena) in his honor; nothing delights saints more.

Key Prayers:

Prayer For an Urgent Matter

Most Holy Apostle St. Jude Thaddeus, faithful servant and friend of Jesus, the name of the traitor who delivered your beloved Master into the hands of the enemies has caused you to be forgotten by many, but the Church honors and invokes you universally as the patron of hopeless cases and of things despaired of. Pray for me who am so needy; make use, I implore you, of that particular privilege accorded to you to bring visible and speedy help where help is almost despaired. Come to my assistance in this great need that I may receive the consolations and succor of heaven in all my necessities, tribulations, and sufferings, particularly (here mention your petition) and that I may bless God with you and all the elect throughout eternity. I promise you, O blessed Jude, to be ever mindful of this great favor, and I will never cease to honor you as my special and powerful patron and to do all in my power to encourage devotion to you. Amen.

St. Jude Novena

O Holy St. Jude, Apostle and Martyr, great in virtue and rich in miracles, near kinsman of Jesus Christ, faithful intercessor of all who invoke your special patronage in time of need, to you I have recourse from the depth of my heart and humbly beg to whom God has given such great power to come to my assistance. Help me in my present and urgent petition. In return, I promise to make your name

known and cause you to be invoked. St. Jude, pray for us all who invoke your aid. Amen.

Prayer to St. Jude for Physical Healing

St. Jude, you witnessed the healing power of our Lord Jesus. You saw His compassion for the sick and dying. You yourself touched the sick, shared the sorrows of the mournful, and encouraged the despairing. You received this authority and healing power to work wonders, to cure the incurable, to make people whole. We ask you to intercede with our brother, Jesus, to send His saving grace to heal the sickness and suffering of _____, to uplift his/her despondent spirit, and to instill hope in his/her heart. Amen.

Prayer to St. Jude in Times of Suffering

Most holy Apostle, St. Jude, faithful servant and friend of Jesus, I place myself into your hands at this difficult time. Help me to know that I am not alone. Please pray for me, asking God to send me comfort for my sorrows, bravery for my fears, and healing for my suffering. Ask our loving God to strengthen my faith and give me the courage to accept His Will for my life. Thank you, St. Jude, for the hope you offer to all who believe in you. Amen.

HYMN TO ST. JUDE

Apostle of Jesus, a martyr-saint of old
The cousin of our Savior, of Whom thy love hath told;
A writer of the scriptures, with tongue of fire aflame,
The worker great of wonders, in Jesus' Holy Name,
The worker great of wonders, in Jesus' Holy Name.
St. Jude, though oft forgotten, thou shalt remembered be,
We hail thee now in glory, and have recourse to thee;
For help for the despairing, when hopeless seems the task,
And from the Heart of Jesus, through thee we favors ask,
And from the Heart of Jesus, through thee we favors ask.

Add: "Most holy Apostle St. Jude, faithful servant and friend of Jesus... bring visible and speedy help where help has almost despaired of. Pray for me, so helpless and alone."

Practical steps:

Promise public testimony upon favor received. Jude loves this, drawing more graces.

Let St. Jude Thaddeus, a "Powerful Heavenly Intercessor" become your companion. In floods, job loss, illness, marital strife, cry: "Jude, help!" His relics in St. Peter's Basilica pulse with answered prayers; your heart can too.

Begin today: Pray his novena. Share testimonies in this newsletter. Form St. Jude sodality. As The Gambia rises in faith, may hordes convert, echoing his Persian triumphs.

St. Jude Thaddeus, pray for us! Relative of Jesus, apostle of hope, clubbed martyr, intercede mightily. Amen.

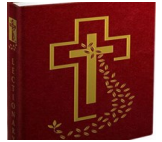
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Daily Mass Readings

April & May

**1 April, 2026 – Wednesday**

Wednesday of Holy Week

First Reading: [Isaiah 50](#): 4-9aResponsorial Psalm: [Psalms 69](#): 8-10, 21-22, 31 & 33-34Gospel: [Matthew 26](#): 14-25**2 April, 2026 – Thursday**

Holy Thursday. At Evening, Begin Easter Triduum of the Lord's Passion, Death and Resurrection

First Reading: [Exodus 12](#): 1-8, 11-14Responsorial Psalm: [Psalms 116](#): 12-13, 15-16bc, 17-18Second Reading: [First Corinthians 11](#): 23-26Verse Before the Gospel: [John 13](#): 34Gospel: [John 13](#): 1-15**3 April, 2026 – Friday**

Good Friday. Day of Fast (ages 18-59) and Abstinence from Meat (age 14 and up)

First Reading: [Isaiah 52](#): 13 – 53: 12Responsorial Psalm: [Psalms 31](#): 2, 6, 12-13, 15-16, 17, 25Second Reading: [Hebrews 4](#): 14-16; 5: 7-9Verse Before the Gospel: [Philippians 2](#): 8-9Gospel: [John 18](#): 1 – 19: 42**4 April, 2026 – Saturday**

Holy Saturday

First Reading: [Genesis 1](#): 1 – 2: 2 or 1: 1, 26-31aResponsorial Psalm: [Psalms 104](#): 1-2, 5-6, 10, 12, 13-14, 24, 35 or [Psalms 33](#): 4-5, 6-7, 12-13, 20 and 22Second Reading: [Genesis 22](#): 1-18 or 22: 1-2, 9a, 10-13, 15-18Responsorial Psalm: [Psalms 16](#): 5, 8, 9-10, 11Third Reading: [Exodus 14](#): 15 – 15: 1Responsorial Psalm: [Exodus 15](#): 1-2, 3-4, 5-6, 17-18Fourth Reading: [Isaiah 54](#): 5-14Responsorial Psalm: [Psalms 30](#): 2, 4, 5-6, 11-12, 13Fifth Reading: [Isaiah 55](#): 1-11Responsorial Psalm: [Isaiah 12](#): 2-3, 4, 5-6Sixth Reading: [Baruch 3](#): 9-15, 32 – 4: 4Responsorial Psalm: [Psalms 19](#): 8, 9, 10, 11Seventh Reading: [Ezekiel 36](#): 16-17a, 18-28Responsorial Psalm: [Psalms 42](#): 3, 5; 43: 3, 4 or [Isaiah 12](#): 2-3, 4bcd, 5-6 or [Psalms 51](#): 12-13, 14-15, 18-19Epistle Reading: [Romans 6](#): 3-11Responsorial Psalm: [Psalms 118](#): 1-2, 16-17, 22-23Gospel: [Matthew 28](#): 1-10**5 April, 2026 – Sunday**

Easter Sunday. The Resurrection of Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

First Reading: [Acts 10](#): 34a, 37-43Responsorial Psalm: [Psalms 118](#): 1-2, 16-17, 22-23Second Reading: [Colossians 3](#): 1-4 or [First Corinthians 5](#): 6b-8Alleluia: [First Corinthians 5](#): 7b-8aGospel: [John 20](#): 1-9 or [Matthew 28](#): 1-10 or, at an afternoon or evening Mass, [Luke 24](#): 13-35**6 April, 2026 – Monday**

Easter Monday

First Reading: [Acts 2](#): 14, 22-33Responsorial Psalm: [Psalms 16](#): 1-2a and 5, 7-8, 9-10, 11Alleluia: [Psalms 118](#): 24Gospel: [Matthew 28](#): 8-15**7 April, 2026 – Tuesday**

Easter Tuesday

First Reading: [Acts 2](#): 36-41Responsorial Psalm: [Psalms 33](#): 4-5, 18-19, 20 and 22Alleluia: [Psalms 118](#): 24Gospel: [John 20](#): 11-18**8 April, 2026 – Wednesday**

Easter Wednesday

First Reading: [Acts 3](#): 1-10Responsorial Psalm: [Psalms 105](#): 1-2, 3-4, 6-7, 8-9Alleluia: [Psalms 118](#): 24Gospel: [Luke 24](#): 13-35**9 April, 2026 – Thursday**

Easter Thursday

First Reading: [Acts 3](#): 11-26Responsorial Psalm: [Psalms 8](#): 2ab and 5, 6-7, 8-9Alleluia: [Psalms 118](#): 24Gospel: [Luke 24](#): 35-48**10 April, 2026 – Friday**

Easter Friday

First Reading: [Acts 4](#): 1-12Responsorial Psalm: [Psalms 118](#): 1-2 and 4, 22-24, 25-27aAlleluia: [Psalms 118](#): 24Gospel: [John 21](#): 1-14**11 April, 2026 – Saturday**

Easter Saturday

First Reading: [Acts 4](#): 13-21Responsorial Psalm: [Psalms 118](#): 1 and 14-15ab, 16-18, 19-21Alleluia: [Psalms 118](#): 24Gospel: [Mark 16](#): 9-15**12 April, 2026 – Sunday**

Second Sunday of Easter

First Reading: [Acts 2](#): 42-47Responsorial Psalm: [Psalms 118](#): 2-4, 13-15, 22-24Second Reading: [First Peter 1](#): 3-9Alleluia: [John 20](#): 29Gospel: [John 20](#): 19-31**13 April, 2026 – Monday**

Easter Weekday/ Martin I, Pope, Martyr

First Reading: [Acts 4](#): 23-31Responsorial Psalm: [Psalms 2](#): 1-3, 4-6, 7-9Alleluia: [Colossians 3](#): 1Gospel: [John 3](#): 1-8**14 April, 2026 – Tuesday**

Easter Weekday

First Reading: [Acts 4](#): 32-37Responsorial Psalm: [Psalms 93](#): 1ab, 1cd-2, 5Alleluia: [John 3](#): 14-15Gospel: [John 3](#): 7b-15**15 April, 2026 – Wednesday**

Easter Weekday

First Reading: [Acts 5](#): 17-26Responsorial Psalm: [Psalms 34](#): 2-3, 4-5, 6-7, 8-9Alleluia: [John 3](#): 16Gospel: [John 3](#): 16-21

