

# *The Diocese of Banjul* **NEWSLETTER**

*Incorporating The Catholic Newsletter*

## **OPINION:**

**RELIGIOUS HATE SPEECH AMIDST  
MENDACITY AND BIGOTRY**

*See Page 10*

## **COVER STORY**



## **OCTOBER**

**The Month of  
the Rosary**

*See Page 4*

**TRIBUTE TO HIS LORDSHIP, JAMES  
ALLEN YAW ODICO**

*See Page 9*



**THE “US VS. “THEM” DICHOTOMY  
IN OUR SOCIETY - *See Page 3***

**EDITORIAL**

# 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.



## CONTENTS

## PAGES

<b>EDITORIAL HINT:</b> THE "US" VS. "THEM" DICHOTOMY IN OUR SOCIETY	3
<b>COVER STORY</b> OCTOBER: THE MONTH OF THE ROSARY	4
<b>HOLY DAYS OF OBLIGATION</b> ALL SAINTS DAY AND ALL SOULS DAY	5
<b>WEEKDAY CELEBRATIONS</b> OCTOBER & NOVEMBER	6 - 7
<b>PICTORIAL</b> THE FEAST OF THE LADY OF OUR ASSUMPTION 2025	8
<b>TRIBUTE</b> TO HIS LORDSHIP, JAMES ALLEN YAW ODICO	9
<b>OPINION</b> RELIGIOUS HATE SPEECH AMIDST MENDACITY & BIOGOTRY	10
<b>DAILY MASS READINGS</b> OCTOBER & NOVEMBER	11 - 14
<b>POPE'S PRAYER INTENTIONS</b> OCTOBER & NOVEMBER	14
<b>GAMBIAN CHRISTIAN ANNIVERSARIES</b> OCTOBER & NOVEMBER	15 - 16
<b>VIEWPOINT</b> THE DANGERS OF THE 1997 CONSTITUTION	16-17
<b>OUR SUNDAY READINGS</b> OCTOBER & NOVEMBER	18 - 21
<b>RELIGIOUS PERSPECTIVE</b>	BACK PAGE



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*Incorporating The Catholic Newsletter*

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Telephone: 7006955 / 7011564 / 7913212 - Email: info@gpibanjul.com

Editors: Fr. Peter S. Lopez / Dr. Burang Goree-Ndiaye

Editorial Consultant: Mr. Joseph Akagha Layout: Betty Quacoo

Production: Mamgorr Peter Campbell & Marie Sireh Manga

## EDITORIAL

# THE “US” VS. “THEM” DICHOTOMY IN OUR SOCIETY

In The Gambia, a nation historically bound by traditions like **sanawya**, a culture of joking relationships that diffuse tensions with humor and mutual respect, a dangerous new wave is taking hold. We are witnessing a new trend of social warfare breeding an “us” versus “them” dichotomy, characterized by a rising tide of divisive politics and religious bigotry, evidently fueled by both local leaders and some foreign preachers. This phenomenon threatens to unravel the fabric of a society once celebrated for its harmony. Presently, some Imams are openly condemning Christianity, declaring in Mosques that Christians will go to hell, a practice bolstered by foreign Islamic preachers who periodically come to the country and plant seeds of religious division and discord.

On the other hand, historically, The Gambia's diverse communities, Mandinka, Fula, Wolof, Jola, and others coexisted, with traditions which insulated us from ethnic violence that plague some of our neighboring nations. Yet, today, our politicians are weaponizing ethnic identities, framing elections as “zero-sum contests” for tribal interests and reducing governance to tribal arithmetic. This approach is not only morally bankrupt, but also “economic suicide”, as it erodes trust and stifles the collaboration needed for

progress. Our leaders, behaving like monarchs, have failed this test by clinging to power and treating leadership as a birthright, fostering a “cult of personality” that suffocates progress.

To counter this, The Gambia must draw lessons from nations like most of the Asian Tigers, such as Singapore, which forged a unifying civic nationalism from diversity. While we don’t need to replicate their authoritarian methods, we must embrace the core truth that “survival hinges on forging collective purpose from diversity”. This requires a serious overhaul: democratizing our political parties by imposing term limits and internal elections, reforming our education system to teach civic pride over tribal pride, and formalizing cultural bridges like **sanawya**, as a tool for conflict resolution.

Ultimately, the choice lies with all of us. We must reject leaders who trade in ethnic fearmongering and demand plans for a shared future. As the Gambia River flows as one, so too must our nation. Democracy is not a “spectator sport”. Our collective survival depends on citizens prioritizing the nation's well-being over self-interest.

**GAMBIA PASTORAL INSTITUTE & RADIO  
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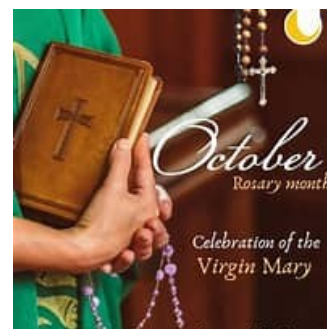
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COVER  
STORY

## OCTOBER

## The Month of the Rosary



**I**n the rich spiritual tradition of the Catholic Church, certain months are set aside for special forms of devotion. Two of the most beloved are May and October, both dedicated in a unique way to the Blessed Virgin Mary. These months offer the faithful a chance to grow closer to Mary and, through her, deepen their relationship with Christ. Whether through the beauty of May Crownings or the prayerful rhythm of the Rosary in October, Marian devotions remain a vital expression of Catholic faith and love.

The month of October is especially dedicated to the Holy Rosary, a powerful prayer that meditates on the life of Jesus through the lens of His mother. This devotion has deep roots in Church history. The practice of using prayer beads to count prayers dates back to early Christian hermits, but the Rosary, as we know it today, was solidified through the centuries. It consists of reciting the Hail Mary, Our Father, and Glory Be prayers while meditating on the "Mysteries" of the life of Christ and the Virgin Mary. The Rosary is divided into four sets of mysteries: the Joyful, Luminous, Sorrowful, and Glorious, each focusing on key moments in the Gospel narrative.

The historical significance of the October devotion is tied directly to the Feast of Our Lady of the Rosary, celebrated on October 7. This feast was instituted by Pope St. Pius V in 1571 to commemorate the miraculous Christian victory at the Battle of Lepanto. At the time, a vast Ottoman Turkish fleet was poised to invade Europe. Outmatched and outnumbered, the Christian Holy League, led by Don Juan of Austria, faced a formidable foe. Knowing their material disadvantage, Pope Pius V called on all of Europe to pray the Rosary for victory. Miraculously, at the hour of the battle, the wind shifted in favor of the Christian fleet, leading to a decisive and unexpected victory. The victory was widely attributed to the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary through the praying of the Rosary.

The significance of this event solidified the Rosary's

place in the hearts of the faithful. Originally named "Our Lady of Victory," the feast was later renamed "Our Lady of the Rosary" and extended to the Universal Church by Pope Clement XI in 1716. Since then, the Rosary has been a cherished devotion and a source of strength, particularly in times of difficulty. Pope Leo XIII, in the late 19th century, was a strong proponent of the Rosary, writing several encyclicals on the subject and encouraging its daily recitation throughout October, calling it a "spiritual weapon."

In October, parishes often organize Rosary rallies, Eucharistic adoration, and processions to honor the Blessed Mother. Families are also encouraged to pray the Rosary together, asking for Mary's protection and guidance. The devotion serves as a reminder of the strength and grace that come through Mary's intercession and her powerful connection to her Son, Jesus Christ. Through the Rosary, the faithful are drawn into a profound contemplation of the Gospel, making the life of Christ more present and real in their own lives.

The Rosary, therefore, is more than just a historical commemoration; it is a living prayer with profound spiritual benefits. This reality is beautifully underscored by the 15 promises attributed to the Blessed Virgin Mary for those who faithfully pray the Rosary. These promises speak to the immense spiritual gifts bestowed upon those who dedicate themselves to this devotion. For instance, Mary promised her special protection and the greatest graces to those who pray the Rosary, and that it would be a powerful armor against hell, destroying vice and decreasing sin. This directly connects to the Battle of Lepanto, where the Rosary acted as a spiritual weapon that manifested in a physical victory. Furthermore, she promised to assist those who are faithful to the Rosary at the hour of their death, ensuring their passage to heaven. This is perhaps one of the most comforting promises, assuring the faithful of a happy death. Mary also promised that the Rosary would be a powerful sign of predestination, as those who devoutly

pray it will not be lost. In this way, the October devotion is not merely a seasonal observance but a call to a deeper, more intentional relationship with Christ through His Mother. By taking up this "spiritual weapon," the faithful are invited to experience a continuous shower of grace, making the Rosary a cornerstone of their spiritual life and a constant guide on their journey towards heaven.

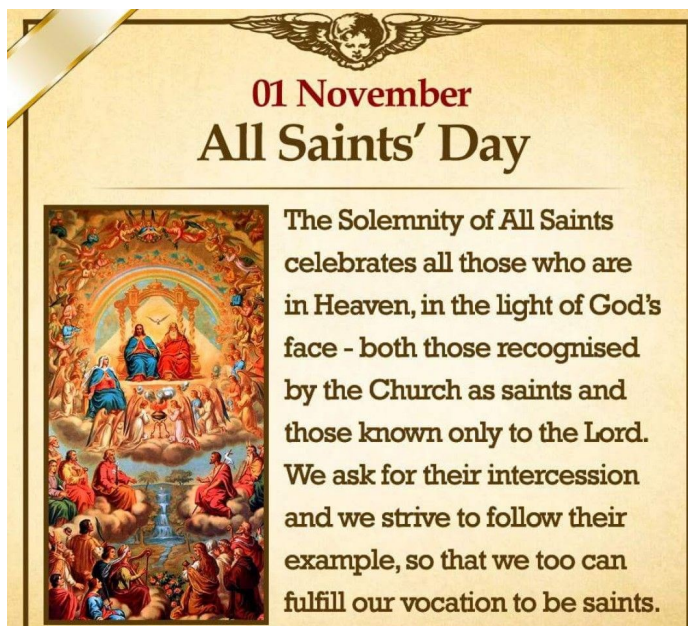
October And The  
Rosary

The Month Of The Holy Rosary

The month of October is dedicated to the Holy Rosary and this is a reminder of the promises for those who pray this contemplative prayer with Our Lady. It is a sign of predestination.

## Holy Days of Obligation

# ALL SAINTS AND ALL SOULS DAY



**1<sup>ST</sup> NOVEMBER:** All Saints Day is one of the great days of the Church's calendar termed as holy day of obligation.

It has been a Christian tradition since the 4th century. Remembering martyrs and other saints, and dedicating a specific day to each of them. But it wasn't until AD609 that Pope Boniface IV designated 13th May as the commemoration of all the Church's martyrs.

Over 200 years later, in 837, Pope Gregory IV extended the feast to include the commemoration of all the saints. The saints are examples of 'virtuous and godly living'.

The Letter to the Hebrews tells us that during our earthly pilgrimage 'we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses'. Sainthood is not so much about hero-worship as about having friends: the saints are the real men and women of every age in whose lives we can glimpse heaven in our midst. They are our partners in prayer.

'Human life is a journey. Towards what destination? How do we find the way? Life is like a voyage on the sea of history, often dark and stormy, a voyage in which we watch for the stars that indicate the route. The true stars of our life are the people who have lived good lives. They are lights of hope. Certainly, Jesus Christ is the true light, the sun that has risen above all the shadows of history. But to reach him we also need lights close by - people who shine with his light and so guide us along our way.'

*Pope Benedict XVI: Spe Salvi*

'We celebrate the Solemnity of All Saints. This invites us to turn our gaze to the immense multitude of those who have already reached the blessed land, and points us on the path that will lead us to that destination.'

