



The Holy See

**ADDRESS OF PAUL VI
TO THE PILGRIMS GATHERED IN ROME FOR THE
CANONIZATION OF THE HOLY MARTYRS OF UGANDA**

Monday, 19 October 1964

Lord Cardinal,

We thank you cordially for your inspired words, which recall to Our memory the tragic and glorious story of the Holy Martyrs, to whom We decreed yesterday the honours of Catholic veneration, and who confirm Us in the esteem and gratitude which We, together with the universal Church, owe to the Sacred Congregation you so wisely direct, for the impulse and the guidance it gives to the many forms of missionary activity, and for the solicitude with which it promoted and successfully completed the cause of canonization of the heroes of faith in Africa.

A grateful thought is due from Us also to the Sacred Congregation of Rites, for the long and careful study required of it by the cause of the Uganda Martyrs.

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*Illustrious Gentlemen,
Representatives of Uganda and of Central Africa,*

It is with great pleasure that We salute your presence on this occasion.

We are thus afforded an opportunity to express to you, to the Authorities you represent, in particular to the Chief of State of Uganda, and to the Nations to which you belong, Our respectful greeting, Our best wishes for the prosperity of your Countries, and the determination of the Catholic Church to honour your Nations, and to favour civil and moral progress, in the confidence that your States will always be willing to accord just liberty and lawful favour to Catholics and to

their institutions.

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*Venerable Brothers and beloved sons,
the Bishops, priests and faithful of Uganda and of Central Africa,*

Your visit, occurring on the happy occasion of the canonization of the Martyrs of Uganda, fills Our heart with joy.

We have been particularly pleased to add these new Saints to the long list of Africans who have been raised to the honours of the altar, Martyrs, Confessors, and even Roman Pontiffs, among them the African Popes Saint Victor the First, Saint Meltiades, and Saint Gelasius the First.

We thank you for your kindness in coming to represent your Dioceses at this solemn ceremony, and We lovingly bless you and your dear ones. Through your good offices, We send Our blessing to all the beloved people of Africa, especially those noble Nations represented here by the distinguished Missions from Uganda and Central Africa. By the intercession of the Holy Martyrs, We invoke upon all Our African children the choicest graces and favours of Heaven.

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Un mot à vous aussi, chers Fils d'Afrique de langue française, pour vous dire Notre joie de vous accueillir ici au lendemain de l'émouvante cérémonie de la canonisation des Martyrs de l'Uganda.

Si toute l'Eglise exulte en voyant dans la gloire ces vingt-deux nouveaux Saints, il est bien juste que les premiers à se réjouir soient ceux qui sont les plus voisins géographiquement des lieux où a coulé le sang de ces martyrs. Honneur donc à la généreuse terre d'Afrique et à ses magnifiques chrétientés, qui sont pour Notre coeur de Père un motif de si grande consolation!

Et merci à vous tous, qui avez entrepris un si long voyage pour venir vous associer de plus près à cette grande manifestation de la vie de l'Eglise.

Continuez à l'aimer, chers Fils, cette Eglise, mère des Saints! Soyez-lui fidèles, sur la trace et à l'exemple des héros admirables que Nous avons hier placés sur les autels. Que leur foi, leur fermeté, leur courage, vous soient un stimulant dans vos luttes quotidiennes. Nous vous confions tous de grand coeur à leur céleste protection, et en songeant à tous ceux qui, là-bas en Afrique, vous sont unis en ce moment par la pensée et par la prière, Nous vous accordons à tous une très paternelle Bénédiction Apostolique.