16 April, 2026 – Thursday

Easter Weekday

First Reading: [Acts 5](#): 27-33

Responsorial Psalm: [Psalms 34](#): 2 and 9, 17-18, 19-20

Alleluia: [John 20](#): 29

Gospel: [John 3](#): 31-36

17 April, 2026 – Friday

Easter Weekday

First Reading: [Acts 5](#): 34-42

Responsorial Psalm: [Psalms 27](#): 1, 4, 13-14

Alleluia: [Matthew 4](#): 4b

Gospel: [John 6](#): 1-15

18 April, 2026 – Saturday

Easter Weekday

First Reading: [Acts 6](#): 1-7

Responsorial Psalm: [Psalms 33](#): 1-2, 4-5, 18-19

Gospel: [John 6](#): 16-21

19 April, 2026 – Sunday

Third Sunday of Easter

First Reading: [Acts 2](#): 14, 22-33

Responsorial Psalm: [Psalms 16](#): 1-2, 5, 7-8, 9-10, 11

Second Reading: [First Peter 1](#): 17-21

Alleluia: [Luke 24](#): 32

Gospel: [Luke 24](#): 13-35

20 April, 2026 – Monday

Easter Weekday

First Reading: [Acts 6](#): 8-15

Responsorial Psalm: [Psalms 119](#): 23-24, 26-27, 29-30

Alleluia: [Matthew 4](#): 4b

Gospel: [John 6](#): 22-29

21 April, 2026 – Tuesday

Easter Weekday/ Anselm, Bishop, Religious, Doctor

First Reading: [Acts 7](#): 51-60

Responsorial Psalm: [Psalms 31](#): 3cd-4, 6/ 7b / 8a, 17 & 21ab

Alleluia: [John 6](#): 35ab

Gospel: [John 6](#): 30-35

22 April, 2026 – Wednesday

Easter Weekday

First Reading: [Acts 8](#): 1b-8

Responsorial Psalm: [Psalms 66](#): 1-3a, 4-5, 6-7a

Alleluia: [John 6](#): 40

Gospel: [John 6](#): 35-40

23 April, 2026 – Thursday

Easter Weekday/ George, Martyr/ Adalbert, Bishop, Martyr

First Reading: [Acts 8](#): 26-40

Responsorial Psalm: [Psalms 66](#): 8-9, 16-17, 20

Alleluia: [John 6](#): 51

Gospel: [John 6](#): 44-51

24 April, 2026 – Friday

Easter Weekday/ Fidelis of Sigmaringen, Priest, Martyr

First Reading: [Acts 9](#): 1-20

Responsorial Psalm: [Psalms 117](#): 1, 2

Alleluia: [John 6](#): 56

Gospel: [John 6](#): 52-59

25 April, 2026 – Saturday

Mark, Evangelist Feast

First Reading: [First Peter 5](#): 5b-14

Responsorial Psalm: [Psalms 89](#): 2-3, 6-7, 16-17

Alleluia: [First Corinthians 1](#): 23a, 24b

Gospel: [Mark 16](#): 15-20

26 April, 2026 – Sunday

Fourth Sunday of Easter

First Reading: [Acts 2](#): 14a, 36-41

Responsorial Psalm: [Psalms 23](#): 1-3a, 3b-4, 5, 6

Second Reading: [First Peter 2](#): 20b-25

Alleluia: [John 10](#): 14

Gospel: [John 10](#): 1-10

27 April, 2026 – Monday

Easter Weekday

First Reading: [Acts 11](#): 1-18

Responsorial Psalm: [Psalms 42](#): 2-3; 43: 3-4

Alleluia: [John 10](#): 14

Gospel: [John 10](#): 11-18

28 April, 2026 – Tuesday

Easter Weekday/ Peter Chanel, Priest, Religious, Missionary, Martyr/ Louis Mary De Montfort, Priest

First Reading: [Acts 11](#): 19-26

Responsorial Psalm: [Psalms 87](#): 1b-3, 4-5, 6-7

Alleluia: [John 10](#): 27

Gospel: [John 10](#): 22-30

29 April, 2026 – Wednesday

Catherine of Siena, Virgin, Doctor Obligatory Memorial

First Reading: [Acts 12](#): 24 – 13: 5

Responsorial Psalm: [Psalms 67](#): 2-3, 5, 6 and 8

Alleluia: [John 8](#): 12

Gospel: [John 12](#): 44-50

30 April, 2026 – Thursday

Easter Weekday/ Pius Virgin, Pope, Religious

First Reading: [Acts 13](#): 13-25

Responsorial Psalm: [Psalms 89](#): 2-3, 21-22, 25 and 27

Alleluia: [Revelation 1](#): 5ab

Gospel: [John 13](#): 16-20

1 May, 2026 – Friday

Easter Weekday/ Joseph the Worker

First Reading: [Acts 13](#): 26-33

Responsorial Psalm: [Psalms 2](#): 6-7, 8-9, 10-11ab

Alleluia: [John 14](#): 6

Gospel: [John 14](#): 1-6,

Proper Gospel for Joseph: [Matthew 13](#): 54-58

2 May, 2026 – Saturday

Athanasius, Bishop, Doctor Obligatory Memorial

First Reading: [Acts 13](#): 44-52

Responsorial Psalm: [Psalms 98](#): 1, 2-3ab, 3cd-4

Alleluia: [John 8](#): 31b-32

Gospel: [John 14](#): 7-14

3 May, 2026 – Sunday

Fifth Sunday of Easter

First Reading: [Acts 6](#): 1-7

Responsorial Psalm: [Psalms 33](#): 1-2, 4-5, 18-19

Second Reading: [First Peter 2](#): 4-9

Alleluia: [John 14](#): 6

Gospel: [John 14](#): 1-12

4 May, 2026 – Monday

Easter Weekday

First Reading: [Acts 14](#): 5-18

Responsorial Psalm: [Psalms 115](#): 1-2, 3-4, 15-16

Alleluia: [John 14](#): 26

Gospel: [John 14](#): 21-26

5 May, 2026 – Tuesday

Easter Weekday
 First Reading: [Acts 14](#): 19-28
 Responsorial Psalm: [Psalms 145](#): 10-11, 12-13ab, 21
 Alleluia: [Luke 24](#): 46, 26
 Gospel: [John 14](#): 27-31a

6 May, 2026 – Wednesday

Easter Weekday
 First Reading: [Acts 15](#): 1-6
 Responsorial Psalm: [Psalms 122](#): 1-2, 3-4ab, 4cd-5
 Alleluia: [John 15](#): 4a, 5b
 Gospel: [John 15](#): 1-8

7 May, 2026 – Thursday

Easter Weekday
 First Reading: [Acts 15](#): 7-21
 Responsorial Psalm: [Psalms 96](#): 1-2a, 2b-3, 10
 Alleluia: [John 10](#): 27
 Gospel: [John 15](#): 9-11

8 May, 2026 – Friday

Easter Weekday
 First Reading: [Acts 15](#): 22-31
 Responsorial Psalm: [Psalms 57](#): 8-9, 10 and 12
 Alleluia: [John 15](#): 15b
 Gospel: [John 15](#): 12-17

9 May, 2026 – Saturday

Easter Weekday
 First Reading: [Acts 16](#): 1-10
 Responsorial Psalm: [Psalms 100](#): 2, 3, 5
 Alleluia: [Colossians 3](#): 1
 Gospel: [John 15](#): 18-21

10 May, 2026 – Sunday

Sixth Sunday of Easter
 First Reading: [Acts 8](#): 5-8, 14-17
 Responsorial Psalm: [Psalms 66](#): 1-3, 4-5, 6-7, 16, 20
 Second Reading: [First Peter 3](#): 15-18
 Alleluia: [John 14](#): 23
 Gospel: [John 14](#): 15-21

11 May, 2026 – Monday

Easter Weekday
 First Reading: [Acts 16](#): 11-15
 Responsorial Psalm: [Psalms 149](#): 1b-2, 3-4, 5-6a and 9b
 Alleluia: [John 15](#): 26b, 27a
 Gospel: [John 15](#): 26 – 16: 4

12 May, 2026 – Tuesday

Easter Weekday/ Nereus and Achilleus, Martyrs/
 Pancras, Martyr
 First Reading: [Acts 16](#): 22-34
 Responsorial Psalm: [Psalms 138](#): 1-2ab, 2cde-3, 7c-8
 Alleluia: [John 16](#): 7, 13
 Gospel: [John 16](#): 5-11

13 May, 2026 – Wednesday

Easter Weekday/ Our Lady of Fatima
 First Reading: [Acts 17](#): 15, 22 – 18: 1
 Responsorial Psalm: [Psalms 148](#): 1-2, 11-12, 13, 14
 Alleluia: [John 14](#): 16
 Gospel: [John 16](#): 12-15

14 May, 2026 – Thursday

Matthias, Apostle Feast
 First Reading: [Acts 1](#): 15-17, 20-26
 Responsorial Psalm: [Psalms 113](#): 1-2, 3-4, 5-6, 7-8
 Alleluia: [John 15](#): 16
 Gospel: [John 15](#): 9-17

15 May, 2026 – Friday

Easter Weekday/ Isidore the Farmer, Married Man
 First Reading: [Acts 18](#): 9-18
 Responsorial Psalm: [Psalms 47](#): 2-3, 4-5, 6-7
 Alleluia: [Luke 24](#): 46, 26
 Gospel: [John 16](#): 20-23

16 May, 2026 – Saturday

Easter Weekday
 First Reading: [Acts 18](#): 23-28
 Responsorial Psalm: [Psalms 47](#): 2-3, 8-9, 10
 Alleluia: [John 16](#): 28
 Gospel: [John 16](#): 23b-28

17 May, 2026 – Sunday

Ascension of the Lord Solemnity (Seventh Sunday of Easter)
 First Reading: [Acts 1](#): 1-11
 Responsorial Psalm: [Psalms 47](#): 2-3, 6-7, 8-9
 Second Reading: [Ephesians 1](#): 17-23
 Alleluia: [Matthew 28](#): 19a, 20b
 Gospel: [Matthew 28](#): 16-20

18 May, 2026 – Monday

Easter Weekday/ John I, Pope, Martyr
 First Reading: [Acts 19](#): 1-8
 Responsorial Psalm: [Psalms 68](#): 2-3ab, 4-5acd, 6-7ab
 Alleluia: [Colossians 3](#): 1
 Gospel: [John 16](#): 29-33

19 May, 2026 – Tuesday

Easter Weekday
 First Reading: [Acts 20](#): 17-27
 Responsorial Psalm: [Psalms 68](#): 10-11, 20-21
 Alleluia: [John 14](#): 16
 Gospel: [John 17](#): 1-11a

20 May, 2026 – Wednesday

Easter Weekday/ Bernardine of Siena, Priest, Religious,
 Missionary
 First Reading: [Acts 20](#): 28-38
 Responsorial Psalm: [Psalms 68](#): 29-30, 33-35a, 35bc-36ab
 Alleluia: [John 17](#): 17b, 17a
 Gospel: [John 17](#): 11b-19

21 May, 2026 – Thursday

Easter Weekday/ Christopher Magallanes, Priest, and
 Companions, Martyrs
 First Reading: [Acts 22](#): 30; 23: 6-11
 Responsorial Psalm: [Psalms 16](#): 1-2a and 5, 7-8, 9-10, 11
 Alleluia: [John 17](#): 21
 Gospel: [John 17](#): 20-26

22 May, 2026 – Friday

Easter Weekday/ Rita of Cascia, Religious
 First Reading: [Acts 25](#): 13b-21
 Responsorial Psalm: [Psalms 103](#): 1-2, 11-12, 19-20ab
 Alleluia: [John 14](#): 26
 Gospel: [John 21](#): 15-19

23 May, 2026 – Saturday

Easter Weekday

First Reading: [Acts 28](#): 16-20, 30-31

Responsorial Psalm: [Psalms 11](#): 4, 5 and 7

Alleluia: [John 16](#): 7, 13

Gospel: [John 21](#): 20-25

24 May, 2026 – Sunday

Pentecost Solemnity

First Reading: [Genesis 11](#): 1-9 or [Exodus 19](#): 3-8a, 16-20b

or [Ezekiel 37](#): 1-14 or [Joel 3](#): 1-5

Responsorial Psalm: [Psalms 104](#): 1-2, 24, 35, 27-28, 29, 30

Second Reading: [Romans 8](#): 22-27

Gospel: [John 7](#): 37-39

24 May, 2026 – Sunday

Pentecost Solemnity

First Reading: [Acts 2](#): 1-11

Responsorial Psalm: [Psalms 104](#): 1, 24, 29-30, 31, 34

Second Reading: [First Corinthians 12](#): 3b-7, 12-13

Gospel: [John 20](#): 19-23

25 May, 2026 – Monday

Ordinary Weekday/ Venerable Bede, Priest, Religious, Doctor/
Gregory VII, Pope, Religious/ Mary Magdalene De' Pazzi,
Virgin, Religious (Eighth Week in Ordinary Time)