*St. Pope John Paul II*

**"The saints are the masterpieces of God's grace, lights of the world in every age."**

**— Pope Francis**

**2<sup>ND</sup> NOVEMBER - All Souls Day** is when we commemorate all the faithful departed. We remember and pray for the souls of those in Purgatory – the place or state in which those who have died, atone for their less grave sins, before being granted the vision of God in heaven.

When a soul leaves the body, it is not entirely cleansed from venial (minor) sins. But, through the power of prayer, the faithful on earth may be able to help the departed to gain the Beatific Vision, bringing the soul eternal happiness.

So at the Mass, when visiting family graves, and in our private prayers, we remember our dead.

Praying for the dead is an ancient Christian tradition, but it was Odilo, Abbot of Cluny, in France, who in AD998 designated a specific day for remembering and praying for those in the process of purification. This started as a local feast in his monasteries and gradually spread throughout the Catholic Church towards the end of the 11th century.

'For the souls in Purgatory, waiting for eternal happiness and for meeting the Beloved is a source of suffering, because of the punishment due to sin, which separates them from God. But, there is also the certitude that once the time of purification is over, the soul will go to meet the One it desires.' *St. John Paul II*

Grant to us, Lord God, to trust you, not for ourselves alone, but for those also whom we love and who are hidden from us by the shadow of death; so that, as we believe your power to have raised our Lord Jesus Christ from the dead, we may trust your love to give eternal life to all who believe in Him.

Through the same Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, One God, now and for ever. Amen.

**The ones we lost are not lost forever. May we meet their souls in the afterlife.**



## Weekday Celebrations

## October &amp; November


**October 1st: St. Therese of Lisieux,  
doctress of the Church**

**Therese** was born to devout parents in 1873 in Alençon, France, youngest of nine children. When she was four, her mother died; and her father, a watch-maker, moved to Lisieux. Early on, she wanted to follow two of her sisters in the religious life, but was told she was too young. She persisted, and in 1888 was admitted as a Carmelite nun.

Therese is known for her 'Little Way', which asserts that it is not necessary to achieve 'great deeds' to become holy. 'I see that it is enough to realise one's nothingness and give oneself wholly, like a child, into the arms of the loving God.' Therese suffered from tuberculosis, and died aged only 24 on 30th September, 1897.

Her autobiography, *L'histoire d'une âme* ('The story of a soul') was edited by her sister Pauline and published after Therese's death. It became a best-seller. Therese was canonised in 1925. The Gambia's largest church is dedicated to St. Therese. In this diocese, we pray, especially today, for the priests and people of the parish of St. Therese, Kanifing.

**October 4th: St. Francis of Assisi, religious**

**St. Francis** is one of the best-loved saints. He was born into a wealthy family in Assisi, Italy, around 1181. In his early 20s, after being a soldier and a prisoner of war, he experienced conversion. Francis sold all his possessions, gave the proceeds to the Church, and began a life of poverty. In 1209, Pope Innocent III approved the formation of the Franciscan Order, which stressed the need to imitate the life of Christ. Francis viewed nature as a mirror of God, calling all creatures his brothers and sisters. In 1209, he approved the formation of a women's order (the Poor Clares). In 1219, Francis visited Egypt and the Holy Land. In 1224, after a vision, he became the first person to receive the stigmata. Francis helped to restore popular faith in a Church, which had been corrupted by wealth and political aspirations. He died in October, 1226 and was canonised in 1228.

**October 7th: Our Lady of the Rosary**

**October** is the month of the Holy Rosary. Today, in particular, we are reminded to meditate on the mysteries of Christ, following the example of Mary, who was associated with her Son's incarnation, ministry, passion and resurrection. In this diocese, we pray today for the people of the Church of the Holy Rosary, Lamin, opened in April 1995.

**October 9th: Blessed John Henry Newman**

**John Henry Newman** (1801-1890), was an Anglican priest who became a leader of the Oxford Movement, a group of Anglicans who wished to return the Church of England to Catholic beliefs and forms of worship. In 1845 Newman left the Church of England and was received into

the Roman Catholic Church, where he was eventually made a Cardinal by Pope Leo XIII. Newman was instrumental in founding the Catholic University of Ireland, which evolved into University College, Dublin, today the largest university in Ireland. Newman's beatification was proclaimed by Pope Benedict XVI in September 2010, during his visit to the United Kingdom. Newman's writings include his autobiography 'Apologia Pro Vita Sua (1865-66)'. He wrote the popular hymns 'Lead, Kindly Light' and 'Praise to the Holiest in the Height'. Newman is the patron of the English Ordinariate, set up by Benedict XVI for former Anglicans, who are in full communion with Rome, while retaining some Anglican forms of worship.

**October 13th: St. Edward, king and confessor**

**Edward** (1404-1466) was the last of the Anglo-Saxon kings of England, renowned for second-sight, curing scrofula and generosity to the poor. He founded Westminster Abbey, the best-known church in England. The title 'confessor' is given to an outstanding witness to the Gospel. It was conferred on Edward in his lifetime by Pope Alexander II. Edward's tomb at Westminster Abbey was a place of pilgrimage until the Reformation, as it has become again in modern times. Pope Benedict XVI prayed there in September 2010, with the Archbishop of Canterbury. In this diocese, the school at Bwiam is named in St. Edward's honour, and today, we pray for past and present teachers and pupils of that school.

**October 15th: St. Teresa of Avila,  
doctress of the Church**

**Teresa** was born in Avila, Spain, in 1515. She joined the Carmelite Order and received mystic revelations. She underwent many trials in reforming her order. Her writings are marked by a deep understanding of doctrine. She died in 1582. She is one of the patron saints of Spain.

**October 17th: St. Ignatius of Antioch,  
bishop and martyr**

**Ignatius** succeeded the Apostle Peter as second Bishop of Antioch (in present-day Turkey). During the reign of the Roman Emperor Trajan, he was arrested and sent to Rome. On his journey to execution, Ignatius wrote letters encouraging fellow-Christians to remain faithful despite persecution. He met his death by being thrown to wild animals.

**October 18th: St. Luke evangelist**

**Luke** was not an eye-witness of Christ's ministry, but accompanied St. Paul to Macedonia and Rome. Paul referred to Luke as 'the beloved physician'.

Luke's cultural background was Greek, and he was writing for Greeks. His Gospel account of Our Lord's ministry emphasises Jesus' compassion and his sympathy and openness towards women - who at that time were generally treated as inferior to men. The Acts of the

Apostles is a continuation of Luke's Gospel. It deals with events in the life of the early Church.

### **October 28th: St. Simon & St. Jude, *apostles***

**Simon** was born in Cana and was known as the Zealot.

**Jude**, known also as Thaddæus, asked Jesus at the Last Supper why he showed himself only to the apostles and not to the world (John 14: 22).

### **November 4th: St. Charles Borromeo, *bishop***

**Charles** was nobly born in 1583 at Arona (in present-day Italy) and was known in his youth for his saintly life and academic ability. When he was 23, his uncle, Pope Pius IV (1559-65), made him Cardinal Archbishop of Milan. Charles gave his inheritance to the poor. His endeavours to revive the spiritual zeal of the clergy made him enemies. During the plague of 1575, he relieved distress and gave the last rites to the dying. Charles founded the Order of Oblates. He fought hard to eradicate Protestantism from his diocese. He died in 1584.

### **November 10th: St. Leo, *the Great pope***

**Leo** is one of the Doctors (teachers) of the early Church. He was born towards the end of the 4th century in Tuscany (part of present-day Italy). As Pope, from 440 to

451, he championed orthodoxy. When the monk Eutyches of Constantinople asserted that Christ had only a divine nature, Leo wrote his 'tome' insisting that Christ was true God and true man.

Leo's teachings, as the 'voice of Peter', were embraced by the Council of Chalcedon, and his example, letters and sermons contributed to the growth of papal authority.

### **November 21st: Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary**

We honour Mary's dedication of herself to God from her childhood by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, who filled her with grace at prayers and work in The Gambia since 1964 of the Presentation Sisters.

### **November 24th: St. Andrew Dung-Lac & companions *martyrs***

**Born in 1795**, Andrew was a priest in Vietnam, his homeland. He was a Catholic convert ordained to the priesthood, and was arrested in 1839. He was one of 117 people martyred in Vietnam between 1820 and 1862. In June 19th, 1988 they were canonised by St. John Paul II.

*Omnes sancti et sanctæ Dei, intercedite pro nobis  
(All holy men and women of God, intercede for us)*



## **The Jubilee Prayer 2025**

Father in heaven, may the faith you have given us in your son, Jesus Christ, our brother, and the flame of charity enkindled in our hearts by the Holy Spirit, reawaken in us the blessed hope for the coming of your Kingdom.

May your grace transform us into tireless cultivators of the seeds of the Gospel. May those seeds transform from within both humanity and the whole cosmos in the sure expectation of a new heaven and a new earth, when, with the powers of Evil vanquished, your glory will shine eternally.

May the grace of the Jubilee reawaken in us, Pilgrims of Hope, a yearning for the treasures of heaven. May that same grace spread the joy and peace of our Redeemer throughout the earth. To you our God, eternally blessed, be glory and praise for ever. Amen



# PICTORIAL OF THE FEAST OF OUR LADY OF THE ASSUMPTION 2025 (LOCALLY CALLED 'SANG MARIE')







The Author

# TRIBUTE TO HIS LORDSHIP, JAMES ALLEN YAW ODICO

*By Philip Saine*

**A** 'New-Town' born raised to Leadership. The Late Bishop Emeritus James Allen Yaw Odico had early experience of life growing-up and socializing with the Youths of Ingram and MacDonald Streets in the city of Bathurst now Banjul. There he made observation of real life and formation of his worldly view. He became a Banker at the International Bank for Commerce and Industry (*BICI*) and rose to the rank of Branch Manager. He earned deeper understanding of the intricacies of Gambian societies; an asset greatly needed in his future role.

James Odico was a notable citizen that demonstrated exemplary leadership with humility. He took up a career in theology, ordained an Anglican Deacon in 1999 and a Priest in 2002. Soon after he was elevated to the rank of a Bishop succeeding the Late Arch Bishop Solomon Tilewa Johnson on Sunday 24 January 2016. He was a towering figure in Gambian society.

Late Bishop Emeritus James Allen Yaw Odico pursued righteousness, godliness, faith, love, steadfastness and gentleness. He was enthroned when the Church was going through trying times but he soon gathered all his flock together. His managerial skills enabled him to communicate and collaborate effectively with all other Christian denominations. He fostered interfaith dialogue. He left a legacy of unwavering commitment to spreading the Gospel of Jesus Christ, Promoting Peace and Harmony. He stood firm not only in service to the Church but also in defense of marginalized communities. He historically united all Gambian Christians in prayer at the Independence Stadium when former President Yahya Jammeh unlawfully declared The Gambia an Islamic State. Late Bishop James Odico, together with Most Rev. Hannah Caroline Faal-Heim and His Lordship Bishop Robert Ellison CSSp, led multiple 'National Day of Prayer' that nicknamed the Independence Stadium 'The Cathedral'. Bishop James Odico's fervent statements were 'We are one people because we are interrelated' and 'we are instruments of unity and of reconciliation'. During the

events at the Stadium we remembered him intoned in his exhortation hymn 'Who has the Final Say? Jehovah has the final say'. Late Bishop Odico had memorable contributions during the drafting process of the 2020 Draft Constitution.

Bishop James Yaw Odico unambiguously and consistently raised his voice loud, during the preparation of the Defunct 2020 Gambia Draft

Constitution. As Chairman of the Gambia Christian Council (*GCC*), he stood conspicuously defending the Principles of Sovereignty, Equity and Religious Diversity of The Gambia. He tirelessly pushed back strategies of Majority Dictatorship over the Minority. He also played a crucial role in promoting truth, reconciliation, and reparations in the post-Jammeh new democratic dispensation in The Gambia. He was one of the Commissioners manifesting the face and voice of comfort during the work of the Truth Reconciliation and Reparation Commission (*TRRC*). He led inspiring daily prayers and posed hard-hitting questions to witnesses thus bringing greater clarity to their testimonies.

