



VOICEAFRIQUE

CATHOLIC NEWS ANALYSIS

FOLLOWING THE FOOTPRINTS OF GOD IN AFRICA

VoiceAfrique Weekly Update

Catholic News Analysis from Africa by Africans, for Africa and the World
Saturday, December 20, 2025

Greetings from VoiceAfrique

Thursday, January 1, 2026

This week's analysis highlights the Church in a vital phase of transformation, evolving from its historical foundations to address the pressing needs of our time. As we enter 2026, we recognize a Church that has moved beyond merely establishing its presence, now embracing the opportunity to lead with prophetic courage.

From the academic excellence of the PACTPAN Academy and its recent graduates to the courageous advocacy of African Young People—our Person of the Year—and from the intellectual liberation of theological thought to the nurturing wisdom of grassroots ministry in places like Zambia: these reflections inspire us to see our faith not as a remnant of the past, but as a dynamic force promoting justice and hope in Africa.

By Sr. Helen Kasaka, LSMI — PACTPAN Communication Director

A New Year of Synodal Hope

From the Editorial Team

As we stand on the threshold of 2026, the *VoiceAfrique* editorial team extends our warmest blessings to our readers across the continent and the diaspora.

This past year has been one of profound listening and bold action. We give thanks to God for the birth of *VoiceAfrique* and extend our deepest gratitude to you, our readers, for your steadfast support of this new publication. Our *raison d'être* is defined in our mission statement: to provide in-depth analysis of Catholic news in Africa and beyond—shifting the narrative from clichés of despair toward a redemptive story of hope. Through this analysis, we have witnessed the Church in Africa move beyond the walls of the sanctuary into the digital frontier, the halls of academia, and the front lines of social justice.

In this edition, we reflect on a year of tangible, institutional progress. From the intellectual rigor of the new PACTPAN Academy—which has launched specific programs like the African Digital Youth Influencers course and the Transformational Servant Leadership program for African religious, already celebrating its first cohort of graduates—to the courageous grassroots advocacy of our Zambia chapter. The African Church is proving that faith is not a static tradition but a living, transforming force. In Zambia, this advocacy materialized through the establishment of twenty active Anti-Human Trafficking Clubs nationwide and the Laudato Si' Unit's initiative, where Dominican Convent Girls planted over one thousand trees, demonstrating a concrete commitment to ecological justice.

As we enter this New Year, let us carry the disarming peace requested by Pope Leo XIV into our homes and communities. May 2026 be a year where we continue to beat our swords into plowshares and build a Church that truly serves as a home for all.

Happy New Year to the PACTPAN Family, Friends, and the Church Family of God in Africa!

VoiceAfrique's Person of the Year 2025: African Young People

At the heart of the mission and vision of PACTPAN is a demanding but straightforward conviction: Africa must tell her own story, interpret her own wounds, and imagine her own future through the lived faith, wisdom, and agency of her people. *VoiceAfrique* Catholic News Analysis exists to serve this calling—to shift the narrative from one too often buried beneath clichés of despair toward a story of hope.

In this Jubilee Year of Hope, *VoiceAfrique* names African Young People as its Person of the Year. They are not merely the future of Africa; they are already its moral conscience and its most credible sign of hope.

"Africa's youth are not merely the future of the continent; they are already its moral conscience, its restless civic energy, and its most credible sign of hope." — *VoiceAfrique*

Key Insights

- **Courage and Resistance as Moral Language:** Across the continent, young people are refusing to be silenced. From Tanzania to Madagascar, Morocco to Kenya, and Cameroon, youth-led movements have risen against economic exclusion and corruption. In Kenya, young people stood at the forefront of protests against the cost of living, paying with their lives when security forces responded with force. This resistance is an idealism that transcends the narrow identity politics of the past.
- **Building Alternative Sites of Hope:** This truth was displayed at the III Pan-African Catholic Congress in Abidjan, where projects from 18 young people demonstrated that with minimal support, African youth can transform communities. A luminous example is Marco Nyoro Abal of Wau. In August 2025, Marco helped convene a community dialogue in South Sudan to confront drug abuse, suicide, and gender-based violence. His leadership reminds us that African youth are not waiting for perfect systems before acting.
- **Saving Lives Beyond Borders:** African youth continue to save lives—literally and symbolically. The story of Mamoudou Gassama, the Malian migrant who climbed a building

in France to save a dangling child, is a parable of Africa's youth. While the continent dangles from broken systems, her young people hold life together.

Key Takeaway

Africa's most valuable resource is not buried in the soil; it is alive in the hearts of her young people. When they are treated as subjects of mission rather than objects of charity, they become innovators of hope. They are already writing the future from below.