First Reading: [First Peter 1](#): 3-9

Responsorial Psalm: [Psalms 111](#): 1-2, 5-6, 9 and 10c

Alleluia: [Second Corinthians 8](#): 9

Gospel: [Mark 10](#): 17-27

26 May, 2026 – Tuesday

Philip Neri, Priest Obligatory Memorial

First Reading: [First Peter 1](#): 10-16

Responsorial Psalm: [Psalms 98](#): 1, 2-3ab, 3cd-4

Alleluia: [Matthew 11](#): 25

Gospel: [Mark 10](#): 28-31

27 May, 2026 – Wednesday

Ordinary Weekday/ Augustine of Canterbury, Bishop,
Religious, Missionary

First Reading: [First Peter 1](#): 18-25

Responsorial Psalm: [Psalms 147](#): 12-13, 14-15, 19-20

Alleluia: [Mark 10](#): 45

Gospel: [Mark 10](#): 32-45

28 May, 2026 – Thursday

Ordinary Weekday

First Reading: [First Peter 2](#): 2-5, 9-12

Responsorial Psalm: [Psalms 100](#): 2, 3, 4, 5

Alleluia: [John 8](#): 12

Gospel: [Mark 10](#): 46-52

29 May, 2026 – Friday

Ordinary Weekday

First Reading: [First Peter 4](#): 7-13

Responsorial Psalm: [Psalms 96](#): 10, 11-12, 13

Alleluia: [John 15](#): 16

Gospel: [Mark 11](#): 11-26

30 May, 2026 – Saturday

Ordinary Weekday/ Optional Memorial of the Blessed
Virgin Mary

First Reading: [Jude 1](#): 17, 20b-25

Responsorial Psalm: [Psalms 63](#): 2, 3-4, 5-6

Alleluia: [Colossians 3](#): 16a, 17c

Gospel: [Mark 11](#): 27-33

31 May, 2026 – Sunday

The Holy Trinity Solemnity

First Reading: [Exodus 34](#): 4b-6, 8-9

Responsorial Psalm: [Daniel 3](#): 52, 53, 54, 55, 56

Second Reading: [Second Corinthians 13](#): 11-13

Alleluia: [Revelation 1](#): 8

Gospel: [John 3](#): 16-18

THE DIOCESE OF BANJUL NEWSLETTER

APPEAL FOR SUPPORT

We have a small favor to ask. Many people are beginning to turn to the Diocese of Banjul Newsletter for vital, independent, and quality journalism. Therefore, readers around the world now need to support us financially.

We would like to invite you to join the myriad of readers who have taken the step to support us financially – keeping us open to all, and fiercely independent. Since 2021, this support assisted in sustaining our work in diverse spheres. It enabled diligent, fact-checked, authoritative journalism to thrive in an era of falsehood, sensation, hype and breathtaking misinformation and misconception. We are still active and striving for the best. Banjul Newsletter journalism is available for everyone to read, we do this because we believe in information equality. While others commoditize information, we seek to democratize it. Greater numbers of people can keep track of societal issues, understand their impact, and become inspired to take meaningful action. Every contribution, however big or small, powers our journalism and sustains our future.

Support the Banjul Newsletter for as little as any amount if you can monthly.

April & May

Gambian Christian



23rd April, 1816: Captain Alexander Grant purchased Banjul Island from the King of the Kombos, and renamed it St. Mary's Island. Grant Street in Banjul was named after him.

18th April, 1848: The first Mass was celebrated in a room in Banjul which served as a chapel.

18th April, 1849: For 2,500 French francs, Bishop Aloysius Kobès of Dakar bought the property on Daniel Goddard Street, where the Cathedral now stands.

2nd May, 1849: Bishop Kobès blessed the foundation stone of the first Catholic chapel.

14th April, 1850: Four Sisters of the Immaculate Conception arrived from France to open a school for girls.

1st May, 1931: Bishop Augustin Grimault visited Banjul to confirm 30 young people.

4th May, 1935: Arrival of Sr. Albert Byrne SJC, who served in The Gambia until her death in Banjul on 16th July, 2001, aged 90.

15th April, 1936: Fr. Harold Whiteside celebrated the first Mass at Old Jeshwang.

9th April, 1948: Opening of the first St. Therese's Church Kanifing, now the parochial hall.

15th April, 1951: The Catholic Mission was raised to the status of Prefecture-Apostolic.

22nd May, 1954: Fr. Meehan's Golden Jubilee was celebrated. The actual date of his ordination was 28th October, 1904, but the celebration was brought forward because of his declining health. He died on 15th September, 1954.

8th April, 1958: Completion of Bwiam mission house, supervised by Fr. Reginald Gillooly.

3rd April, 1959: Opening of Njongon Primary School.

24th April, 1960: Bishop Moloney blessed Star of the Sea, Bakau.

2nd April, 1962: Bishop Moloney blessed a bell at the Cathedral.

9th April, 1966: Following Vatican II, Bishop Moloney set up three commissions: Liturgy, headed by Fr. Hugh Fagan; Ecumenism, Fr. Michael Flynn; and the Laity, Fr. Seán Little.

9th April, 1972: Archbishop Francis Carroll of Monrovia consecrated the new St. Therese's Church at Kanifing. The consecration coincided with the Bishops' Conference of The Gambia and Sierra Leone, hosted by Bishop Moloney.

4th April, 1980: Bishop Moloney announced his resignation, due to ill health.

5th April, 1983: The Cluny Sisters celebrated 100 years in The Gambia at the opening of the convent at Darsilami, with Sisters Elizabeth, Josephine and Philomena taking up residence.

13th April, 1985: At Bakau Stadium, Bishop Cleary ordained Anthony Gabisi and Peter Gomez as priests and David Jimoh Jarju and Edward Gomez as deacons.

12th April, 1986: Ordination of Fr. Edward Gomez.

26th April, 1986: Ordination of Fr. David Jimoh Jarju.

21st April, 1989: The renovated church at Bwiam was re-dedicated to Our Lady of Fatima.

17th April, 1993: Opening of St. James, Kanchungkou.

23rd April, 1995: Bishop Cleary blessed Holy Rosary, Lamin.

5th April, 1997: Opening of St. Matthew, Barra.

10th April, 1999: Ordination by Bishop Cleary of Fr. Joseph Karbo and Fr. Michael Ndecky.

21st April, 2001: Opening of St. Peter & St. Paul, Albreda.

14th May, 2006, Feast of St. Matthias: Episcopal Ordination at Bakau of the Most Rev. Robert Ellison CSSp.

1st April, 2007, Palm Sunday: Bishop Ellison opened the Chapel of Perpetual Adoration at St. Therese, Kanifing.

28th April, 2007: Bishop Emeritus Michael Cleary opened the Anne-Marie Javouhey Academy, Brusubi.

29th April, 2007: Opening of St. Teresa of Calcutta, Mariamakunda.

12th May, 2007: The Cluny Sisters celebrated the 200th anniversary of the founding of their Order.

11th-23rd April, 2008: Bishop Ellison attended the Pastoral Council for Inter-Religious Dialogue in Nairobi.

25th May, 2008: Death, in Dakar, of Mgr. Pierre Sagna CSSp, Bishop Emeritus of St. Louis du Sénégal, who had spent his retirement at Holy Cross, Brusubi.

20th April, 2009: Launching of the Network of Catholic Women's Associations.

11th May, 2009: Br. Marcelin, Principal of the Lycée Sacré Coeur Ziguinchor, visited St. Peter's Senior School, Lamin, with 11 teachers and 84 pupils.

24th May, 2009: The Methodist Mission achieved autonomy from the parent mission in Britain.

2nd May, 2009: President Jammeh made Bishop Ellison an honorary Commander of the Order of the Republic of The Gambia (CRG).

10th May, 2015: Sr. Marie J. Mendy, the only Gambian Sister of the School Sisters of Notre Dame, made her perpetual profession.

End of May, 2015: After serving in The Gambia since 1967, Fr. Michael Casey CSSp returned finally to Ireland.

25th March, 2017: The Gambia Christian Council held a thanksgiving service at Bakau Stadium attended by thousands of Christians of all denominations.

17th - 19th April, 2017: The Diocesan Finance Committee held its first Annual General Meeting. "Key stakeholders discussed how the Bishop's office could 'better partner' with them.

17th - 20th May, 2017: A prayer walk was held from Koina to Banjul for the salvation of souls across The Gambia.

10th April 2023: Walk for health organized by the Mam Amata Foundation to capture both young and old for our fitness of body - Banjul 10km Road Race will also take place this year 1st April 2024.

2nd April, 2024. The Funeral Mass of Sr. Bernadette Bah, (PM) was done at St. Therese's Parish, Kanifing and Interment at the Banjul Christian cemetery.

20th April, 2024: Ordinations of Fr. Pa George Mendy, Fr. John Mendy & Fr. James Jatta.

10th May, 2025. Ordinations in the Diocese of Banjul of Rev. Frs. Joseph Romain Karbo, Felix Boissey, Paul Donkor, Michael Reuben Gabbidon & + Suty Jaata.



Chrism Mass

Chrism Mass is one celebration which takes place every year during Holy Week, when the bishop presides over the Chrism Mass, during which he blesses the oils of catechumen and the infirmed. Additionally, the bishop, joined by members of the presbyterate, the priests, will consecrate the oil of chrism. These oils will then be taken to the parishes throughout the Diocese to be used during the celebration of the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, Anointing of the Sick, and Holy Orders.

The presbyterate will also renew promises made during their ordination to the priesthood. They will publicly recommit themselves to the service of the Church in collaboration with the bishop. Their priestly ministry assists all the faithful in living a life in the Holy Spirit.

During the Mass, the passage from the Gospel according to Saint Luke will be read, recounting Jesus preaching in the synagogue in Nazareth (Luke 4:16-21). Jesus quotes the Prophet Isaiah (61:1), "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, wherefore, he has anointed me to preach the good news to the poor." The oil that is blessed is used to express our faith

that those who receive the sacraments are truly anointed with the Holy Spirit.

From ancient times, oil has been used for a variety of purposes, often as a physical example of the Holy Spirit's work in the lives of the faithful. Oil has been used for medicinal purposes, to bring healing and soothing. The Holy Spirit heals our spiritual wounds and soothes our spirits when agitated. Oil has been used to give light and heat. The Holy Spirit enlightens our minds to do good and avoid evil, while warming our hearts, giving us strength needed to do the will of God. Oil also has the ability to soften things and even help to preserve them. The Holy Spirit softens the hardness of our hearts and preserves us from being hardened by sin.

Each of the oils is used for various purposes. The oil of the sick is used to anoint the infirmed, requesting that the Holy Spirit bring healing of mind and body to the one anointed, strengthening the sick person to persevere and not lose hope. The oil of catechumens helps the one anointed to resist the temptations of Satan. The oil of chrism is a mixture of olive oil and perfume. It is used to consecrate persons and places. It is used in baptism, confirmations and ordinations, as well as dedications of altars and church buildings. The sweet perfume recalls that those anointed are to have the sweet aroma of sanctity, pleasing to both God and people.