Late Bishop James Yaw Odico served tirelessly inside and outside the Anglican Diocese of The Gambia.

May his memory be a blessing!



**Late Bishop James Y. Odico**  
**1952-2025**

## A REMINDER FOR CATHOLIC

Many whom have been careless about regular attendance at Sunday Mass may wish to make a fresh start. It's never too late.

To remain in good standing in the Church, all Catholics should take part in the Mass every Sunday and on all Holy Days of Obligation.

Everyone - Catholic or otherwise - is welcome to attend Mass. But Holy Communion may be received only by Catholics, and they must be in a state of grace - that is, free of serious sin.

If you are aware of any grave sin, you must make confession before a priest and receive absolution. Then you may receive Holy Communion in good faith and with joy.

## RELIGIOUS HATE SPEECH AMIDST MENDACITY AND BIGOTRY

*BY PHILIP ANTHONY SYLVA*

First and foremost, religious hate speech refers to speech that attacks, incites hatred or violence against a person or group based on their religion. It may involve insults, slurs, or inflammatory statements and tends to be particularly harmful in multi-religious societies like The Gambia, where religious identity is part of people's social fabric. What country on our beloved planet, has exclusive group of people as her occupants? God Almighty, The Creator of heaven and earth, creates in diversity [Genesis 1]. Religious hate speech is often intended to dehumanise and harass an individual, or a group of people, out of hatred, caused by illusion and nascent belief.

Since time immemorial, Christians have been overwhelmingly contributing towards the intellectual development, economic progress, dignity and wellbeing of the human race through myriads of international Christian, charitable and non-profit organisations that exist in every nook and cranny of our beloved universe. Recipients and beneficiaries of these benevolent initiatives are ninety-nine times out of a hundred, non Christians. Saint Mother Teresa of blessed memory, picked innumerable babies who had been dumped in the streets, took care of them, preserved and nurtured the divine and inherent dignity, that God created and imbued them with. Again the greater chunk of these babies are non Christians.

Religious hate speech that target Christians, perpetrated by an imam, has the potential to propagating extremism, and ultimately, herald terrorists and terrorism. In the newer Criminal Offences Act 2025, Section 113 criminalises "wounding religious feelings": anyone who, with deliberate intent, says, writes, gestures, shows anything "that could be perceived as offensive" to religious feelings of another commits a misdemeanour (up to one year in prison). Hence, the Inspector General of Police must arrest and prosecute the imam that recently uttered

hate speech against Christians or resign. An imam is not above the law, and The Gambia must not sacrifice the rights of Christians on the altar of prejudice and indifference.

The NHRC (National Human Rights Commission) has done studies, held forums, and publicly warned that religious hate speech is rising in The Gambia- the most recent religious hate speech perpetrated by an imam against Christians, has vindicated the NHRC's warning. Time and again, studies show that religious and political leaders are frequently among the perpetrators of religious hate speech. Again, the recent incident in The Gambia of an imam's religious hate speech against Christians, is an impeccable testament of such studies.

Religious hate speech, perpetrated by an imam against Christians, can jeopardise the peace and stability of our beloved Gambia. Therefore the government of The Gambia must manifest its commitment to upholding the laws of the land, by making sure that the said imam is swiftly arrested and brought to book. Otherwise, our government would be encouraging impunity and anarchy, and religious hate speech against Christians would continue to upsurge. The Gambia government is hereby reminded of its fundamental responsibility in safeguarding the inalienable rights of Christians, to professing their faith without being attacked through barbaric, religious hate speech.

Few years ago, some Christian churches in The Gambia suffered brutal and outrageous terror attacks, whilst causing some architectural destruction to the said churches by the terrorists. No solemn action had been taken since then: The Gambia government, through the Inspector General of Police, did not endeavour to prosecute those terrorists. It is, however, abundantly clear that The Gambia has become a safe haven for perpetrators of religious hate speech against Christians, and also for religious extremists and religious terrorists.





## Daily Mass Readings

## October &amp; November 2025

**1 October, 2025 – Wednesday**

Thérèse of Lisieux, Virgin, Religious, Doctor  
Obligatory Memorial

First Reading: [Nehemiah 2](#): 1-8

Responsorial Psalm: [Psalms 137](#): 1-2, 3, 4-5, 6

Alleluia: [Philippians 3](#): 8-9

Gospel: [Luke 9](#): 57-62

**2 October, 2025 – Thursday**

The Guardian Angels / Obligatory Memorial

First Reading: [Nehemiah 8](#): 1-4a, 5-6, 7b-12

Responsorial Psalm: [Psalms 19](#): 8, 9, 10, 11

Alleluia: [Psalms 103](#): 21

Gospel: [Matthew 18](#): 1-5, 10

**3 October, 2025 – Friday**

Ordinary Weekday

First Reading: [Baruch 1](#): 15-22

Responsorial Psalm: [Psalms 79](#): 1b-2, 3-5, 8, 9

Alleluia: [Psalms 95](#): 8

Gospel: [Luke 10](#): 13-16

**4 October, 2025 – Saturday**

Francis of Assisi, Religious Founder

Obligatory Memorial

First Reading: [Baruch 4](#): 5-12, 27-29

Responsorial Psalm: [Psalms 69](#): 33-35, 36-37

Alleluia: [Matthew 11](#): 25

Gospel: [Luke 10](#): 17-24

**5 October, 2025 – Sunday**

Twenty-Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time

First Reading: [Habakkuk 1](#): 2-3; 2: 2-4

Responsorial Psalm: [Psalms 95](#): 1-2, 6-7, 8-9

Second Reading: [Second Timothy 1](#): 6-8, 13-14

Alleluia: [First Peter 1](#): 25

Gospel: [Luke 17](#): 5-10

**6 October, 2025 – Monday**

Ordinary Weekday/ Bruno, Priest, Hermit, Religious  
Founder/ Blessed Marie-Rose Durocher, Virgin,  
Religious Founder

First Reading: [Jonah 1](#): 1 – 2: 1-2, 11

Responsorial Psalm: [Jonah 2](#): 3, 4, 5, 8

Alleluia: [John 13](#): 34

Gospel: [Luke 10](#): 25-37

**7 October, 2025 – Tuesday**

Our Lady of the Rosary / Obligatory Memorial

First Reading: [Jonah 3](#): 1-10

Responsorial Psalm: [Psalms 130](#): 1b-2, 3-4ab, 7-8

Alleluia: [Luke 11](#): 28

Gospel: [Luke 10](#): 38-42

**8 October, 2025 – Wednesday**

Ordinary Weekday

First Reading: [Jonah 4](#): 1-11

Responsorial Psalm: [Psalms 86](#): 3-4, 5-6, 9-10

Alleluia: [Romans 8](#): 15bc

Gospel: [Luke 11](#): 1-4

**9 October, 2025 – Thursday**

Ordinary Weekday/ Denis, Bishop, Martyr, &  
Companions, Martyrs/ John Leonardi, Priest

