

**MESSAGE OF HIS GRACE, THE MOST REV. PAUL SSEMOGERERE ON THE OCCASION OF
THE UGANDA MARTYRS CELEBRATIONS, NAMUGONGO 2026**

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

It is with faith and thanksgiving to God that I address all pilgrims, clergy, religious, and people of goodwill spiritually united for this year's Uganda Martyrs celebrations under the theme: "Christ is alive in you and me." (cf. **Galatians 2:20**).

This year's celebration comes at a time when our country continues to exercise vigilance because of the Ebola outbreak. For the protection of life, we are unable to gather physically at Namugongo in the usual large numbers. Nevertheless, our communion in Christ remains strong. United in prayer from our homes, parishes, dioceses, and small Christian communities, we continue to celebrate the witness of the Uganda Martyrs with faith and hope.

In a special way, I thank the Diocese of Kasese, under the leadership of the Rt. Rev. Bishop Aquirinus Kibira, which had prepared to lead this year's celebrations at Namugongo. Although circumstances have prevented the normal national gathering, your dedication remains a sign of the unity and resilience of the Church in Uganda.

The Uganda Martyrs remain one of the greatest treasures of faith for Africa and the universal Church. Their witness reminds us that no fear, suffering, or earthly power can extinguish the light of Christ. In moments of trial and uncertainty, they remained firm because they trusted in God. As St. Paul reminds us: "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" (**Romans 8:35**).

As we face fears and anxieties brought by disease and uncertainty, the Uganda Martyrs call us to keep our faith alive. Through their intercession, we pray for healing for the sick, protection for families and communities, wisdom for leaders and health workers, and strength for all who continue serving humanity.

When Pope St. Paul VI canonized the Uganda Martyrs in 1964, he described them as "not only African martyrs, but martyrs of the universal Church." Their witness continues to inspire generations today.

The courage and fidelity of St. Charles Lwanga and his companions challenge us to choose truth over compromise, holiness over sin, and faith over fear. Devotion to the Uganda Martyrs must therefore renew within us the desire for deeper prayer, holiness, and courageous Christian living wherever we celebrate from.

I encourage all the faithful to continue observing health guidelines responsibly. Protecting life and caring for one another is also an expression of Christian faith and charity.

As we unite in prayer this year, may the witness of the Uganda Martyrs strengthen our families, inspire our young people, renew our priests and religious, and deepen the faith of all believers. May we truly become living witnesses that Christ is alive in us and among us.

Through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary and St. Charles Lwanga and Companions, may God bless our nation with healing, peace, unity, and steadfast faith.

†Paul Ssemogerere
ARCHBISHOP OF KAMPALA