During the consecration of the chrism, the bishop will breathe on the oil, recalling the action of Jesus, who breathed on the Apostles after the Resurrection, stating, "Receive the Holy Spirit. Whose sins you forgive, they are forgiven." (John 20:22-23) Jesus gave his Apostles and their successors the power of the Holy Spirit in order to communicate the redemption he won for us upon the Cross. Our sins are forgiven and we live a new life in the Spirit. We share in the life of Jesus, being anointed to bring the

MAY, THE MONTH OF MARY

May is dedicated to Mary, the Mother of God, as a month of special devotion and honor in the Catholic Church, celebrating her role in the life of Jesus and the faithful.

The celebration of May as a Marian month fits well with the Liturgical Celebrations of Easter and Pentecost as we recall Mary's great joy in her Son's victory over death, as well as her presence with the apostles in the Upper Room, prayerfully awaiting the descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost.

Historical Significance: The tradition of dedicating the month of May to Mary has deep roots in Christian history. It began in the late 13th century and became more formalized in the 18th century, particularly through the efforts of the Jesuit Order. The month of May was chosen due to its association with spring and new life, paralleling the themes of motherhood and fertility, which resonate with Mary's role as the mother of Jesus.

Personal Devotions: Many families and communities gather to pray the Rosary or other Marian prayers, reflecting on her virtues and intercession. Another common practice involves crowning a statue of Mary with flowers, symbolizing her Queenship and the beauty of creation. Also churches often hold special services dedicated to Mary, emphasizing her importance in the faith.

Mary holds a unique position in Catholic theology as the Mother of God. Her acceptance of God's will and her role in the Incarnation make her a model of faith and obedience for all Christians. The month of May serves as a reminder for the faithful to deepen their relationship with her and to seek her intercession in their lives.



Conclusion: May, as the Month of Mary, is a time for Catholics to reflect on the significance of Mary in their faith, engage in devotional practices, and celebrate the virtues she embodies. It is an opportunity to renew one's commitment to living a life of faith, inspired by her example. Through various forms of devotion, the faithful honor Mary and recognize her role in the salvation history of humanity.

Weekday Celebrations

April & May

7TH APRIL**ST. JEAN-BAPTIST DE LA SALLE, PRIEST**

Born in Rheims, France, in 1631, Jean-Baptiste devoted himself to establishing schools for the poor. He founded the religious congregation, the Salesians. He endured many hardships, dying in Rouen in 1719.

25TH APRIL**ST. MARK, EVANGELIST**

The Gospel attributed to St. Mark is the shortest of the four Gospels, and probably the first to be written. John Mark was a cousin of St. Barnabas. It was at his mother's house in Jerusalem that the disciples assembled (Acts 12:12). Mark travelled with Barnabas and Paul to Cyprus (Acts 12:25; 13:13; 15:26-39). He left them there, but later helped Paul when he was in prison in Rome. Tradition says that Mark's Gospel was based on Peter's reminiscences.

29TH APRIL**ST. CATHERINE OF SIENA,
DOCTOR OF THE CHURCH**

Catherine was born in Siena, Tuscany (now part of Italy). In 1363, she joined the Dominican Order, becoming known for her asceticism. Her writings include four treatises on religious mysticism. She wrote: 'Be what God meant you to be, and you will set the world on fire!' Catherine died on 29th April, 1389 and was canonised in 1461.

2ND MAY**ST. ATHANASIUS,
DOCTOR OF THE CHURCH**

Athanasius was born in 293 at Alexandria, Egypt. In 325, he took part in the first Council of the Church in Nicæa (now Iznik) in Turkey. The council condemned Arianism, a heresy which denied Christ's divinity. In 328, Athanasius was appointed Patriarch of Alexandria, but in 336, theological disputes led to his banishment. He repeatedly returned from exile and resumed his office. But in 356, he was banished by the Emperor Constantine, and withdrew to Upper Egypt, where he wrote theological works. Constantine's death in 361 gave Athanasius a respite; but renewed controversy forced him to flee into the Theban desert. At the time of his death in 373, Athanasius was again in possession of his diocese.

The creed named after Athanasius was not written by him. It defines the Persons of the Trinity as revealed by the Holy Spirit, and is accepted by Catholics, Orthodox, Anglicans and most Protestants.

3RD MAY**ST. PHILIP & ST. JAMES, APOSTLES**

Philip was one of the twelve apostles, fellow-countryman of Andrew and Peter, whose home was in Bethsaida, a

fishing-village by the Lake of Galilee. In the early Church, he was one of the 'seven men of good repute' appointed to care for widows (Acts 6:1-5). When persecution broke out after the death of Stephen, Philip went down to Samaria as a preacher and healer (Acts 8:5-13). He converted and baptised an Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8:26-39). Later, Paul and his companions, on their way to Jerusalem, stayed with Philip at Cæsarea (Acts 21:8).

James is mentioned in the Gospels only in passing, but appears in Acts and the letters of Paul as a leader of the early Church. As leader of the Christian community in Jerusalem, he gave judgment on whether Gentiles had to be circumcised before they could be received into the Church. (Acts 15:1-19). Note that this James is not to be confused with the other apostle named as James, son of Zebedee and brother of John, often called James the Great, whose feast day is Tuesday, 25th July.

26TH MAY**ST. PHILIP NERI, PRIEST**

Philip Neri, known as the 'Second Apostle of Rome', was born in 1515. He was ordained at the age of 35. Gathering young people together for spiritual exercises, he found himself leading a group of priests who wished to live together, not bound by vows, but united in charity, in an institution called the Oratory. Philip was the friend of popes, noted for his preaching, modesty and humour. He died in 1595 and was canonised in 1622. Since then, other oratories have been founded.

7TH MAY**ST. AUGUSTINE OF CANTERBURY**

Augustine was born in 6th-century Rome, and became a Benedictine friar. Pope Gregory I sent Augustine and forty missionaries to England. They arrived in 597. Augustine converted King Ethelbert of Kent and many of his subjects. On the Pope's instructions, he purified many pagan temples, consecrated 13 other bishops, and became the first Archbishop of Canterbury. He died in 604. We pray today for the Governors, Principal, staff and students of St. Augustine's Senior Secondary School.

31ST MAY**VISITATION OF THE
BLESSED VIRGIN MARY**

This day marks the end of the Month of Mary. We celebrate the visit of Mary to her cousin Elizabeth, as related in Luke 1:39-56. In Elizabeth's house, Mary exclaimed the Magnificat - the hymn the universal Church says or sings at Vespers every day.

April & May

Saviour of the world, by Your Cross and
Resurrection You have set us free.

Our Sunday Readings

5th April, 2026

Easter Sunday

The Resurrection of the Lord

1st Reading: Acts 10:34A, 37-43
Responsorial Psalm: Psalms 118:1-2, 16-17, 22-23
2nd Reading: Colossians 3:1-4 Or 1 Corinthians 5:6B-8
Alleluia: 1 Corinthians 5:7B-8A
Gospel: John 20:1-9 or Matthew 28:1-10 or Mark 16:1-7 or Luke 24:13-35

Homily Theme: Jesus Christ Resurrects from the Dead, Let Us Celebrate the Risen Lord

Verse of the Day for Reflections: The Exsultet is a hymn sung at the beginning of Mass in darkness during the Easter Vigil, with the church only lit by candles. It celebrates Christ's victory over sin and death and includes a particularly beautiful part expressing joy which states: What a truly necessary sin Adam committed, which has been entirely destroyed by the Death of Christ! How fortunate was that transgression which earned for us such an immense and magnificent Redeemer! This statement may seem unusual at first because it presents the idea that Adam's sin, which brought about the fall of humanity, was necessary and even something to be happy about. However, the statement goes on to clarify that this sin, despite being the cause of so much suffering, ultimately led to the coming of Christ and his redemptive sacrifice, which is seen as a great good.

The reason Easter is significant is because God, through His infinite wisdom and love, transformed sin and its result (death) into a way to save the world. This means that God turned the very things that separated humanity from Him into the means to bring us closer to Him. Therefore, God turned the tragedy of sin into an opportunity for redemption, demonstrating His boundless power and love in the process. Jesus' Resurrection takes away the effects of all sin for those who cling to and embrace Him. During Easter, it is important to hold fast to our risen Lord and to embrace the reality of His resurrection. We should strive to remain connected to Jesus who is alive and active, and to the transformative power of His resurrection. There are numerous ways to maintain this connection. One approach is to find joy in all aspects of our lives, even amid adversity. By focusing on the positive, we can turn difficult situations into opportunities for growth and grace. For instance, whatever troubles us the most, whether it is anger, sadness or depression, has the potential to become a source of joy and grace if we view it in the right light.

The essence of Easter is that nothing can prevent us from experiencing the joy that God intends for us. This joy

cannot be taken away from us, despite any challenges or difficulties we may face. Although we may struggle, as Jesus did during His agony in the garden and all the way to Calvary, these sufferings will not ultimately triumph. Just as Christ persevered and ultimately emerged victorious, we too can find hope and joy in the power of His resurrection. It is God's desire for us to experience the joy of Easter in our lives, and to begin living in that joy even now. So, let us embrace the Easter season with open hearts and minds, and rejoice in the triumph of Jesus over sin and death. Happy Easter!

Let us Pray: Dear Lord, on this joyous Easter, I pray that you will help me to hold on to your resurrection and find strength in it. May you transform every burden and difficulty in my life into a source of joy, as only you can. Please fill my heart with your joy and let it guide me through all the challenges I may face. Jesus, I love you. Amen.

12th April, 2026

Divine Mercy Sunday

Second Sunday of Easter, Year A

1st Reading: Acts 2:42-47
Responsorial Psalm: Psalms 118:2-4, 13-15, 22-24
2nd Reading: 1 Peter 1:3-9
Alleluia: John 20:29
Gospel: John 20:19-31

Homily Theme: Blessed are Those Who Have not Seen and Have Believed – John 20:27-29

Verse of the Day Reflections: Jesus was crucified, died and was buried. This is what Thomas knew at that time when Jesus was appearing to His disciples after His resurrection. Thomas, just like all of us would have done, didn't believe that Jesus had resurrected. But Jesus was not angry or mad at him for his disbelief, in fact, He had to come again a second time so as to reveal Himself to Thomas. This underscores the very important task that Jesus wants us to undertake even with our human weaknesses. Jesus will still use us to spread His Gospel to the whole world. After realizing that Jesus resurrected and is alive, Thomas said to Jesus, "My Lord and my God." These words transformed Thomas from a dis-believer to a believer in the risen Christ. So, the pronouncements we make from our hearts through our mouths are very strong. Jesus will always reveal Himself to us both at our strongest and weakest points in our day-to-day life. Thomas, despite his doubt in the Risen Christ, became one of the greatest Gospel evangelizers in Asia. We too should not be bogged down by our weaknesses, let us rise to the occasion and do God's will of spreading His Word to the whole world.

Divine Mercy Sunday Celebration: This day of Divine Mercy Sunday is full of grace. It marks the end of the eight-day Easter Octave, and on this eighth day, we commemorate the Sunday of Divine Mercy. It's a special day when God's mercy is poured out upon us generously, exceeding our wildest expectations. It's as though the flood-gates of mercy have been opened wide, and we are blessed beyond measure. For many years, Divine Mercy Sunday was observed as a private devotion. However, in the year 2000, Pope Saint John Paul II, who was known for his own personal devotion to God's mercy, added this feast to the official calendar of the Church. This act coincided with the canonization of Sister Faustina Kowalska, who played a significant role in promoting the message of God's Divine Mercy. St Faustina Kowalska was a nun who belonged to the Congregation of Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy in Krakow, Poland and died in 1938. Despite her humble background, coming from a poor family of farmers and having only three years of basic education, she performed the most menial tasks in her convent. However, she was also a mystic who had numerous private revelations from our Lord, which she documented in her diary of Divine Mercy.