First Reading: [Malachi 3](#): 13-18, [4](#): 1-2b

Responsorial Psalm: [Psalms 1](#): 1-2, 3, 4 and 6

Alleluia: [Acts 16](#): 14b

Gospel: [Luke 11](#): 5-13

**10 October, 2025 – Friday**

Ordinary Weekday

First Reading: [Joel 1](#): 13-15; 2: 1-2

Responsorial Psalm: [Psalms 9](#): 2-3, 6 and 16, 8-9

Alleluia: [John 12](#): 31b-32

Gospel: [Luke 11](#): 15-26

**11 October, 2025 – Saturday**

Ordinary Weekday/ Optional Memorial of the Blessed  
Virgin Mary

First Reading: [Joel 4](#): 12-21

Responsorial Psalm: [Psalms 97](#): 1-2, 5-6, 11-12

Alleluia: [Luke 11](#): 28

Gospel: [Luke 11](#): 27-28

**12 October, 2025 – Sunday**

Twenty-Eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time

First Reading: [Second Kings 5](#): 14-17

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

Second Reading: [Second Timothy 2](#): 8-13

Alleluia: [First Thessalonians 5](#): 18

Gospel: [Luke 17](#): 11-19

**13 October, 2025 – Monday**

Ordinary Weekday

First Reading: [Romans 1](#): 1-7

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

Alleluia: [Psalms 95](#): 8

Gospel: [Luke 11](#): 29-32

**14 October, 2025 – Tuesday**

Ordinary Weekday/ Callistus I, Pope, Martyr

First Reading: [Romans 1](#): 16-25

Responsorial Psalm: [Psalms 19](#): 2-3, 4-5

Alleluia: [Hebrews 4](#): 12

Gospel: [Luke 11](#): 37-41

**15 October, 2025 – Wednesday**

Teresa of Avila, Virgin, Religious, Doctor Obligatory  
Memorial

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

Responsorial Psalm: [Psalms 62](#): 2-3, 6-7, 9

Alleluia: [John 10](#): 27

Gospel: [Luke 11](#): 42-46

**16 October, 2025 – Thursday**

Ordinary Weekday/ Hedwig, Religious/ Margaret Mary  
Alacoque, Virgin

First Reading: [Romans 3](#): 21-30

Responsorial Psalm: [Psalms 130](#): 1b-2, 3-4, 5-6ab

Alleluia: [John 14](#): 6

Gospel: [Luke 11](#): 47-54

**17 October, 2025 – Friday**

Ignatius of Antioch, Bishop, Martyr

Obligatory Memorial

First Reading: [Romans 4](#): 1-8

Responsorial Psalm: [Psalms 32](#): 1b-2, 5, 11

Alleluia: [Psalms 33](#): 22

Gospel: [Luke 12](#): 1-7

## 12 DIOCESE OF BANJUL NEWSLETTER: OCTOBER — NOVEMBER 2025

### 18 October, 2025 – Saturday

Luke, Evangelist Feast

First Reading: [Second Timothy 4](#): 10-17b

Responsorial Psalm: [Psalms 145](#): 10-11, 12-13, 17-18

Alleluia: [John 15](#): 16

Gospel: [Luke 10](#): 1-9

### 19 October, 2025 – Sunday

Twenty-Ninth Sunday in Ordinary Time

First Reading: [Exodus 17](#): 8-13

Responsorial Psalm: [Psalms 121](#): 1-2, 3-4, 5-6, 7-8

Second Reading: [Second Timothy 3](#): 14 – 4: 2

Alleluia: [Hebrews 4](#): 12

Gospel: [Luke 18](#): 1-8

### 20 October, 2025 – Monday

Ordinary Weekday/ Paul of the Cross, Priest, Religious Founder

First Reading: [Romans 4](#): 20-25

Responsorial Psalm: [Luke 1](#): 69-70, 71-72, 73-75

Alleluia: [Matthew 5](#): 3

Gospel: [Luke 12](#): 13-21

### 21 October, 2025 – Tuesday

Ordinary Weekday

First Reading: [Romans 5](#): 12, 15b, 17-19, 20b-21

Responsorial Psalm: [Psalms 40](#): 7-8a, 8b-9, 10, 17

Alleluia: [Luke 21](#): 36

Gospel: [Luke 12](#): 35-38

### 22 October, 2025 – Wednesday

Ordinary Weekday/ John Paul II, Pope

First Reading: [Romans 6](#): 12-18

Responsorial Psalm: [Psalms 124](#): 1b-3, 4-6, 7-8

Alleluia: [Matthew 24](#): 42a, 44

Gospel: [Luke 12](#): 39-48

### 23 October, 2025 – Thursday

Ordinary Weekday/ John of Capistrano, Priest

First Reading: [Romans 6](#): 19-23

Responsorial Psalm: [Psalms 1](#): 1-2, 3, 4 and 6

Alleluia: [Philippians 3](#): 8-9

Gospel: [Luke 12](#): 49-53

### 24 October, 2025 – Friday

Ordinary Weekday/ Anthony Mary Claret, Bishop, Religious Founder

First Reading: [Romans 7](#): 18-25a

Responsorial Psalm: [Psalms 119](#): 66, 68, 76, 77, 93, 94

Alleluia: [Matthew 11](#): 25

Gospel: [Luke 12](#): 54-59

### 25 October, 2025 – Saturday

Ordinary Weekday/ Optional Memorial of the Blessed Virgin Mary

First Reading: [Romans 8](#): 1-11

Responsorial Psalm: [Psalms 24](#): 1b-2, 3-4ab, 5-6

Alleluia: [Ezekiel 33](#): 11

Gospel: [Luke 13](#): 1-9

### 26 October, 2025 – Sunday

Thirtieth Sunday in Ordinary Time

First Reading: [Sirach 35](#): 12-14, 16-18

Responsorial Psalm: [Psalms 34](#): 2-3, 17-18, 19, 23

Second Reading: [Second Timothy 4](#): 6-8, 16-18

Alleluia: [Second Corinthians 5](#): 19

Gospel: [Luke 18](#): 9-14

### 27 October, 2025 – Monday

Ordinary Weekday

First Reading: [Romans 8](#): 12-17

Responsorial Psalm: [Psalms 68](#): 2 and 4, 6-7ab, 20-21

Alleluia: [John 17](#): 17b, 17a

Gospel: [Luke 13](#): 10-17

### 28 October, 2025 – Tuesday

Simon and Jude, Apostles / Feast

First Reading: [Ephesians 2](#): 19-22

Responsorial Psalm: [Psalms 19](#): 2-3, 4-5

Gospel: [Luke 6](#): 12-16

### 29 October, 2025 – Wednesday

Ordinary Weekday

First Reading: [Romans 8](#): 26-30

Responsorial Psalm: [Psalms 13](#): 4-5, 6

Alleluia: [Second Thessalonians 2](#): 14

Gospel: [Luke 13](#): 22-30

### 30 October, 2025 – Thursday

Ordinary Weekday

First Reading: [Romans 8](#): 31b-39

Responsorial Psalm: [Psalms 109](#): 21-22, 26-27, 30-31

Alleluia: [Luke 19](#): 38; [2](#): 14

Gospel: [Luke 13](#): 31-35

### 31 October, 2025 – Friday

Ordinary Weekday

First Reading: [Romans 9](#): 1-5

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

Alleluia: [John 10](#): 27

Gospel: [Luke 14](#): 1-6

### 1 November, 2025 – Saturday

All Saints Solemnity, No Obligation this Year to Attend Mass

First Reading: [Revelation 7](#): 2-4, 9-14

Responsorial Psalm: [Psalms 24](#): 1b-2, 3-4ab, 5-6

Second Reading: [First John 3](#): 1-3

Alleluia: [Matthew 11](#): 28

Gospel: [Matthew 5](#): 1-12a

### 2 November, 2025 – Sunday

The Commemoration of All the Faithful Departed (All Souls)

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

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

Second Reading: [Romans 6](#): 3-9

Alleluia: [Matthew 25](#): 34

Gospel: [John 6](#): 37-40

### 3 November, 2025 – Monday

Ordinary Weekday/ Martin De Porres, Religious

First Reading: [Romans 11](#): 29-36

Responsorial Psalm: [Psalms 69](#): 30-31, 33-34, 36

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

Gospel: [Luke 14](#): 12-14

### 4 November, 2025 – Tuesday

Charles Borromeo, Bishop / Obligatory Memorial

First Reading: [Romans 12](#): 5-16ab

Responsorial Psalm: [Psalms 131](#): 1bcde, 2, 3

Alleluia: [Matthew 11](#): 28

Gospel: [Luke 14](#): 15-24

### 5 November, 2025 – Wednesday

Ordinary Weekday

First Reading: [Romans 13](#): 8-10



Responsorial Psalm: [Psalms 112](#): 1b-2, 4-5, 9

Alleluia: [First Peter 4](#): 14

Gospel: [Luke 14](#): 25-33

#### 6 November, 2025 – Thursday

Ordinary Weekday

First Reading: [Romans 14](#): 7-12

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

Alleluia: [Matthew 11](#): 28

Gospel: [Luke 15](#): 1-10

#### 7 November, 2025 – Friday

Ordinary Weekday

First Reading: [Romans 15](#): 14-21

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

Alleluia: [First John 2](#): 5

Gospel: [Luke 16](#): 1-8

#### 8 November, 2025 – Saturday

Ordinary Weekday/ Optional Memorial of the Blessed Virgin Mary

First Reading: [Romans 16](#): 3-9, 16, 22-27

Responsorial Psalm: [Psalms 145](#): 2-3, 4-5, 10-11

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

Gospel: [Luke 16](#): 9-15

#### 9 November, 2025 – Sunday

Dedication of the Lateran Basilica in Rome

First Reading: [Ezekiel 47](#): 1-2, 8-9, 12

Responsorial Psalm: [Psalms 46](#): 2-3, 5-6, 8-9

Second Reading: [First Corinthians 3](#): 9c-11, 16-17

Alleluia: [Second Chronicles 7](#): 16

Gospel: [John 2](#): 13-22

#### 10 November, 2025 – Monday

Leo the Great, Pope, Doctor / Obligatory Memorial

First Reading: [Wisdom 1](#): 1-7

Responsorial Psalm: [Psalms 139](#): 1b-3, 4-6, 7-8, 9-10

Alleluia: [Philippians 2](#): 15d, 16a

Gospel: [Luke 17](#): 1-6

#### 11 November, 2025 – Tuesday

Martin of Tours, Bishop Obligatory Memorial

First Reading: [Wisdom 2](#): 23 – 3: 9

Responsorial Psalm: [Psalms 34](#): 2-3, 16-17, 18-19

Alleluia: [John 14](#): 23

Gospel: [Luke 17](#): 7-10

#### 12 November, 2025 – Wednesday

Josaphat, Bishop, Religious, Martyr  
Obligatory Memorial

First Reading: [Wisdom 6](#): 1-11

Responsorial Psalm: [Psalms 82](#): 3-4, 6-7

Alleluia: [First Thessalonians 5](#): 18

Gospel: [Luke 17](#): 11-19

#### 13 November, 2025 – Thursday

Frances Xavier Cabrini, Virgin, Religious  
Obligatory Memorial

First Reading: [Wisdom 7](#): 22b – 8: 1

Responsorial Psalm: [Psalms 119](#): 89, 90, 91, 130, 135, 175

Alleluia: [John 15](#): 5

Gospel: [Luke 17](#): 20-25

#### 14 November, 2025 – Friday

Ordinary Weekday

First Reading: [Wisdom 13](#): 1-9

Responsorial Psalm: [Psalms 19](#): 2-3, 4-5ab

Alleluia: [Luke 21](#): 28

Gospel: [Luke 17](#): 26-37

#### 15 November, 2025 – Saturday

Ordinary Weekday/ Optional Memorial of the Blessed Virgin Mary/ Albert the Great, Bishop, Religious, Doctor

First Reading: [Wisdom 18](#): 14-16; 19: 6-9

Responsorial Psalm: [Psalms 105](#): 2-3, 36-37, 42-43

Alleluia: [Second Thessalonians 2](#): 14

Gospel: [Luke 18](#): 1-8

#### 16 November, 2025 – Sunday

Thirty-Third Sunday in Ordinary Time

First Reading: [Malachi 4](#): 1-2a

Responsorial Psalm: [Psalms 98](#): 5-6, 7-8, 9

Second Reading: [Second Thessalonians 3](#): 7-12

Alleluia: [Luke 21](#): 28

Gospel: [Luke 21](#): 5-19

#### 17 November, 2025 – Monday

Elizabeth of Hungary, Married Woman, Religious  
Obligatory Memorial

First Reading: [First Maccabees 1](#): 10-15, 41-43, 54-57, 62-63

Responsorial Psalm: [Psalms 119](#): 53, 61, 134, 150, 155, 158

Alleluia: [John 8](#): 12

Gospel: [Luke 18](#): 35-43

#### 18 November, 2025 – Tuesday

Ordinary Weekday/ Dedication of the Churches of Peter and Paul/ Rose Philippine Duchesne, Virgin, Religious, Missionary – Ordinary

First Reading: [Second Maccabees 6](#): 18-31

Responsorial Psalm: [Psalms 3](#): 2-3, 4-5, 6-7

Alleluia: [First John 4](#): 10b

Gospel: [Luke 19](#): 1-10

#### 18 November, 2025 – Tuesday

Ordinary Weekday/ Dedication of the Churches of Peter and Paul/ Rose Philippine Duchesne, Virgin, Religious, Missionary – Proper

First Reading: [Acts 28](#): 11-16, 30-31

Responsorial Psalm: [Psalms 98](#): 1, 2-3ab, 3cd-4, 5-6

Gospel: [Matthew 14](#): 22-33

#### 19 November, 2025 – Wednesday

Ordinary Weekday

First Reading: [Second Maccabees 7](#): 1, 20-31

Responsorial Psalm: [Psalms 17](#): 1bcd, 5-6, 8b and 15

Alleluia: [John 15](#): 16

Gospel: [Luke 19](#): 11-28

#### 20 November, 2025 – Thursday

Ordinary Weekday

First Reading: [First Maccabees 2](#): 15-29

Responsorial Psalm: [Psalms 50](#): 1b-2, 5-6, 14-15

Alleluia: [Psalms 95](#): 8

Gospel: [Luke 19](#): 41-44

#### 21 November, 2025 – Friday

Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary  
Obligatory Memorial

First Reading: [First Maccabees 4](#): 36-37, 52-59

Responsorial Psalm: [First Chronicles 29](#): 10bcd, 11abc, 11d-12a, 12bcd

Alleluia: [John 10](#): 27

Gospel: [Luke 19](#): 45-48

**22 November, 2025 – Saturday**

Cecilia, Virgin, Martyr / Obligatory Memorial

First Reading: [First Maccabees 6](#): 1-13

Responsorial Psalm: [Psalms 9](#): 2-3, 4 and 6, 16 and 19

Alleluia: [Second Timothy 1](#): 10

Gospel: [Luke 20](#): 27-40

**23 November, 2025 – Sunday**

Christ the King Solemnity (Thirty-Fourth and Last Sunday in Ordinary Time)

First Reading: [Second Samuel 5](#): 1-3

Responsorial Psalm: [Psalms 122](#): 1-2, 3-4ab, 4cd-5

Second Reading: [Colossians 1](#): 12-20

Alleluia: [Mark 11](#): 9, 10

Gospel: [Luke 23](#): 35-43

**24 November, 2025 – Monday**

Andrew Dung-Lac, Priest, Martyr, & Companions, Martyrs Obligatory Memorial

First Reading: [Daniel 1](#): 1-6, 8-20

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

Alleluia: [Matthew 24](#): 42a, 44

Gospel: [Luke 21](#): 1-4

**25 November, 2025 – Tuesday**

Ordinary Weekday/ Catherine of Alexandria, Virgin, Martyr

First Reading: [Daniel 2](#): 31-45

Responsorial Psalm: [Daniel 3](#): 57, 58, 59, 60, 61

Alleluia: [Revelation 2](#): 10c

Gospel: [Luke 21](#): 5-11

**26 November, 2025 – Wednesday**

Ordinary Weekday

First Reading: [Daniel 5](#): 1-6, 13-14, 16-17, 23-28

Responsorial Psalm: [Daniel 3](#): 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67

Alleluia: [Revelation 2](#): 10c

Gospel: [Luke 21](#): 12-19

**27 November, 2025 – Thursday**

Ordinary Weekday/ Thanksgiving Day – Ordinary

First Reading: [Daniel 6](#): 12-28

Responsorial Psalm: [Daniel 3](#): 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74

Alleluia: [Luke 21](#): 28

Gospel: [Luke 21](#): 20-28

**27 November, 2025 – Thursday**

Ordinary Weekday/ Thanksgiving Day – Proper

First Reading: [Sirach 50](#): 22-24

Responsorial Psalm: [Psalms 145](#): 2-3, 4-5, 6-7, 8-9, 10-11

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

Alleluia: [First Thessalonians 5](#): 18

Gospel: [Luke 17](#): 11-19

**28 November, 2025 – Friday**

Ordinary Weekday

First Reading: [Daniel 7](#): 2-14

Responsorial Psalm: [Daniel 3](#): 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81

Alleluia: [Luke 21](#): 28

Gospel: [Luke 21](#): 29-33

**29 November, 2025 – Saturday**

Ordinary Weekday/ Optional Memorial of the Blessed Virgin Mary

First Reading: [Daniel 7](#): 15-27

Responsorial Psalm: [Daniel 3](#): 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87

Alleluia: [Luke 21](#): 36

Gospel: [Luke 21](#): 34-36

**30 November, 2025 – Sunday**

First Sunday of Advent

First Reading: [Isaiah 2](#): 1-5

Responsorial Psalm: [Psalms 122](#): 1-2, 3-4ab, 4cd-5, 6-7, 8-9

Second Reading: [Romans 13](#): 11-14

Alleluia: [Psalms 85](#): 8

Gospel: [Matthew 24](#): 37-44

## The Pope's Prayer Intentions 2025

### October

#### FOR COLLABORATION BETWEEN DIFFERENT RELIGIOUS TRADITIONS

Let us pray that believers in different religious traditions might work together to defend and promote peace, justice, and human fraternity.

### November

#### FOR THE PREVENTION OF SUICIDE

Let us pray that those who are struggling with suicidal thoughts might find the support, care, and love they need in their community, and be open to the beauty of life.

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# October & November

## Gambian Christian



**8th October, 1878:** Death of the Superior of the Mission, Fr. Renoux, who arrived six months earlier on 11th April.

**15th October, 1884:** Opening of Bethel Methodist Church on Stanley Street, Banjul.

**26th October, 1905:** Arrival of Fr. John Meehan, ordained in Paris the previous year.

**16th October, 1931:** Fr. Meehan was nominated first Ecclesiastical Superior of the Banjul Mission, which in May that year had become self-governing. (His appointment was confirmed in January 1931).

**1st October, 1933:** Ordination in Paris of Fr. Thomas Jobe, who celebrated his first Mass in Banjul on 15th October 1934.

**21st November, 1936:** Fr. Joseph Charles Mendy arrived from a retreat in Dakar, bringing with him an English priest, Fr. Harold Whiteside.

**27th October, 1938:** Arrival of Fr. Michael Moloney (later became Bishop Moloney).

**10th October, 1945:** Arrival of Fr. James White, who died in The Gambia in February 1996.

**1st November, 1948:** Opening of St. Therese's Elementary School with 114 pupils.

**30th November, 1951:** Fr. Moloney was named Prefect of the Banjul Mission, which had been designated a Prefecture Apostolic on 15th April that year.

**16th October, 1952:** Arrival of Fr. William Costelloe and Fr. Reginald Gillooly.

**26th October, 1958:** Enthronement of Bishop Moloney as first Bishop of Banjul, at Hagan Street Church, becoming his Cathedral.

**3rd October, 1959:** Building began in Bakau of Stella Maris Church (Star of the Sea).

**17th October, 1962:** Founding of Pioneer Total Abstinence Association.

**20th October, 1965:** Arrival of Fr. John Sharpe.

**3rd October, 1967:** Arrival of Fr. Michael Casey, who retired from service in The Gambia after 47 years' service.

**28th October, 1968:** Arrival of the first Presentation Sisters, Sr. Cecilia and Sr. Margaret.

**12th November, 1968:** Arrival of Br. Liam Sheridan and Br. Benedict Stapleton to begin Lamin Technical School.

**27th October, 1970:** Arrival of Fr. Robert Ellison (who later became the Bishop of Banjul).

**11th October, 1972:** Fr. Sharpe moved to Kunkujang to found a mission station.

**12th November, 1972:** Bishop Moloney blessed the Junior Seminary at Fajara. The first Director was Fr. Pierre Sagna (later, Bishop Sagna). Among the 19 seminarians were Fr. Anthony Gabasi and Fr. Peter Gomez (deceased).

**4th November, 1976:** First meeting of all Mission personnel to work out a pastoral plan for the diocese.

**29th October, 1977:** Death of James Ndow, first Gambian Principal of Gambia High School.

**31st October, 1981:** Departure of Fr. Michael Murray owing to ill-health.

**23rd November, 1983:** Sudden death in Ireland of Fr. Francis Farrell.

**18th November, 1999:** Funeral in Banjul of Tony Blain, former Director of Education, who had died in the USA.

**6th November, 2000:** President Yahya Jammeh appointed Bishop Michael Cleary an honorary Commander of the Order of the Republic of The Gambia (CRG).

**13th November, 2000:** Death of Rachel Palmer, former Head of the School of Nursing, Banjul.

**13th October, 2002:** Death in Ireland of Fr. Vincent Comer, former Principal of St. Peter's Technical High School Lamin, and Vicar-General of the diocese.

**6th October, 2005:** Death in Ireland of Sr. Benigna Kearney, who had taught in The Gambia for more than 50 years.

**17th November, 2007:** Bishop Ellison began a three-day pastoral visit to the neighbouring Diocese of Ziguinchor.

**24th November, 2007:** Archbishop Théodore-Adrien Sarr of Dakar was among 23 new cardinals created by Pope Benedict XVI.

**17th October, 2008:** Death in the USA of Arthur K. Carrol, Methodist, who after retirement as head of the Gambia Public Transport Corporation, worked for the Catholic charity, Caritas. Mr. Carrol's funeral was held at Wesley Methodist Church, Banjul on 7th November.

**10th-18th November, 2008:** Fr. Peter Conaty, former Director of GPI, returned after 20 years to lead a workshop on the liturgy for priests, religious and choir leaders.

**21st November, 2008:** At Farafenni, Bishop Ellison ordained Fr. John Mendy.

**29th November, 2008:** Sr. Vivian Aduni, Sr. Benedicta Peligabase, Ghanaians, and Sr. Marie Sylva, Gambian, made their first profession as Sisters of St. Joseph of Cluny.

**14th November, 2009:** At Brikama, Bishop Ellison ordained Fr. Yenes Manneh.

**2nd to 23rd October, 2009:** Bishop Ellison was among 244 bishops who took part in the Synod for Africa in Rome.

**5th October, 2009:** Death in Banjul of Matilda Ann Faal, aged 98, who had attended Holy Spirit, Banjul every day since its opening.

**25th November, 2009:** Death of Marcel Jinage Badji, aged 58, Director of St. Joseph's Family Farm, Bwiam.

**1st – 10th October, 2010:** Sr. Calixte Thomas, Sr. Josephine Kamada, Sr. Teresa Mundow and Sr. Jeanne-Therese Ndeye joined Cluny Sisters from all over Africa at a synod in Dakar.

**15th November, 2010:** Simon Suta Mendy became Catechist Co-ordinator at GPI.

**29th October, 2011:** Mass of Thanksgiving at the Cathedral for the 50th anniversary as a reverend sister of Sr. Jeanne-Thérèse Ndeye, first Gambian Sister of St. Joseph of Cluny.

**10th November, 2012:** Bishop Ellison ordained Fr. Aimé Joseph Colley and Fr. Matthew M. Mendy at Lamin.

**17th November, 2012:** Sr. Barbara Koranteng from Ghana, Sr. Rahel Matandala from Kenya, and Sr. Victoria Tholley from Sierra Leone made their first profession at the Novitiate of St. Joseph of Cluny at Kanifing.

**9th November, 2013:** At Brikama, Bishop Ellison ordained Fr. Victor Ndecky.

**1st October, 2016:** Ellen B. Mendy and Harriet B. Mendy made their first vows as novices of the Presentation of Mary.

**19th October, 2016:** At Bakau Stadium, the Gambian Christian Council held an ecumenical gathering to pray for the peace, human rights, security and religious freedom, especially for Christians, in The Gambia.

**7th October, 2017:** Dawida Krzempek of the School Sisters of Notre Dame (SSND) celebrated the Silver Jubilee of her religious profession, having spent 17 of her 25 years as religious sister in The Gambia.

**5th October, 2018:** Three priests of the Salesians of St. John Bosco took up ministry at Kunkujang-Mariama.

**2nd November, 2018:** The Dutchess of Cornwall, wife of the Prince of Wales, visited St. Therese's Upper Basic School, Kanifing.

**5th November, 2018:** At Jaama Hall, the choir of St. Peter's, Lamin staged a Silver Jubilee Concert.

**9th November, 2018:** Crowds of Christians and Muslims welcomed Bishop Gabriel Mendy when he paid his first visit to Basse. He also confirmed 17 young Catholics.

**19th November, 2018:** Bishop Mendy hosted a dinner at GPI for Archbishop Dagoberto Campos-Salas, Apostolic Nuncio to The Gambia.

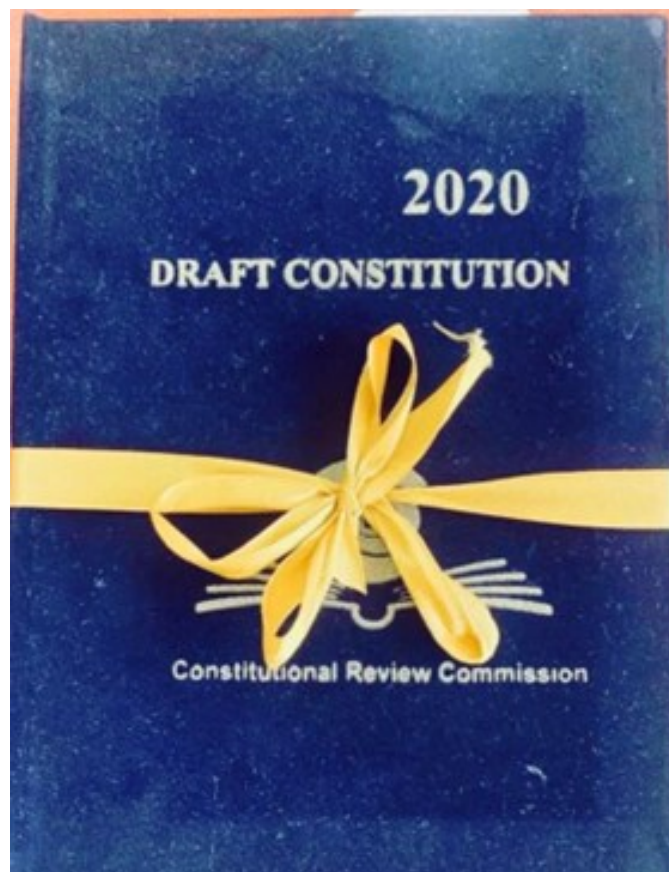
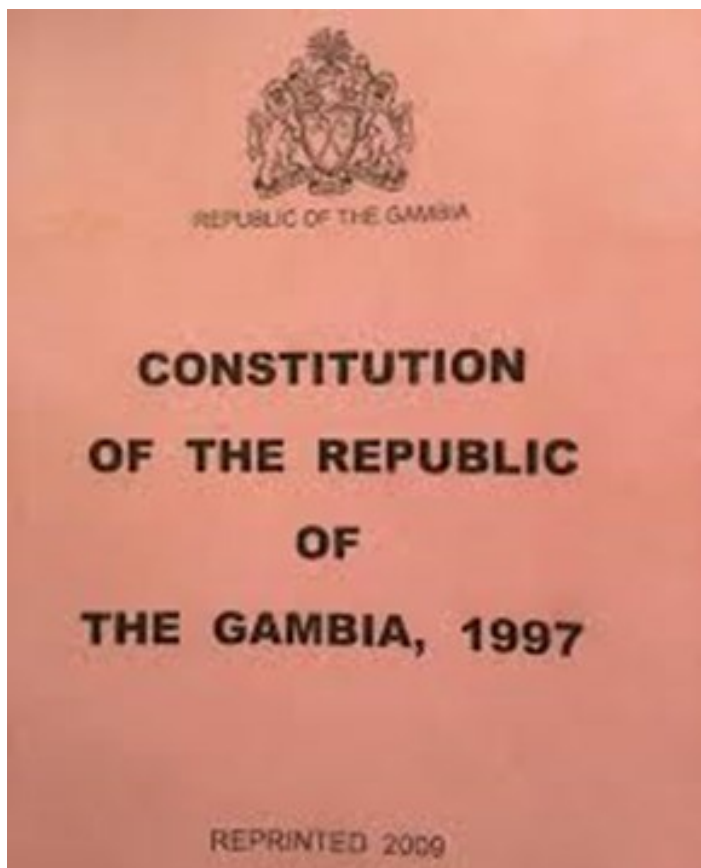
**2nd October, 2021:** Ordination of Rev. Fr. John Nicolas Correa at the St. Kizito's Parish, Bakoteh.