According to St. Faustina Kowalska, Jesus instructed her that Divine Mercy Sunday is a day when the deepest and most tender aspects of His mercy are available to all. He pours out an abundance of graces upon those who approach Him with a contrite heart. Those who confess their sins and receive Holy Communion will obtain complete forgiveness of both their sins and their punishment. On this day, all the channels through which grace flows are opened wide, and no one should fear approaching Him, regardless of the gravity of their sins. His mercy is so immense that no human or angelic mind could ever comprehend it. As we commemorate Divine Mercy Sunday, it is a time to deeply contemplate the immense generosity of the gift that God desires to lavish upon us. We are loved unconditionally by our merciful God, and on this eighth day of Easter, we should be acutely aware that the gates of Heaven are flung open wide for us to receive boundless graces and mercy. So let us turn our hearts to our compassionate Lord and be receptive to all that He wishes to bestow upon us.

Let us pray: Dear God, bypass our human weaknesses and use us to spread Your Word to the whole world just the same way You used Apostle Thomas. Help us to never doubt Your presence in our lives, and that You will always help us when we believe in You and call on Your Holy Name. Jesus, I love you. Amen.

19th April, 2026

Third Sunday of Easter, Year A

1st Reading: Acts 2:14, 22-33
Responsorial Psalm: Psalms 16:1-2, 5, 7-8, 9-10, 11
2nd Reading: 1 Peter 1:17-2
Alleluia: Luke 24:32
Gospel: Luke 24:13-35

Homily Theme: Jesus Meets Cleopas On The Road to Emmaus – Luke 24:13-35

Verse of the Day Reflections: The event of Jesus revealing himself to two of his disciples is captivating and thought-provoking. These disciples were deeply upset and uncertain about the death of Jesus. They had believed he

was the Messiah, but his execution shattered their hopes. Furthermore, there were reports that his tomb was found empty, leaving them perplexed about the situation. How should they interpret all of these occurrences? Jesus met the two disciples on the road to Emmaus, despite their doubts and confusion. He walked with them and met them where they were on their journey. This shows us that Jesus is always with us, even in our moments of doubt and confusion. Jesus reveals Himself to those who seek Him. Similarly, when we seek Jesus with an open heart and mind, He will reveal Himself to us. As they were journeying, Jesus "explained to them what was said about himself in all the Scriptures." As a result, these disciples comprehended that the man they were conversing with possessed remarkable knowledge and perception, prompting them to invite Him to stay with them.

Jesus is present in the breaking of the bread: Jesus revealed Himself to the two disciples when He broke bread with them. Jesus accepted their invitation and joined them in their home. While there, it is recorded in Scripture that "he took bread, said a blessing, broke it, and gave it to them." Then, their eyes were opened, and they recognized Him. However, soon after, He disappeared from their sight. This emphasizes the significance of the Eucharist and how Jesus is present in the act of breaking bread. Indeed, this event is both captivating and thought-provoking. Jesus intended for those disciples, and all of us, to comprehend that He, who was resurrected from the dead, was genuinely alive, and that we would recognize Him through the breaking of bread. We would recognize Him in the Most Holy Eucharist!

The event of Jesus revealing Himself to those disciples was, in reality, a lesson for all of us to understand the fundamental truth of His existence in the Eucharist. The truth that Jesus is present in the Eucharist signifies that He is alive! However, it also indicates that He is concealed in the Eucharist. This blend of being hidden and genuinely present gives us invaluable direction in our faith. This is particularly true when we attend Mass, but it is also the case in numerous other aspects of our daily lives. Jesus is present in our midst, at this very moment, but we may not perceive Him. Nevertheless, He is genuinely present! Frequently, we believe that our Lord is present solely in extraordinary ways, but that is not the case! He is always present to us in very ordinary ways. Take some time to meditate on the encounter of those disciples. If you were in their shoes, you would be fortunate to be in the presence of the Savior of the world. What an extraordinary privilege! The truth is that God is with you right now and forever. He is always with you, and He is always communicating with you. Seek Him out and listen to His voice. You may be amazed at how close He truly is.

Let us Pray: Dear Lord, I am grateful for Your abundant love towards me, which assures me of Your constant presence in my life. Please guide me to be able to perceive your gentle and calm voice, and to identify Your presence around me. I ask for the gift of faith to be able to recognize You in the Most Holy Eucharist and to be able to discern Your presence in the everyday occurrences of my life. My love for You is boundless. Jesus, I love you. Amen.



26th April, 2026
Fourth Sunday of Easter, Year A

1st Reading: Acts 2:14A, 36-41
Responsorial Psalm: Psalms 23: 1-3a, 3b, 4, 5, 6
2nd Reading: 1 Peter 2:20B-25
Alleluia: John 10:14
Gospel: John 10:1-10

Homily Theme: I Came So That You Might Have Life More Abundantly – John 10:1-10

Verse of the Day Reflections: Jesus presents a sharp distinction between shepherds, which is relevant to priests, parents, and everyone in their individual way. Jesus demonstrated sacrificial love as the ultimate Shepherd, being willing to do whatever it took for the sake of His sheep. He did not allow any obstacle, such as suffering, persecution, or rejection, to deter Him from fulfilling His responsibility of caring for us in a total and complete way. His unwavering commitment to us, even to the point of sacrificing everything, should inspire, console, and encourage us to recognize the depth of His love. The steadfast affection of a parent, sibling, or close companion serves as a demonstration of love, which can prove to be a valuable source of support during challenging times. This unwavering love creates a powerful spiritual connection between individuals, which can withstand any adversity. Regardless of the challenges we face, it's important to recognize the constant guidance and support of the Divine Shepherd. Moreover, when we can perceive this love through the unwavering assistance of other people, we receive double the blessings. It can be challenging to persevere during difficult circumstances, to provide support to those who require it at the right time, and to remain committed to our beliefs without succumbing to fear. Take time today to consider how closely you resemble the Good Shepherd in your actions. If you identify any shortcomings, allow Him to guide you, so that you can become a better shepherd to others. Place your faith in the Good Shepherd and rely on His flawless love for you.

Let us Pray: Lord, I express my gratitude to You for always being there for me as my Shepherd. Additionally, I appreciate those who serve as Your instruments to demonstrate this profound love and devotion. Please assist me in fulfilling my role as a shepherd for Your people, the individuals You have put in my life. May I never shy away from this wonderful responsibility You have entrusted to me. Jesus, I love You. Amen.

3rd May, 2026
Fifth Sunday of Easter, Year A

1st Reading: Acts 6:1-7
Responsorial Psalm: Psalms 33:1-2, 4-5, 18-19
2nd Reading: 1 Peter 2:4-9
Alleluia: John 14:6
Gospel: John 14:1-12

Homily Theme: In My Father's House, There Are Many Dwelling Places – John 14:1-6

Verse of the Day Reflections: As believers, it's important to cultivate a deep affection for Heaven by comprehending its nature and the role of our existence on Earth. Heaven serves to structure our lives and keep us on the right track which leads to everlasting joy. The passage mentioned above offers a comforting view of Heaven as the "Father's house." This is a valuable image to contemplate because it emphasizes that Heaven is our true home. A home is a secure place where we can be ourselves, unwind, be with our loved ones, and experience a sense of belonging. As God's children, we are meant to be there with Him, and He has chosen us to belong there. Meditating on this picture of Heaven can also bring comfort to those who have lost someone dear to them. The process of bidding farewell, even if temporary, is often painful, as it should be. The pain of losing someone we love signifies that there was a genuine bond in that relationship, which is a positive thing. God desires that as we experience the pain of loss, we also find comfort in the thought of our loved ones being in the Father's home for eternity. Although it's hard to grasp, they are happier there than we can ever imagine, and one day we will be called to share in that joy. Take some time today to meditate on the image of Heaven as our Father's House. Allow yourself to fully immerse in this image and listen to what God may be saying to you through it. As you do so, let your heart be captivated by the beauty of Heaven, so that this longing will guide your choices and actions in your present life.

Let us Pray: Lord, my ultimate desire is to be with You forever in Heaven where I can experience Your comfort, consolation, and everlasting joy. Please assist me in maintaining this as my primary goal in life and to constantly cultivate a longing for this ultimate destination. Jesus, I love you. Amen.

10th May, 2026
Sixth Sunday of Easter, Year A

1st Reading: ACTS 8:5-8, 14-17
Responsorial Psalm: Psalms 66:1-3, 4-5, 6-7, 16, 20
2nd Reading: 1 Peter 3:15-18
Alleluia: John 14:23
Gospel: John 14:15-21

Homily Theme: If You Love Me You Will Keep My Commandments – John 14:15-21

Jesus said to his disciples: "If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate to be with you always, the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot accept, because it neither sees nor knows him. But you know him, because he remains with you, and will be in you. – John 14:15-21

Verse of the Day Reflections: To begin with, we should consider whether we are ready to accept the complete truth that comes with the Holy Spirit, which Jesus referred to as the "Spirit of Truth." If we are worldly and hold onto worldly beliefs and values, we will not be open to receiving the Holy Spirit. As we approach Pentecost Sunday, we shift our focus to the anticipation of the Holy Spirit's arrival. Jesus mentions in the passage above that He will ask the Father to send another Advocate who will remain with us, and this Advocate is none other than the Holy Spirit. Currently, we are living in the time that Jesus referred to as the "Age of the Holy Spirit." It is beneficial to examine the coming of the Holy Spirit as

Jesus presented it to His disciples. The Holy Spirit serves as The Advocate, implying that it is the sole helper we require. Being engulfed by the Holy Spirit gives us access to every grace we need in life. Take some time today to think about how Jesus' promise to His Apostles has come to fruition and how you too can receive this promise today. Remember that Pentecost Sunday is only two weeks away, so prepare for it by praying to the Holy Spirit and eagerly anticipating its arrival. Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and kindle in them the fire of your love. Send forth your Spirit and they shall be created. And You shall renew the face of the earth.

Let us Pray: Dear God, you have taught and guided your faithful people through the Holy Spirit. Please grant us the same wisdom and comfort of the Holy Spirit so that we may live our lives according to your will. We ask this through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

17th May, 2026 Seventh Sunday of Easter, Year A

1st Reading: ACTS 1:12-14
Responsorial Psalm: Psalms 27:1, 4, 7-8
2nd Reading: 1 Peter 4:13-16
Alleluia: John 14:18
Gospel: John 17:1-11A

Homily Theme: Give Glory To Your Son So That Your Son May Glorify You – John 17:1-11

Jesus raised his eyes to heaven and said, "Father, the hour has come. Give glory to your son, so that your son may glorify you, just as you gave him authority over all people, so that your son may give eternal life to all you gave him. Now, this is eternal life, that they should know you, the only true God, and the one whom you sent, Jesus Christ – John 17:1-11

Verse of the Day Reflections: God the Father gave Jesus Christ the authority over all people so that He may preach the Good News to them. Those whom God has chosen will hear the Word and will inherit eternal life. Now, here we have a clear explanation of what eternal life is. Eternal life is knowing God the Father, who is the True God and Jesus Christ, who was sent by God on earth to save us from our sins. In this world, there are many gods that we try to follow blindly. These gods may be material wealth, political power, drugs, immorality etc. Jesus says these are false gods. The true God is our Heavenly Father. Living forever in the everlasting Love and goodness of God in Heaven is the surest thing we should yearn for or look forward to in this life. By knowing God, loving Him, glorifying Him and keeping His commandments, we are assured eternal life by God. Let us today resolve to know God the Father and Jesus Christ in all ways so that our assurance of Eternal Life may come true. Let us Love and trust the only true God and keep His commandments.

Let us Pray: Eternal Father, help us to continue loving and trusting You. Give us the strength to resist the temptations of following other earthly gods. Help us to remain attached to You and on the last day we will inherit Eternal Life. Jesus, I love you. Amen.

24th May, 2026 Pentecost Masses

Vigil Mass

1st Reading: Genesis 11:1-9 or
Exodus 19:3-8A, 16-20B or
Ezekiel 37:1-14 or
Joel 3:1-5
Responsorial Psalm: Psalms 104:1-2, 24 & 35, 27-28,
29-30
2nd Reading: Romans 8:22-27
Gospel: John 7:37-39

Extended Vigil

1st Reading: Genesis 11:1-9
Responsorial Psalm: Psalms 33:10-11, 12-13, 14-15
2nd Reading: Exodus 19:3-8A, 16-20B
Responsorial Psalm: Daniel 3:52, 53, 54, 55, 56
or Psalms – 19:8, 9, 10, 11
3rd Reading: Ezekiel 37:1-14
Responsorial Psalm: Psalms 107:2-3, 4-5, 6-7, 8-9
4th Reading: Joel 3:1-5
Responsorial Psalm: Psalms 104:1-2, 24 & 35, 27-28,
29-30
Epistle: Romans 8:22-27
Gospel: John 7:37-39

Pentecost Sunday – Mass During the Day

1st Reading: ACTS 2:1-11
Responsorial Psalm: Psalms 104:1, 24, 29-30, 31, 34
2nd Reading: 1 Corinthians 12:3B-7, 12-13
or Romans 8:8-17 or Galatians 5:16-25
Gospel: John 20:19-23

Homily Theme: Pentecost! Receive the Holy Spirit – John 20:19-23

Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you." And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. Whose sins you forgive are forgiven them, and whose sins you retain are retained." – John 20:19-23

Verse of the Day, Pentecost Sunday Reflections: Today is Pentecost Sunday. This is the day that God sent to us a helper after Jesus returned to our Heavenly Father. The helper is the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is our advocate in all our times of hardships and comfort. He will keep reminding us of everything that Jesus taught us while He was here on earth. He will also be providing good counsel always when we fall into temptations. Jesus, today, is sending the Holy Spirit to us and at the same time sending us forth to the world to proclaim the Good News. He knows that it will not be an easy task to proclaim the Gospel to the world. The world is full of evil and persecutions. The Holy Spirit will be with us to strengthen our faith and hope when face turbulence from the evil one. Our clergy are today being given the powers to help us in penance. Jesus has advanced the powers of absolution to our Bishops and Priests. Let us seize this golden opportunity and always go to confession as often as possible without fear of being scorned by Non-Catholics.

Let us Pray: Come, Holy Spirit, Father of the poor! Come, source of all our store! Come, within our bosoms shine. You, of comforters the best; You, the soul's most welcome guest. Amen.

31st May, 2026
The Solemnity of the Most Holy Trinity
Year A

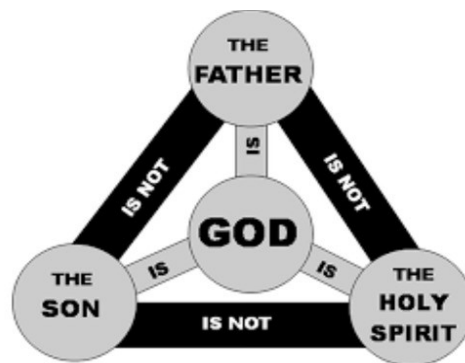
1st Reading: Exodus 34:4B-6, 8-9
Responsorial Psalm: Daniel 3:52, 53, 54, 55, 56
2nd Reading: 2 Corinthians 13:11-13
Alleluia: Revelation 1:8
Gospel: John 3:16-18

Homily Theme: The Most Holy Trinity – For God So Loved the World – John 3:16-18

Verse of the Day Reflections: To begin with, it is crucial to comprehend that the Divine Trinity of God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit comprises three distinct Persons, and we wholeheartedly embrace the belief that this singular God exists as the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Each of these individuals possesses an immaculate intellect and free will, and they are each capable of attaining absolute knowledge and love. As a result, each one possesses complete knowledge and love for the others. Another aspect that is both uplifting and enlightening to grasp is that the unity they experience through their shared knowledge and love also provides each individual with absolute fulfillment as a distinct Person. This exemplifies that the completeness of “person-hood” is achieved through unity. This serves as a remarkable and invaluable lesson for each and every one of us. While we are distinct from God, we are created in the image and likeness of God. Consequently, we discover fulfillment in a similar manner to God. Specifically, our fulfillment in life arises from our love for others and our voluntary decision to

engage in a deeper understanding of each individual, thereby establishing a sense of unity with them. The manifestation of this unity will vary depending on the nature of our relationships. Naturally, spouses are called to emulate the profound unity observed in the life of God. However, all relationships are encouraged to partake in God’s divine essence in their own distinct manner. As we commemorate Trinity Sunday, take a moment to contemplate the relationships to which God has summoned you. To what extent do you mirror the love exhibited by the Trinity in your own relationships? Undoubtedly, there will be areas where we can further develop and mature. Pledge yourself to embark on a deeper journey and, in that act of love, permit God to bestow upon you a greater sense of fulfillment.

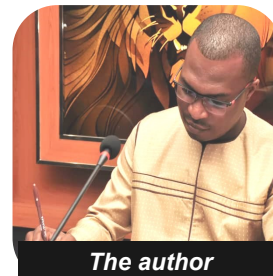
Let us Pray: Dear Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, assist me in deepening my knowledge and affection for You. Guide me to uncover the profound love that permeates Your divine existence. As I make this discovery, enable me to extend the same heartfelt love to others. Father, Son and Holy Spirit I love You. Amen.



VIEWPOINT

By Andrew Sylva - andrewsylva1982@gmail.com

**Statesmanship, Patriotism, and Nationalism:
 Reimagining The Gambia’s Path to
 Responsible Nationhood**



The author

There is a timeless truth in the words of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.: “Everybody can be great... because anybody can serve.”

True greatness for a nation does not come from the wealth of its land, the size of its economy, or the strength of its armies — but from the quality of its people’s character, their capacity to serve one another, and their willingness to put collective good over personal interest. For The Gambia, a small nation with a big heart, this truth offers a guiding light toward responsible nationhood.

**The Meaning of Statesmanship:
 Beyond Position to Purpose**

When we speak of statesmanship, we must broaden our view beyond titles and offices. The true statesman is not defined by rank but by vision, integrity, and service. The Gambian who embodies statesmanship is not only the one who leads in public spaces, but one who guides in everyday life — in families, schools, markets, and communities.

As Nelson Mandela once said: “What counts in life is not the mere fact that we have lived. It is what difference we have made to the lives of others.”

Each Gambian can become a statesman in his own sphere by making a conscious choice to uplift others, to encourage unity where there is division, and to practise empathy where there is indifference.

Patriotism: More Than a Feeling, a Daily Commitment

Patriotism is often misunderstood as something that only arises during national celebrations or in moments of crisis. Yet, the deepest form of patriotism is not emotional, but active.

The American poet Emily Dickinson captured this idea beautifully when she wrote: “Unable are the loved to die, for love is immortality.”

Patriotism grounded in love for one’s country endures. It manifests not in loud slogans but in everyday actions: teaching a child respect for others, defending the dignity of a neighbor, or nurturing the natural beauty of our land. A patriotic Gambian is one who says, “I will build up my home, I will serve my community, I will cherish our traditions and embrace the promise of progress.”

Reimagined: Inclusive, Proud, and Forward-Looking

Nationalism in its best form celebrates identity without excluding others. It is rooted in pride, not arrogance; in confidence, not superiority. A nation's identity should be inclusive — a tapestry woven from multiple cultures, languages, and histories — not a banner that divides.

The Ghanaian statesman Kwame Nkrumah declared: "We face neither East nor West; we face forward."

This idea can inspire Gambians to build a nationalism that looks forward — one that cherishes heritage while welcoming innovation; one that honours tradition while embracing positive change.

The Call to Action: Every Citizen, Every Day

To reimagine The Gambia's path to responsible nationhood is to call every Gambian into action — not as spectators, but as active participants in shaping the future.

Educators: Cultivators of Character

Teachers and mentors sow seeds of hope and discipline. Every lesson in a classroom is a building block for citizenship. When we teach young people to question thoughtfully, to read widely, and to act compassionately, we are training future leaders who serve with both heart and mind.

Youth: The Heartbeat of Tomorrow

The youth are not merely the future — they are the present in motion. When young Gambians choose resilience over resignation, curiosity over complacency, and collaboration over conflict, they become agents of transformation. Their energy, creativity, and courage are the pulse of national renewal.

Parents and Families: First Schools of Patriotism

Patriotism begins at home. A child who sees respect, responsibility, and kindness modeled by parents and elders learns that service to others is not optional, but noble. Fathers and mothers who teach their children to value

honesty, generosity, and dignity are doing more for the nation than any speech ever could.

Community Leaders: Architects of Unity

From neighborhood associations to faith-based groups, community leaders have the power to bring people together. Through events that celebrate culture, fora that encourage dialogue, and programs that foster shared responsibility, unity becomes lived reality — not just an aspiration.

The Spirit of Responsible Nationhood

Responsible nationhood is not an abstract ideal — it is a lived commitment. It is the daily choice to act with integrity, to care for neighbors, and to build bridges rather than walls.

The great Indian leader Mahatma Gandhi reminded the world: "Be the change that you wish to see in the world."

For The Gambia, these words are not only inspiring — they are imperative. If Gambians wish to see a nation respected for its unity, compassion, and collective achievement, then all citizens must first practice these values in their lives.

Conclusion: A People United in Purpose

The path to responsible nationhood is not laid by luck, coincidence, or external force — it is shaped by the choices of the people. When Gambians embrace statesmanship as service, patriotism as daily action, and nationalism as inclusive pride, the nation blossoms not because of what it has, but because of what its people give.

In the words of Rabindranath Tagore: "Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high..."

Let this be the Gambian spirit — courageous minds, humble hearts, and hands eager to build a future that belongs to every citizen.

Overall, are you truly a statesman, a patriot, or a nationalist?

**SAINT TERESA OF CALCUTA DEANERY LENTEN PILGRIMAGE
THEME: Repent and Believe in the Gospel**



St. Mother Teresa of Calcutta Deanery Lenten Pilgrimage to the shrine of our Lady of Peace in Kunkujang-Mariama took place on Saturday, 21st March, 2026.

It was a moment of prayer and reconciliation. The deanery is composed of 5 parishes: St. Kizito's, Holy Cross, St. Charles L'wanga, St. Anthony and St. Peter's. They spent the day together in reconciliation, praying the

Holy Rosary, Stations of the Cross and Adoration of the Holy Eucharist.