**6th - 9th October, 2023:** The Legion of Mary (*Lay apostolic association of Catholics*), travelled to Popenguine, Senegal for a prayer weekend.

**27th October, 2023:** St. Therese senior choir celebrated their 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary by staging a musical concert at the Pencha Mi hall Paradise Suites Hotel.

**VIEWPOINT**

## THE DANGERS OF THE 1997 CONSTITUTION



**A** truly democratic constitution is more than a legal document; it is the soul of a nation, a blueprint for shared prosperity and stability. For a country like The Gambia, which has historically been challenged by political instability and a lack of inclusivity, a new constitution must be designed to ensure that all citizens, regardless of their background, have an equal stake in the nation's affairs. A constitution that empowers its people is not a gift from the government but a reflection of the sovereign will of the people, from whom all authority is derived.

The cornerstone of such a constitution is a clear and

robust framework for the separation of powers. By ensuring that the executive, legislative, and judicial branches are independent and have adequate checks and balances, the constitution prevents the concentration of power in a single office. This is crucial for The Gambia, which has experienced the dangers of an "executocracy" under its current legal framework. A new constitution must strengthen the legislature's oversight of executive appointments and actions, and grant the judiciary full independence to uphold the rule of law without fear or favor. This is the only way to build a system of accountability that protects against the abuse of office and



related vices.

Furthermore, a democratic constitution must enshrine principles of equality and non-discrimination. It must affirm that every citizen has the right to participate in public affairs and political processes, without distinction based on ethnicity, gender, language, religion, or any other factor. This includes provisions that guarantee fair and transparent elections, as well as measures that ensure inclusive representation. For instance, the 2020 draft constitution was a significant step in this direction, proposing an increased number of seats in the National Assembly and reserving seats for women and persons with disabilities to address historical imbalances. Such a constitution would not only guarantee political rights but also protect the cultural and linguistic diversity of all Gambians as a source of national pride and unity.

In addition to political rights, a constitution for a prosperous nation must secure social and economic rights for its people. This means affirming citizens' right to access essential services, such as free education, healthcare, and clean water. A constitution can serve as a powerful tool for social justice, guaranteeing state support for marginalized groups like the elderly, children, and people with disabilities. It must also protect the right to culture, secure environmental protections, and ensure the equitable distribution and use of national resources. When a constitution makes these commitments, it sends a clear message that the government is a servant of the people, dedicated to their well-being and development.

In effect, a democratic constitution must be forward-looking, with provisions that prevent future political stagnation. This is where the issue of presidential term limits becomes paramount. By instituting a clear limit on the number of terms a president can serve, a new constitution would ensure a regular turnover of leadership and prevent the "cult of personality" that can lead to tyranny and corruption. This encourages new, diverse leadership to emerge, fosters a culture of mentorship, and forces leaders to focus on making a tangible impact within a finite period. A constitution with such a provision would be a living document, capable of adapting to the nation's changing needs and ensuring that power is always exercised with the consent and for the benefit of the people.

Therefore, if we truly desire a prosperous and stable future for our nation, we must confront the foundational flaws of the 1997 constitution by replacing it with a more democratic one in which all citizens have equal stakes in the affairs of our nation. As it stands, our nation is not a democracy but an "executocracy," where all the political firestorms, socio-political decay, and allied tragedies we witness today are anchored by this single document. Unless

we act now to amend it, The Gambia will predictably sink into the abyss. The worst is yet to come if this constitution continues to define who we are and what our nation will be.

One of the most critical deficiencies of the 1997 constitution is its lack of term limits. In a country where our elections and governing institutions do not perform as intended, this absence is a significant problem. It allows for the perpetual reelection of leaders who may be "incompetent, corrupt, ideologically extreme, or out of touch." Term limits are a necessary corrective measure to counterbalance the inherent advantages of incumbency and to "throw the rascals out," ensuring a regular turnover of leaders and injecting new blood into our political system.

With a limited time in office, leaders are compelled to prioritize making a tangible impact rather than engaging in a "scarcity mentality" and "scheming how to stay in power." This mentality, exemplified by the "insecure boss" who undermines the contributions of junior colleagues, stifles initiative and prevents meaningful succession planning. Term limits, in contrast, guide a leader's productivity. Leaders who know their term is finite, will focus their discretionary energy on achieving concrete goals, preventing the "slow cooldown period" seen in leaders who have occupied a role for decades.

Furthermore, the implementation of term limits would fundamentally change the culture of governance. When leaders know that their peer or even a junior colleague may someday become their supervisor, it encourages more thoughtful behavior, fosters collaboration, and reduces the "status anxiety" that can lead to bullying. This cultural shift would also help to reduce election-related incentives for wasteful government spending and promote more independent political judgment.

The absence of term limits tends to favor a lack of diversity in leadership. It perpetuates a political structure that disproportionately benefits a select few, often older and male leaders, and discourages fresh perspectives. A term-limit policy would encourage mentorship, as senior leaders would be incentivized to prepare their "heir apparents," creating a more horizontal power structure. This embraces a diversity of thought and talent, which is proven to help a country's bottom line, team productivity, and morale.

While term limits alone will not solve all of The Gambia's problems, they are a good start. They are a powerful tool to ensure that leaders rotate out and that damaging behavior is contained. The 1997 constitution, with its characteristic lack of term limits, will not serve The Gambia well in the future. To secure a true democracy and a vibrant future, we must act decisively to reform our foundational legal document.

*A truly democratic constitution is more than a legal document; it is the soul of a nation, a blueprint for shared prosperity and stability.*

*While term limits alone will not solve all of The Gambia's problems, they are a good start.*

October &amp; November 2025

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

# Our Sunday Readings

5<sup>th</sup> October, 2025*Twenty-seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year C*

**1st Reading:** Habakkuk 1:2-3; 2:2-4  
**Responsorial Psalm:** Psalms 95:1-2, 6-7, 8-9  
**2nd Reading:** 2 Timothy 1:6-8, 13-14  
**Alleluia:** 1 Peter 1:25  
**Gospel:** Luke 17:5-10

**Homily Theme:** We Are Unprofitable Servants – Luke 17:5-10

**Verse of the Day Reflection:** This is a hard command to live. Most often when we have done something well, and fulfilled our duty, we seek recognition and praise. We want to be noticed, it's not the most humble reaction. Humility comes in many degrees, and the deepest degree of humility allows a person to repeat this passage above and mean it. First, we must realize that the will of God is good for us. It imposes an obligation of love on us. When we fulfil God's will, we should take delight in that fact alone because it is good. That way, the fulfilment of God's will becomes the source of our joy, not the recognition of others. On the other hand, it is good when we see goodness in others and acknowledge it. We should do this not to build up our ego but to give praise to God for the good things done. And when others see and acknowledge God's will accomplished in our lives, we must accept their praise not as a source of our pride but as an honest acknowledgement that God is good and His will is being fulfilled. We must be grateful that we could do "what we were obliged to do." Embracing the will of God as a holy "obligation" also enables us to fulfil it more fully. But when it's seen as our duty of love and as the normal act we should fulfil, it's easier to embrace His will more completely. Reflect, today, on this humble phrase. "We are unprofitable servants; we have done what we were obliged to do." Try to say it, mean it and let it become the foundation of your daily service of God's will. Doing so will set you on the "fast track" toward holiness.

**Prayer:** Lord, I am an unprofitable servant. When I fulfil Your holy will, I acknowledge that this is a holy obligation of love and my most fundamental duty. Help me to see Your will as the most normal part of my daily life. Help me to embrace it with wholehearted faith and obedience. Jesus, I love You. Amen.

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12<sup>th</sup> October, 2025*Twenty-eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year C*

**1st Reading:** 2 Kings 5:14-17  
**Responsorial Psalm:** Psalms 98:1, 2-3, 3-4  
**2nd Reading:** 2 Timothy 2:8-13  
**Alleluia:** 1 Thessalonians 5:18  
**Gospel:** Luke 17:11-19

**Homily Theme:** Ten Were Cleansed, Where Are The Other Nine? – Luke 17:11-19

**Verse of the Day Reflection:** These words were spoken by Jesus after He healed ten lepers and only one of them, a foreigner, returned to Jesus to thank Him. Ten were cleansed physically of their leprosy but only one received a much deeper healing. Upon returning to Jesus with a grateful heart, Jesus said to this one leper, "Stand up and go; your faith has saved you." Only this one leper, the one who returned with a grateful heart, heard our Lord speak these words: "Your faith has saved you." This reveals that gratitude to God is not only our duty, it also brings forth manifest blessings in our lives. When we sincerely offer thanks to God for all that He has done, we are manifesting great faith in God as a result. We are pointing to Him and His goodness as the source of our blessings and it takes faith to see this and to profess it. What is it for which you need to grow in gratitude in your life? What is it that you may take for granted and have failed to properly return to God and thank Him for? The truth is that everything in life is a gift. Everything. Even the struggles you endure can be turned into blessings. In fact, that's exactly what happened in this story. The awful suffering of leprosy was turned into a grace from God. Reflect, today, upon all that God has done for you. Pray that you will understand all of the countless ways that God graces your life. As you see them, ponder those blessings, count them and be grateful for them. And from that gratitude, return a joyful thanks to God. In that act, your faith will also save you.

**Prayer:** Lord, I do thank You for the countless blessings that You have bestowed upon me throughout my life. I thank You for the ways in which You have graced me, led me and healed me. Help me to see clearly all that You have done and continue to do for me. As I see these blessings, help me to daily express my gratitude in faith. Jesus, I love You. Amen.

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19<sup>th</sup> October, 2025*Twenty-ninth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year C*

**1st Reading:** Exodus 17:8-13  
**Responsorial Psalm:** Psalms 121:1-2, 3-4, 5-6, 7-8  
**2nd Reading:** 2 Timothy 3:14-4:2  
**Alleluia:** Hebrews 4:12  
**Gospel:** Luke 18:1-8

**Homily Theme:** Why We Should Persist in Prayer – Luke 18:1-8

**Verse of the Day Reflection:** Jesus used this story to teach a lesson about the necessity "to pray always without becoming weary" (Luke 18:1). It's interesting that the image of the judge is one "who neither feared God nor respected any human being" (Luke 18:2). But Jesus uses



this image of an unjust judge to reveal the power of persistence and to reveal the depths of God's mercy. First, we learn that this woman never gave up. So with us, we must never cease to lose hope in prayer. We must pray always, constantly and persistently. It's not that prayer changes God; rather, prayer changes us and disposes us to receive the immeasurable graces from God. Second, we learn that if an uncaring judge will eventually make a good decision, then so much more will the merciful and all-loving God pour forth His good judgments in our lives when we trust Him. There should be no doubt in our lives that God can do all good things for us if we let Him. Reflect, today, upon how persistent you are in your prayer. The prayer you must seek to live is primarily a prayer of total trust and abandonment to God. You do not change God's mind by begging Him. Rather, your prayer must be so persistent that it opens you to the will of God and allows His grace to flow in accord with His perfect will.