The day ended with Holy Mass celebrated by the Vicar General and the priests of the deanery.



Joint Resolutions of the Catholic Bishops Conferences of The Gambia, Liberia and Sierra Leone (CBCGLS)

From January 23–25, 2026, the Catholic Bishops Conference of Liberia (CABICOL) joined the bishops' conferences of The Gambia and Sierra Leone for a three-day solidarity visit and Plenary Assembly. Discussions centered on merging conferences and seminaries and strengthening pastoral collaboration.

Here is the: (CABICOL) AND THE INTER-TERRITORIAL CATHOLIC BISHOPS' CONFERENCE (ITCABIC) OF THE GAMBIA AND SIERRA LEONE.

Preamble: The members of the Catholic Bishop's Conference of Liberia (CABICOL) and the Inter-Territorial Catholic Bishops' Conference (ITCABIC) of The Gambia and Sierra Leone meeting in the City of Makeni, Diocese of Makeni, Sierra Leone on Friday, January, 23 2026, after prayerful deliberations.

Resolved:

1. To continuously and unflinchingly support the Holy Father, Pope Leo XIV, as he shepherds the Universal Church, and asking for God's blessings upon him through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of the Church.
2. To recommit ourselves to the pastoral care of the people of God entrusted to us, taking into consideration their spiritual, psychological, moral and economic well-being, especially the poor and marginalized. We also renew our commitment to protect God's children, especially minors and vulnerable adults, in accordance with the Exhortation in 'Motu Proprio-Vos Estis Lux Mfundu', of our Holy Father of blessed memory, Pope Francis.
3. To work together as one Episcopal Conference, as a sign of our communion, in accordance with the Lord's prayer of unity among His disciples, "Ur Unum Sint" - let them be one (Jn 17:21) and in keeping with the spirit of the Synod on Synodality, while respecting the

autonomy of each diocese as provided in canons 368, 381 and 391. This Episcopal Conference will be known as "Catholic Bishops' Conference of The Gambia, Liberia and Sierra Leone (C. B. C. G. L. S)."

To confirm this decision, voting was carried out among the eight (Bishops present; seven (7) voted in favour, and one (1) against.

4. To this effect, a Committee has been set up to review the Statutes of both Conferences and come up with a revised version.

This Committee comprises:

- A. Most Rev. Henry Aruna. Bishop of Kenema-Episcopal Chairperson
- B. Rev. Fr. Dennis Cephas Nimene, CABICOL, Secretary -First Secretary of Committee.
- C. Rev. Fr. Francis Papa Bangura, ITCABIC Secretary-Second Secretary of Committee
- D. Rev. Fr. Paul Sandi, Catholic Diocese of Bo-Member.
- E. Rev. Fr. Joseph Konteh, Archdiocese of Freetown-Member.
- F. Rev. Fr. Charles Gono, Diocese of Gbarnga, Liberia-Member.

To enhance this merger, we further resolved to have Philosophical studies in Liberia, Theological studies in Sierra Leone and Spiritual Year in The Gambia.

Conclusion: We entrust the CBCGLS to Mary our Mother, Queen of The Gambia, Liberia and Sierra Leone, as we impart our episcopal blessings upon all those who live in our territories.

Done on Sunday, 25th Day of January, 2026, the Feast of the Conversion of St. Paul the Apostle.

Signed:

*Most Rev. Dr. Gabriel Mendy CSSp.
President of ITCABIC.*

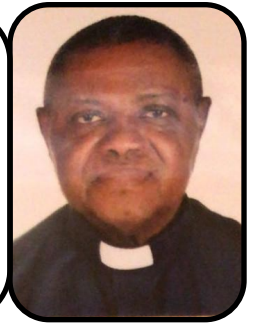
*Most Rev. Anthony F. Borwah
President of CABICOL.*



REIGIOUS PERSPECTIVE

Inter-Religious Relations & Dialogue Among Christians & Muslims In The Gambia

BY FR. EDU GOMEZ



INTRODUCTION

The topic, Inter-religious relations and dialogue is very important and has been treated by Religious bodies and the government of The Gambia. Both Christians and Muslims live and exist in the country for many years and have close links. Sometimes family ties, culture, social and religious events bind them together. People of both religious convictions see themselves as one because they inter marry, go to the same farm to work, schools, and market and sometimes pray together in some circumstances. As a result, people, whether Christian and Muslim, create a live in relations with one another and dialogue as well.

DIALOGUE THROUGH THE EFFORTS OF CHRISTIAN AND MUSLIM LEADERS

Our leaders on both faiths have, in the past and in recent times, made efforts to unity and understanding. The late Catholic Bishop Michael Mahoney in 1965 formally reached out to Muslim leaders and elders as a result the Church's stance to reach out to other religions. Coming from the Vatican Council (1962 - 1965) having followed the policy to reach out by visiting and having talks with the then Imam of Banjul Abdoulie Jobe. This was a successful attempt to bring close relations between Christians and Muslims in the Community of Banjul.

From this attempt to meet with Imams, a good relation and dialogue continued with successive religious leaders. Both late Bishops Cleary and Robert Ellison saw the need for good inter-religious relations and dialogue, and so made a promise at their consecrations to continue this trend. Many visits to the Imam Ratib of Banjul continued annually at the beginning of Ramadan, Muslims fasting period. These visits were friendly to the Imam and his council of elders in Banjul. In 2004 on the visit of Bishop Robert Ellison, he asked if this visit could be reciprocated so during the Christmas season. This was done and I was a living witness because it took place at the Cathedral in Banjul where I was Administrator. This made headlines in the local newspapers with reports and pictures of the gathering of Bishop Ellison, some Christians and Imam Ratib, Alieu Cherno Mass Kah, and the Muslims published.

The motive for this great event of relations was to manifest the need for followers and people of both religions to accept each other through the good example of their leaders.

EFFORTS OF COMMUNITIES AND GROUPS IN FOSTERING CHRISTIAN-MUSLIM RELATIONS AND DIALOGUE

Many communities and groups of the two faiths have in the past and recent times, followed the good examples of the leaders. To name a few: we had the Interfaith group for peace and dialogue, the Forum for peace among religions,

Banjul Muslim elders in collaboration with Christians, etc. the latter invited, late Bishop Solomon Tilewa Johnson and me, to a vigil prayer at the Independence Road Mosque, called Gamo. It was a successful welcomed as in their midst and even gave us audience to speak to them. This took place during my time as administrator of the Cathedral in Banjul.

Muslim youths in 2023 in Kololi shared sugar and rice with Christians during Lent, to enhance inter-religious relations.

CONSTRAINTS AND CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED IN SOME EVENTS THAT DETERRED THE GOOD RELATIONS BETWEEN CHRISTIANS AND MUSLIMS

The good will and efforts in this relationship with Christians did not go without challenges. In 2001, when a Church called Omega and the Pipeline Mosque which were in close proximity. It was on a Friday afternoon when Muslims were praying their Friday prayers and the Church also played loud music and songs from their speaker system. Conflict arose because of the deafening noise and so insults and throwing of stones followed. Security forces were called to the scene to restore peace and order. Late Bishop Solomon Tilewa Johnson on behalf of The Gambia Christian Council, and Muslim elders from the Supreme Islamic Council, also played a part through dialogue to calm and resolve the situation.

Also, the very difficult circumstances of Muslim female Students wearing veils in Christian Schools ensued from the past government era. Government made attempts to resolve the problems by asking Muslims to respect Christian School systems by not wearing veil or go to schools that permit the wearing of veils.

In later times, this problem of wearing of veils has continued and ended up as a legal matter.

CONCLUSION

The efforts made in inter-religious dialogue and fostering good relations between Christians and Muslims in The Gambia still maintained up to the present, but sometimes the situation is unpredictable. Our religious leaders and the government are on the alert to help bring peace and calm in the country.

Both The Gambia Christian Council and the Supreme Islamic Council are willing and making peace between Christian and Muslims.

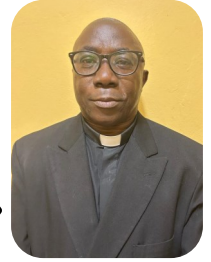
Inter-religious relations and peaceful coexistence should be the norm for such a small country and communities of faith.

*'Peace and tranquility
are a thousand gold pieces'.*

The Not-Quite-Empty Tomb

John 20:1-10

BY FR. GABOU SECKA



Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the entrance. So she came running to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one Jesus loved, and said, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we don't know where they have put him!"

So Peter and the other disciple started for the tomb. Both were running, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. He bent over and looked in at the strips of linen lying there but did not go in. Then Simon Peter, who was behind him, arrived and went into the tomb. He saw the strips of linen lying there, as well as the burial cloth that had been around Jesus' head. The cloth was folded up by itself, separate from the linen. Finally the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went inside. He saw and believed. (They still did not understand from Scripture that Jesus had to rise from the dead.)

Then the disciples went back to their homes.

One of the great historical evidences of Jesus' resurrection is the empty tomb. But the remarkable and startling fact is that when Peter and John arrived at the tomb on the first Easter morning, it was not quite empty. The body of Jesus was gone, but something was still there: the grave clothes. Something about them so struck John, at least, that he believed in the resurrection.

Significantly, this is the first time a disciple indicated belief in the resurrection.

During the last century, a well-known French critic of the Gospels, Ernest Renan, argued that Christian faith in the resurrection was the result of the rumors spread by Mary Magdalene, who had suffered a hallucination, thinking she had seen Jesus. But Mary could not have suffered a hallucination. The last thing in the world she ever expected was her Lord's resurrection. And John testifies that he believed some time before Mary returned to the tomb and met Jesus.

Events of Easter Morning

Jesus had been crucified on Friday (as the church has generally believed). He lay in the tomb until the resurrection, which certainly took place before dawn on Sunday morning. At this point, the women came to the tomb from Jerusalem bearing spices to anoint his body. There were at least four women and probably more. Matthew says that the group included Mary Magdalene and the other Mary, that is, Mary the mother of James. Mark adds that Salome was present. Luke says that Joanna was also there with others. These women started out while it was yet dark and arrived at the tomb in the early dawn, when it was difficult to distinguish objects.

On reaching the tomb, the women were astonished to find the stone removed from the entrance. We must imagine them standing about, afraid to go too close and wondering what had happened. Who moved the stone? Had the body of Jesus been stolen? Had Joseph of Arimathea moved it to another place? What were they to do? At last, they decided that the disciples must be told, and Mary Magdalene was dispatched to find them. Not one of them

imagined that Jesus had been raised from the dead.

After awhile, it began to grow and the women grew bolder. They decided to look into the tomb. There they saw the angels and were afraid. But an angel said, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. He is not here; he has risen, just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay. Then go quickly and tell his disciples" (Matt. 28:5-7). Here, we understand that the women were the first witnesses of the resurrection.

Mary, meanwhile, found the two chief disciples, Peter and John, presumably in John's house, where the beloved disciple had taken Jesus' mother on the day of the crucifixion (John 19:27).