**Prayer:** Lord, I beg of You that Your perfect and holy will be done in my life. I abandon all to You, dear Lord. Do with me as You will. Jesus, I love You. Amen.

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## 26<sup>TH</sup> October, 2025 *Thirtieth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year C*

**1st Reading:** Sirach 35:12-14, 16-18  
**Responsorial Psalm:** Psalm 34:2-3, 17-18, 19, 23  
**2nd Reading:** 2 Timothy 4:6-8, 16-18  
**Alleluia:** 2 Corinthians 5:19  
**Gospel:** Luke 18:9-14

**Homily Theme:** Parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector – Luke 18:9-14

**Verse of the Day Reflection:** In this Gospel passage, Jesus tells a parable to those who trusted in their own righteousness and looked down on others. Two men went up to the temple to pray, a Pharisee and a tax collector. The Pharisee, known for his religious piety, stood and prayed confidently, thanking God that he was not like other men – extortioners, unjust, adulterers – and boasting about his fasting and tithing. He exalted himself in his own righteousness, believing he had earned God's favour through his actions. On the other hand, the tax collector, a despised figure in society, stood at a distance, beating his breast in humility, and simply cried out, "God, be merciful to me, a sinner!" He recognized his own unworthiness and pleaded for God's mercy. Jesus concludes the parable by saying that it was the tax collector, not the Pharisee, who went home justified before God. He emphasizes that those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted. We each must realize the humble truth of our sin and weakness and, in that realization, beg for the only remedy – the mercy of God. The reflection on this Gospel challenges us to examine our own hearts and attitudes. Do we approach God with humility, acknowledging our flaws and relying on His mercy? Or do we fall into the trap of self-righteousness, comparing ourselves favourably to others? This Gospel invites us to cultivate a spirit of humility and to avoid the pitfalls of pride and self-righteousness. It reminds us that our relationship with God is not based on our achievements or comparisons with others but on our acknowledgement of our dependence on His mercy. As we reflect on this parable, let us strive for a humble and contrite heart in our

prayers and actions, seeking God's mercy and grace in all aspects of our lives. Also, reflect, today, upon the prayer of this tax collector: "O God, be merciful to me a sinner" (Luke 18:13).

**Prayer:** Lord, Jesus Christ, please be merciful to me, for I am a sinner. I acknowledge my sin and my weakness and I beg for Your abundant mercy. Please pour forth Your mercy and help me to open my heart to all that You wish to bestow. Help me to live in the humble truth, dear Lord. Jesus, I love You. Amen

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## 2<sup>nd</sup> November, 2025 *(THE COMMEMORATION OF ALL THE FAITHFUL DEPARTED)*

**1st Reading:** Wisdom 3:1-9  
**Responsorial Psalm:** Psalms 23:1-3A, 3B-4, 5, 6  
**2nd Reading:** Romans 6:3-9 or Romans 5:5-11  
**Alleluia:** Matthew 25:34  
**Gospel:** John 6:37-40

**Homily Theme:** All Souls Day – (The Commemoration of All The Holy Souls in Purgatory of the Faithful Departed)

**Verse of the Day Reflection:** As we Commemorate All Souls Day, let's reflect upon our Church teaching on Purgatory: When someone dies in God's grace they are most likely not 100% converted and perfect in every way. Even the greatest of saints most often would have some imperfection left in their lives. Purgatory is nothing other than that final purification of all remaining attachment to sin in our lives. By analogy, imagine that you had a cup of 100% pure water, pure H<sub>2</sub>O. This cup will represent Heaven. The problem is that Heaven (the original cup of 100% H<sub>2</sub>O) cannot contain any impurities. Heaven, in this case, cannot have even the slightest attachment to sin in it. Therefore, if this new water (the 99% pure water) is to be added to the cup it must first be purified even of that last 1% of impurities (attachments to sin). This is ideally done while we are on Earth. This is the process of getting holy. But if we die with any attachment, then we simply say that the process of entering into the final and full vision of God in Heaven will purify us of any remaining attachment to sin. All may already be forgiven, but we may not have detached from those things forgiven. Purgatory is the process, after death, of burning out the last of our attachments so that we can enter Heaven 100% freed of everything to do with sin. If, for example, we still have a bad habit of being rude, or sarcastic, even those tendencies and habits must be purged. How does this happen? We do not know. We only know it does. But we also know it's the result of God's infinite love that frees us of these attachments. Is it painful? Most likely. But it's painful in the sense that letting go of any disordered attachment is painful. It's hard to break a bad habit. It's even painful in the process. But the end result of true freedom is worth any pain we may have experienced.

So, yes, Purgatory is painful. But it's a sort of sweet pain that we need and it produces the end result of a person 100% in union with God. Now since we are talking about the Communion of Saints, we also want to make sure to understand that those going through this final purification are still in communion with God, with those members of the Church on Earth, and with those in Heaven. For

example, we are called to pray for those in Purgatory. Our prayers are effective. God uses those prayers, which are acts of our love, as instruments of His grace of purification. He allows us and invites us to participate in their final purification through our prayers and sacrifices. This forges a bond of union with them. And no doubt the saints in Heaven especially offer prayers for those in this final purification as they await full communion with them in Heaven. It's a glorious thought and a joy to see how God has orchestrated this entire process for the ultimate purpose of the holy communion to which we are called!

**Prayer:** Lord, I pray for those souls going through their final purification in Purgatory. Please pour forth Your mercy upon them so that they may be freed of all attachment to sin and, thus, be prepared to see You face to face. Jesus, I love You. Amen.

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**9<sup>th</sup> November, 2025**

***FEAST OF THE DEDICATION OF THE  
LATERAN BASILICA IN ROME***

**1st Reading:** Ezekiel 47:1-2, 8-9, 12  
**Responsorial Psalm:** Psalms 46:2-3, 5-6, 8-9  
**2nd Reading:** 1 Corinthians 3:9C-11, 16-17  
**Alleluia:** 2 Chronicles 7:16  
**Gospel:** John 2:13-22

**Homily Theme:** My House Shall Be a House of Prayer – Luke 19:45-48, John 2:13-16, Mark 11:15-16

**Verse of the Day Reflection:** This passage highlights Jesus' deep concern for the sanctity of the temple and the purity of worship. It reveals not only something that Jesus did long ago but also reveals something that He desires to do today. During His time, dramatically and forcefully, Jesus drove out those who had turned the house of God into a marketplace. This action is symbolic of Jesus' mission to cleanse not just the physical temple but also our hearts, the spiritual dwelling place of God's people. When we reflect on Jesus cleansing the physical temples we have today, we should be cognizant of the fact that there have been many evil ambitions by many people throughout history up to now who have tried to destroy His Church. Everyone has most likely encountered some sort of hurt from those within the Church itself, from society, and even from family. As for the second and most important point, we should see this passage as a lesson for our souls. Each soul is a temple that should be set aside solely for the glory of God and the fulfilment of His holy will. This may not be easy to do and will require true humility and surrender, but the end result will be cleansing and purification by our Lord. Do not be afraid to let Jesus' holy wrath work its power. Pray for purification in our Churches and also in our hearts and let Jesus with his authority accomplish His mission. Reflect, today, upon the fact that Jesus desires to bring about purification in many ways. He desires to purify the Church as a whole, each society and community, your own family, and especially your own soul. We are called to examine our own hearts and lives. Are there areas where we have allowed impurities to creep in, distracting us from true worship and devotion to God? Jesus' zeal for the Father's house challenges us to maintain the purity and sincerity of our relationship with God, not allowing external distractions to hinder our worship. Ultimately, this Gospel

passage calls us to embrace the transformative power of Christ, recognizing that through his death and resurrection, he offers us a new and living way to approach God.

**Prayer:** Lord, I do pray for the purification of our world, our Church, our families, and most especially my own soul. I invite You to come to me this day to reveal to me what it is that grieves You the most. I invite You to root out, in my heart, all that is displeasing to You. Jesus, I love You. Amen.

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**16<sup>th</sup> November, 2025**

***Thirty-third Sunday in Ordinary Time, Year C***

**1st Reading:** Malachi 3:19-20A  
**Responsorial Psalm:** Psalms 98:5-6, 7-8, 9  
**2nd Reading:** 2 Thessalonians 3:7-12  
**Alleluia:** Luke 21:28  
**Gospel:** Luke 21:5-19

**Homily Theme:** Nation Will Rise Against Nation and Kingdom Against Kingdom – Luke 21:5-11

**Verse of the Day Reflection:** 'Nation Will Rise Against Nation and Kingdom Against Kingdom' - This prophecy of Jesus will most certainly unfold. True, some people may say that this prophecy is already being fulfilled in our world. Some will try to associate this and other prophetic passages of Scripture with a certain time or event. But this would be a mistake. It would be a mistake because the very nature of a prophecy is that it's veiled. All prophecy is true and will be fulfilled, but not all prophecies will be understood with perfect clarity until Heaven. So what do we take from this prophetic word from our Lord? Though this passage may, in fact, refer to more grand and universal events to come, it may also speak to our own particular situations present in our life today. Therefore, we should allow His words to speak to us within those situations. One specific message this passage tells us is that we should not be surprised if, at times, it appears as if our world is rattled to the core. In other words, when we see chaos, evil, sin and malice all around us, we should not be surprised and we should not get discouraged. This is an important message for us as we press on through life. For each one of us, there may be many "earthquakes, famines, and plagues" that we encounter in life. They will take on various forms and will be the cause of much distress at times. But they do not need to be. If we understand that Jesus is aware of the chaos we may encounter and if we understand that He actually prepared us for it, we will be more at peace when the troubles come. In a sense, we will be able to simply say, "Oh, this is one of those things, or one of those moments, Jesus said would come." This understanding of the challenges to come should help prepare us for them and endure them with hope and trust. Reflect, today, on any particular ways that this prophetic word of Christ has taken place in your own life. Know that Jesus is there in the midst of all apparent chaos, leading you through to the glorious conclusion He has in mind for you!

**Prayer:** Lord, when my world seems to cave in around me, help me to turn my eyes to You and to trust in Your mercy and grace. Help me to know that You will never abandon me and that You have a perfect plan for all things. Jesus, I love You. Amen.



**23<sup>rd</sup> November, 2025**  
**FEAST OF CHRIST THE KING, Year C**

**1st Reading:** 2 Samuel 5:1-3  
**Responsorial Psalm:** Psalms 122:1-2, 3-4, 4-5  
**2nd Reading:** Colossians 1:12-20  
**Alleluia:** Mark 11:9, 10  
**Gospel:** Luke 23:35-43

**Homily Theme:** Jesus Christ The King of the Universe (Solemnity)

**Verse of the Day Reflection:** Happy Solemnity of Jesus Christ, King of the Universe! This is the last Sunday of the Church year which means we focus on the final and glorious things to come! It also means that next Sunday is already the First Sunday of Advent. When we say Jesus is a king, we mean a few things. First, He is our Shepherd. As our Shepherd, He desires to lead us personally as a loving father would. He wants to enter our lives personally, intimately, and carefully, never imposing Himself but always offering Himself as our guide. The difficulty with this is that it's very easy for us to reject this kind of kingship. As King, Jesus desires to lead every aspect of our lives and lead us in all things. He desires to become the absolute ruler and monarch of our souls. He wants us to come to Him for everything and to become dependent upon Him always. But He will not impose this sort of kingship upon us. We must accept it freely and without reservation. Jesus will only govern our lives if we freely surrender ourselves. Additionally, Jesus does wish for His Kingdom to begin to be established in our world. First and foremost this takes place when we become His sheep and thus become His instruments to help convert the world.

However, as King, He also calls us to establish His Kingdom by seeing to it that His truth and law is respected within civil society. It's Christ's authority as King that gives us the authority and duty as Christians to do all we can to fight civil injustices and bring about respect for every human person. All civil law ultimately gains its authority from Christ alone since He is the one and only Universal King. First, there are some things we cannot impose. For example, we cannot force people to go to Mass each Sunday. This would hinder one's freedom to enter into this precious gift. We know Jesus requires it of us for the good of our souls, but it must still be embraced freely. However, there are some things that we must "impose" upon others. The protection of the unborn, poor and vulnerable must be "imposed." The freedom of conscience must be written into our laws. The freedom to practice our faith openly (religious liberty) within any institution must be "imposed" also. And there are many other things we could list here. What's important to point out is that, at the end of all time, Jesus will be returning to Earth in all His glory and He will then establish His permanent and unending Kingdom. At that time, all people will see God as He is. And His law will become one with "civil" law. Every knee will bend before the great King and all will know the truth. At that time, true justice will reign and every evil will be corrected. What a glorious day that will be!

Reflect, today, upon your own embrace of Christ as King. Does He truly govern your life in every way? Do you allow Him to have complete control over your life? When this is done freely and completely, the Kingdom of God is established in your life.

Let Him reign so that you can be converted and, through you, others can come to know Him as Lord of all!

**Prayer:** Lord, You are the sovereign King of the Universe. You are Lord of all. Come reign in my life and make my soul Your holy dwelling place. Lord, come transform our world and make it a place of true peace and justice. May Your Kingdom come! Jesus, I love You. Amen.

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**30<sup>th</sup> November, 2025**  
**First Sunday of Advent, Year A**

**1st Reading:** Isaiah 2:1-5  
**Responsorial Psalm:** Psalms 122: 1-2, 3-4, 4-5, 6-7, 8-9  
**2nd Reading:** Romans 13:11-14  
**Alleluia:** Psalm 85:8  
**Gospel:** Matthew 24:37-44

**Homily Theme:** The Coming of Jesus – Luke 12:39-48, Matthew 24:42-51

**Verse of the Day Reflection:** 'The Coming of Jesus' - This Scripture offers us an invitation. It can be said that Jesus comes to us at an unexpected hour in two ways. First, we know that He will return one day in glory to judge the living and the dead. His Second Coming is real and we should be aware of the fact that it could happen at any time. Sure, it may not happen for many years, or even for many hundreds of years, but it will happen. There will be one moment when the world as it is will end and the new order will be established. Ideally, we live each and every day in anticipation of that day and that moment. We must live in such a way that we are always ready for that end. Second, we must realize that Jesus does come to us, continually, by grace. Traditionally, we speak of His two comings: 1) His Incarnation, and 2) His return in glory. But there is a third coming we can speak of which is His coming by grace into our lives. And this coming is quite real and should be something to which we are continually attentive. His coming by grace requires that we be continually "prepared" to meet Him. If we are not prepared, we can be certain we will miss Him. How do we prepare for this coming by grace? We prepare first and foremost by fostering a daily habit of interior prayer. An interior habit of prayer means we are, in a sense, always praying. It means that no matter what we do each and every day, our minds and hearts are always turned toward God. It's like breathing. We always do it and do it without even thinking about it. Prayer must become just as much of a habit as breathing. It must be central to who we are and how we live. Reflect, today, upon your life of prayer. Know that the moments you dedicate exclusively to prayer each day are essential to your holiness and relationship with God. And know that those moments must help to build a habit of always being attentive to God. Being prepared this way will allow you to meet Christ at every moment that He comes to you by grace.

**Prayer:** Lord, help me to foster in my heart a life of prayer. Help me to seek You always and to always be prepared for You when You come. Jesus, I Love You. Amen.

# THE DIOCESE OF BANJUL NEWSLETTER

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# WHO WAS THIS MAN CALLED PAUL?

*Cont'd from back page*

As a Roman citizen, the boy had three names, by one of which he became famous: *Paulus*. Tarsus was ancient and prosperous; Saul described it as “no ordinary city.” Industries in Tarsus included weaving and tent-making—a craft Saul would use later to subsidize his travels. His Roman citizenship implied that his family owned property. It also carried with it privileges—the right to a fair trial, exemption from degrading punishments like whipping, and the right of appeal. Early on Saul learned a trait that would stand him in good stead in later life: how to cross cultural boundaries. Though born in a center of Greek culture, Saul was sent to school in Jerusalem, where he studied the Jewish scriptures and religious law under renowned rabbi Gamaliel “the Elder.” Gamaliel was a member of the Jewish ruling council (the Sanhedrin) and grandson of the famous rabbi Hillel. Gamaliel was gracious. When the Sanhedrin raged against members of a local sect who taught that Jesus of Nazareth, recently executed, was Messiah, he counseled forbearance. The council demanded the death penalty; Gamaliel convinced them to enforce a lesser punishment and let the cult members go. Saul, however, did not adopt his teacher’s moderation, especially toward members of this messianic sect. Saul joined the growing number of Jewish leaders who steadily harassed and even killed followers of “The Way,” as it was called.

Saul could not help but be passionate—a great deal was at stake. He was devoted to his Jewish heritage and traditions, and his sharp intellect quickly perceived that this new sect threatened everything he stood for. So he joined wholeheartedly in restraining measures against The Way.

During one meeting of the Sanhedrin, a follower of the Way, Stephen, appeared before the council. His replies infuriated the members, who began taking off their cloaks and picking up rocks. Saul volunteered to watch their cloaks as they pummeled the radical to death. Harassment of The Way now intensified, and Saul secured official papers from Jerusalem’s high priest requesting that Damascus synagogues extradite members of The Way to Jerusalem for trial. On his way to Damascus, however, Saul’s plans, and life, were changed.

Saul gained not only eyesight but a new religious outlook. He was convinced that Jesus, the executed Nazarene itinerant, was alive and calling him to special service. Astonishingly, Saul—a devout, ethnocentric Jew—now believed his life mission was to talk about Jesus to non-Jews. Saul submitted to baptism, the rite of initiation for followers of The Way. He then disappeared into Arabia for three years, from about A.D. 33 to 36. Where he went and what he did remains a mystery, but during this time, he received revelations. He said Jesus came to him and taught him a message of forgiveness and salvation through faith.

Saul decided to visit the leaders of The Way in Jerusalem, especially Peter and James. They taught him about the emerging movement, the details of Jesus’ life and teachings, and their own encounters with the resurrected Jesus. Still, Saul would later make it clear that nobody taught him anything about the gospel, the fundamental message of Christ. His message and calling, he argued, came by direct revelation from Christ, negating any contribution of even key figures like Peter and James. Saul’s type-A personality and his love of personal superlatives (e.g., he once called himself the “chief of sinners”) remained characteristics throughout his life.

During these years, Saul’s life was in danger. On two occasions, devout Jews—perhaps former colleagues—tried to murder him. And despite his dramatic turnaround, Saul remained unknown and distrusted by The Way’s adherents in Judea. Rumors circulated that Saul’s conversion was a fake, a clever ruse to ferret out more members to put in jail. Joseph of Cyprus (known as Barnabas) gained a welcome for Saul by introducing him to churches. Still, Saul seems to have felt more comfortable in his home town, and he stayed in and around Tarsus for the next decade.

Paul’s missionary style blossomed, particularly his drive to win followers for Jesus Christ and his willingness to cross political, cultural, and religious barriers to do so. We do not know the results of Paul’s legal hearing, which probably took place in A.D. 62. Early tradition says he was martyred by sword during Nero’s persecution in July 64. It is highly possible, however, that he was released, and after further missionary work (perhaps in Spain), was imprisoned again in Rome before being executed.

In this case, his final confinement would have been harsh. This may well be when he wrote his letters to Titus and Timothy: in them, he referred to being deserted by former companions and wrote, “I am already being poured out like a drink offering, and the time has come for my departure. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.” To keep the faith is to put it mildly. Paul had done so in the face of jailing, floggings, death threats, murder attempts, and the constant anxiety for the churches he founded—not to mention what Paul called his “thorn in the flesh”—a chronic and debilitating weakness. Still, Paul had carried his message to people of many religions and cultures. A wise preacher once said, “You must live with people to know their problems and live with God in order to solve them.” Paul networked an entire empire in life and letter, sharing his soul and Christ’s message with Jew and Greek, bond and free, male and female. He once said, “I have become all things to all men, that I might win some.” It’s clear that nobody’s done it better.

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# WHO WAS THIS MAN CALLED PAUL?

RELIGIOUS PERSPECTIVE

BY FR. GABOU SECKA



Each year hundreds of books worldwide are published on Paul and his writings. His every word—literally—is put under the microscope of critical study; his every thought, ruminated over by theologians and preached on by the church. The question facing us today is this: What can we say about Paul that hasn't already been said? What has been said over and over concerns Paul the theologian, the thinker whose teachings are the basis of Christian doctrine. This is the Paul we hear about each Sunday and read about so in many books. But what about Paul the man? What about his times? What about his culture? Thankfully, more and more is being published on this dimension, what historians call social history. So it would be helpful to do an issue that would help set Paul in his times. In this my little research work, you'll find something on what it was like to be with Paul in prison, to travel with Paul, to be in the cities he lived in, to read the pagan religious writings he fought, to be with him as he wrote his letters—and on it go to get a better feel for Paul's life and times. As you can imagine, much, much more could be said about the era, to help you understand Paul the theologian that much better.

Tarsus, Paul's birthplace, is at least 4,000 years old. At least seven of Paul's relatives are mentioned in the New Testament. At the end of his letter to the Romans, Paul greets as "relatives" Andronicus and Junia, Jason, Sospater, and Lucius. In addition, Acts mentions Paul's sister and his nephew, who helped Paul in prison (Acts 23:16–22). It is possible that Paul's "relative" Lucius is Luke, the author of the Gospel and the Acts of the Apostles. On his second missionary journey, Paul may have gone to Troas (where Luke lived or where he joined Paul) because he knew a relative he could stay with there (Acts 16:8, 11). What type of fish did Paul eat? Probably not catfish. Catfish was the largest native fish of the Sea of Galilee (sometimes weighing up to 20 pounds), but Jewish dietary laws would have prevented the early Paul from eating fish without scales (Deut. 14:10). It's not clear exactly how Paul supported himself on his missionary journeys. Luke calls him a "tent-maker" (*skenopoios*), which suggests Paul was a weaver of tent cloth from goats' hair. The term, however, can also mean "leatherworker." Other early translations of Luke's term mean "maker of leather thongs" and "shoemaker."

Paul, the "Apostle to the Gentiles," had plenty of opportunity to preach to Jews in his travels. There were some four to five million Jews living abroad in the first century. Every major city had at least one synagogue, and Rome had at least eleven. The Jewish population of Rome alone was 40,000–50,000. Wine was a common drink of Paul's day, but not the wine of our day. In the Greco-Roman world, pure wine was considered strong and unpleasant, so some Greeks diluted wine with seawater. In cold weather, city snack shops in Italy sold hot wine. Paul read pagan poets. In his writings, he quotes Epimenides of Crete (Tit. 1:12), Aratus of Cilicia (Acts 17:28) and Menander, author of the Greek comedy *Thais* (1 Cor. 15:33). Paul may have recorded some of the New Testament church's hymns.

Many scholars think Paul is quoting hymns in passages like 1 Corinthians 13 and Philippians 2:1–11. Paul's letters, not the Gospels, give us the earliest information we have about Jesus. All his letters were probably written before the first Gospel was penned. The earliest reference to the sayings of Jesus come from 1 Thessalonians, which Paul wrote about A.D. 50. Paul lived a relatively long life. He was probably born about A.D. 6 and probably died about A.D. 64—which means he may have died at about age 58, an old age, given the times and the hard life he lived. In later art, Paul is often depicted with a sword and book, which is said to symbolize the manner of his death (beheading by sword), and his writings, which became "the sword of the Spirit." During the closing years of Caesar Augustus's reign, a boy was born to a Jewish family in Tarsus, capital of the Roman province of Cilicia (in modern-day Turkey). The family traced its descent from the tribe of Benjamin, and they named their son after the most illustrious member in their family's history: Saul, the first king of Israel.

Cont'd inside page 23