The two disciples started for the tomb, running and leaving Mary far behind. Outrunning Peter, John arrived at the tomb first, stooped to look through the narrow opening, and saw the graveclothes. Then Peter arrived, out of breath and in a hurry; he brushed John aside and plunged into the tomb. When John saw the graveclothes, he saw them only in a cursory manner and from outside the tomb. The Greek uses the most common word for seeing (*blepō*); it suggests nothing more than sight. But when Peter arrived, he scrutinized the graveclothes carefully. The Scripture uses a special word (*theoreō*) for what Peter did (from it we get our words "theory" and "theorize"). Moreover, it tells what Peter saw. The Bible says that Peter "went into the tomb. He saw the strips of linen lying there, as well as the burial cloth that had been around Jesus' head. The cloth was folded up by itself, separate from the linen" (John 20:6-7). At this point, John entered, saw what Peter had seen (this time the word is *oraō*, meaning "to see with understanding"), and believed in Jesus' resurrection (v. 8).

After this, the appearances of the Lord began. Jesus appeared first to Mary Magdalene, who arrived back at the tomb after John and Peter had returned to the city. Next, he appeared to the women, then to Peter alone, then to the Emmaus disciples. Finally, later that night, to all the disciples as they were gathered together in the upper room. All the disciples who saw the risen Lord believed. But John believed first, and he did so before he actually saw Jesus. What made him believe? What did he see that convinced him of Jesus' resurrection?

Jewish Burial

It is helpful at this point to know something about the modes of Jewish burial. Every society has its distinct modes of burial. In Egypt, bodies were embalmed. In Rome and Greece, they were often cremated. In Palestine they were neither embalmed nor cremated. They were wrapped in linen bands that enclosed dry spices and placed face up without a coffin in tombs, generally cut from the rock in the Judean and Galilean hills.

Another factor of Jewish burial in ancient times is also of special interest for understanding John's account of Jesus' resurrection. In *The Risen Master*, published in 1901, Henry Latham calls attention to a unique feature of Eastern burials that he noticed when in Constantinople during the last century. He says that funerals he witnessed

often varied in many respects, depending upon whether the funeral was for a person who had been poor or for one who had been rich. But in one respect, all the arrangements were identical. Latham noticed that the bodies were wrapped in linen cloths in such a manner as to leave the face, neck, and upper part of the shoulders bare. The upper part of the head was covered by a cloth that had been twirled about it like a turban. Latham concluded that since burial styles change slowly, particularly in the East, this mode of burial may well have been practiced in Jesus' time. He argued that this is all the more probable, since the practice in 1900 meshes nicely with what is told of the graveclothes in John's Gospel.

There is additional evidence for this thesis. Luke tells us that when Jesus was approaching the village of Nain earlier in his ministry, he met a funeral procession leaving the city. The only son of a widow had died. Luke says that when Jesus raised him from death two things happened. First, the young man sat up; that is, he was lying upon his back on the bier without a coffin. Second, he began to speak. Hence, the graveclothes did not cover his face. Separate coverings for the head and body were also used in the burial of Lazarus (John 11:44).

We have every reason to believe that Joseph of Arimathaea and Nicodemus buried Jesus Christ in a similar manner. The body of Jesus was removed from the cross before the beginning of the Jewish Sabbath, washed and wrapped in linen bands. Seventy-five pounds of spices were carefully inserted into the folds of the linen. Aloe was a powdered wood like fine sawdust with an aromatic fragrance; myrrh was a fragrant gum that would be carefully mixed with the powder. Jesus' body was encased in these. His head, neck, and upper shoulders were left bare and a linen cloth was wrapped about the upper part of his head like a turban. The body of Jesus was then lovingly placed within the sepulcher where it lay until sometime on Saturday night or early Sunday morning.

What would we have seen had we been there at the moment at which Jesus was raised from the dead? Would we have seen Jesus stir, open his eyes, sit up, and begin to struggle out of the bandages? That would have been a resuscitation, not a resurrection. It would have been as if he had recovered from a swoon or had merely been raised from death as he had raised Lazarus. He would have been raised in a natural body rather than a spiritual body; that was not the case at all.

If we had been present in the tomb at the moment of the resurrection, we would have noticed either that the body of Jesus would have seemed to have disappeared or else that it was changed into a resurrection body and passed through the graveclothes and out of the sealed tomb just as it was later to pass through closed doors. John Stott says that the body was "vaporized, being transmuted into something new and different and wonderful." Latham says that the body would have been "exhaled," passing "into a phase of being like that of Moses and Elias on the Mount."

What would have happened then? The linen cloths would have subsided once the body was removed because of the weight of the spices that were in them, and they would have been lying undisturbed where the body of Jesus had been. The cloth which surrounded the head, without the weight of spices, might well have retained its concave shape and have lain by itself separated from the body cloths by the space where the Lord's neck and shoulders had been.

This is exactly what John says he and Peter saw when they entered the sepulcher. John was first at the tomb, and as he reached the open sepulcher in the murky light of early

dawn, he saw the grave clothes lying. There was something about them that attracted John's attention. First, it was significant that they were there at all. John stresses the point, using the word for "lying" at an emphatic position in the sentence. We might translate, "He saw, lying there, the grave clothes" (v. 5). Furthermore, the clothes were undisturbed. The word that John uses (*keimena*) occurs in the Greek papyri of things that have been carefully placed in order. One document speaks of legal documents, saying, "I have not yet obtained the documents, but they are lying collated." Another speaks of clothes that are "lying (in order) until you send me word." Certainly, John noticed that there had been no disturbance at the tomb.

At this point, Peter arrived and went into the sepulcher. Peter saw what John had seen, but, in addition, he was struck by something else. The cloth that had been around the head was not with the other clothes. It was lying in a place by itself (v. 7). What was even more striking, it had retained a circular shape. John says that it was "wrapped together." We might say that it was "twirled about itself." There was a space between it and the cloths that had enveloped the body. When John saw this, he believed.

What did John believe? I imagine that he might have explained it to Peter like this: "Don't you see, Peter, that no one has moved the body or disturbed the grave clothes? They are lying exactly as Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathaea left them on the eve of the Sabbath. Yet, the body is gone. It has not been stolen. It has not been moved. Clearly, it must have passed through the cloths, leaving them as we see them now. Jesus must be risen." Stott says, "A glance at these grave clothes proved the reality, and indicated the nature, of the resurrection."

How foolish, in the light of such evidence, are non-Christian explanations of the events of Easter morning. Some have taught that the body of Jesus was stolen, but in that case, the presence of the grave clothes is inexplicable. They would have been removed along with the body. Others have taught that Jesus revived in the tomb and escaped after having unwound the linen bands. In that case, the linen would have been displaced. Even if we can imagine that Jesus replaced the clothes where they had been and somehow moved the stone, there is still a problem with the spices, for these would have been scattered about the tomb. Of this, there is not the slightest suggestion in the Gospel. None of these explanations will do. The disciples saw everything in order, but the body was gone. Jesus had, indeed, been raised, and in a resurrection body.

What John Believed

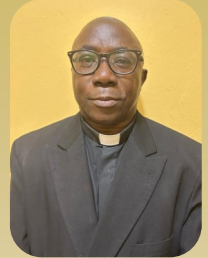
There are a few lessons that arise out of this narrative. The first is that God has provided perfectly adequate evidence of the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. The evidence consists of the claims of those who saw Jesus between the day of his resurrection and the day of his ascension into heaven, the empty tomb, the changed character of the disciples, the authenticity of the records, and the evidence of the undisturbed burial garments. The evidence is there, and the evidence of the grave clothes alone was sufficient to quicken faith in John. We conclude that if men fail to believe, it is because they will not believe, not because the evidence is lacking.

Second, the experiences of Peter and John at the tomb indicate that the body of the Lord was glorified. It was sown a natural body and was raised a spiritual body. In this body Jesus lives, seated at the right hand of God, where he intercedes for his own until the moment when he will

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The Not-Quite-Empty Tomb

John 20:1-10



BY FR. GABOU SECKA

Reading Cont'd from Page 27

return again in judgment. Today, we need not think of Jesus as the vulnerable Jesus of history. Jesus died, but he died once for all. He was buffeted and spat upon and cursed, but that will not be repeated. We pray today to a powerful Lord, to an exalted Lord. This Lord will return one day to take his own to be with him in glory.

Finally, the transformation of the body of Jesus Christ points to a new mode of life for all believers. He is the first fruit. We, the harvest, shall be like him in our bodies, as well as in his traits of character. Our resurrection bodies will be better than our old physical bodies. They will not be our physical bodies resuscitated. Our bodies hamper us. They tie us to earth, to habits, even to traits of character that we have inherited from our parents through their genes. They slow our thought processes. When we are sufficiently tired they carry us away in sleep. Eventually, they die. But, we are to gain by death. The resurrection body will not hamper us. The body of the risen Christ is the forerunner of our bodies, and it was, and is wholly subservient to his wishes. It did

not hamper him. It freed him. In that body, he knew no pain, no suffering, no want. For us, there will also be freedom. There will be no want. There will be unlimited awakefulness and unlimited opportunities for service.

In one of his great sermons on the resurrection, D. L. Moody tells the story of a bright young girl about fifteen years of age, who was suddenly cast upon a bed of suffering, completely paralyzed on one side, and nearly blind. She could hardly see, but she could hear. As she lay in bed one day, she heard the family doctor say to her parents, as they stood by the bedside, "She has seen her best days, poor child." Fortunately, the girl was a believer, and she quickly replied, "No, doctor, my best days are yet to come, when I shall see the King in his beauty." Her hope, like ours, lay in the resurrection.

St. Augustine tells us, "Man himself, consecrated in the name of God and vowed to God, is, therefore, a sacrifice, insofar as he dies to the world, in order to live for God". Resurrection means for us Glory after suffering and death following the perfect example of our Lord.

SERVING THE DIOCESE AND NATION FOR 50 YEARS

In 1976, Bishop Michael Moloney commissioned Fr. Edward Grimes to set up a Pastoral Centre suitable for The Gambia. A preliminary team was formed, with representatives from the Cluny Congregation and the Presentation Sisters. The team visited all parts of the Diocese, and the views and interests of all the congregations were considered in the development of a Pastoral Plan.

Over the last 50 years, the Institute has had several homes. It was set up at St. Augustine's High School, Banjul, then moved to the Cathedral compound. Next, it was housed at the old Catholic Mission house in Kanifing. For many years, GPI has had its own extensive premises on Kairaba Avenue, Serrekunda.

OUR WORK AND MISSION AT GPI

1. As part of the Diocese of Banjul, GPI is a centre working for the Human, Pastoral and Spiritual growth of the local Church.
2. We offer hospitality and on-going formation to catechists, Religious Education, leaders and others involved in evangelisation.
3. Through our Radio Veritas 102.9 fm and television programmes and the Newsletter, we communicate information and instruction.
4. Our out-reach programmes cover all the parishes and outstations of the Diocese.
5. The centre facilitates a growth in awareness of our calling as a Church, to reach beyond ourselves to ecumenical and inter-faith dialogue, while always remaining open to where the Holy Spirit is leading us.

Welcome and hospitality: *Please do not pass by my home without stopping. I am here to serve you. Let me bring some water for you to wash your feet; you can rest here beneath this tree. I will also bring a bit of food, it will give you strength to continue your journey. You have honoured me by coming to my home, so let me serve you.* Genesis 18:3-5. We have Rooms to let at reasonable prices.



Teaching and learning: *Proclaim the message, and welcome or unwelcome, insist on it. Refute falsehood, correct error, and do all with the intention of teaching.* Timothy 4:2

Workers in God's vineyard: *Happy are those who work for peace. God will call them his children.* Matthew 5:9