For full analysis:

<https://voiceafrique.org/voiceafriques-person-of-the-year-2025-african-young-people.>

The Theotokos: A Mirror in Which We Discover Ourselves as Bearers of God's Life to Each Other

As we celebrate the Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God, we look to the Theotokos not just as a historical figure but as a spiritual mirror for the African Church. She represents the ultimate "Yes" that allows the Divine to take flesh in the human story.

"In Mary, we see the archetype of a Church that listens, conceives, and gives birth to hope in the midst of uncertainty." — *VoiceAfrique*

Key Insights

- **The Grace of Hospitality:** The Theotokos reminds us that our primary calling is to provide a "womb" for God's Word. In the African context, this translates to a radical hospitality where we welcome the stranger and the vulnerable as Christ himself.
- **Mutual Bearers of Life:** Mary's journey to Elizabeth reveals that bearing God's life is never a solitary act. We discover our own dignity and purpose when we recognize that we are called to carry God's life to each other, sustaining one another in faith.
- **Dignity in the Ordinary:** By saying "Yes" in a small, overlooked town, Mary sanctifies the ordinary. She validates the faith of millions of African mothers and laypeople who carry the life of the Church in the everyday struggle for justice and peace.

Key Takeaway

To look into the mirror of the Theotokos is to see our own potential to be "God-bearers." We are reminded that the Church in Africa becomes most authentic when every member realizes they carry a unique spark of Divine life meant to be shared for the healing of the community.

For full analysis:

<https://voiceafrique.org/the-theotokos-a-mirror-in-which-we-discover-ourselves-as-bearers-of-gods-life-to-each-other/>

PACTPAN: A Year of Faith and Action



As 2025 draws to a close, PACTPAN celebrates a landmark year of growth, moving from the historic dialogues of the Abidjan Congress to measurable grassroots impact.

With 179 new members and new chapters in Malawi, Zambia, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Uganda, Rwanda, and South Sudan, as well as in the United States, Canada, and Italy, the network has solidified its leading role as a global bridge for African theological imagination, pastoral creativity, grassroots Catholic social justice initiatives, and inter-faith and inter-denominational partnership for research, publication, advocacy, and service to the Church and society in Africa.

The centerpiece of this year's success was the III Pan-African Catholic Jubilee Congress in Abidjan and the institutional launch of the PACTPAN Academy. Rooted in Vital Church theory, the Academy has introduced a curriculum focusing on ten critical dimensions of ecclesial health. By preparing to submit accreditation dossiers to Tangaza University and Pioneer University for its programs—namely, Certificate, Diploma, and Master's programs in Transformational Servant Leadership for a Vital Church in Africa by February—the network is ensuring that formators, women, and youth leaders are academically equipped for the future.

II. PACTPAN Zambia: A Year of Grassroots Transformation



LUSAKA — PACTPAN Zambia looks back with gratitude on a year defined by service and advocacy. The Human Trafficking Unit successfully established twenty active Anti-Human Trafficking Clubs nationwide. In response to the call for environmental justice, the Laudato Si' Unit saw the Dominican Convent Girls plant over one thousand trees, demonstrating their readiness to fight climate change.

The Church of Now Unit focused on bridging the generational gap through a partnership with Radio Yangeni, discussing issues affecting the faith of the youth twice each week.

Vatican City: Pope Leo XIV's Message for World Day of Peace



In a profound appeal for global reconciliation, Pope Leo XIV has released his message for the 59th World Day of Peace (January 1, 2026), titled "**Towards an 'Unarmed and Disarming' Peace.**"

Key Themes of the Message:

- **The Crisis of Rearmament:** The Pope notes that global military expenditure rose by 9.4% in 2024, reaching \$2,718 billion.
- **Artificial Intelligence:** The Holy Father denounces the military implementation of AI, calling the delegation of life-and-death decisions to machines a destructive betrayal of humanism.
- **Weaponization of Faith:** The Pope issues a stern warning against using religion to justify violence or bless nationalism.

For full analysis:

<https://www.vatican.va/content/leo-xiv/en/messages/peace/documents/20251208-messaggio-pace.html>

IV. Looking Ahead to 2026

The network is poised for a significant first quarter, anchored by the upcoming January Assembly. It will feature a palaver on SECAM's 2025–2050 Vision for Africa, focusing on inter-religious dialogue for development, justice, and peace; the first session in a series on African theology titled Leading Voices; presentations on the interim reports from the 14 Synod on Synodality study groups; and the launch of the second cohort of the African Digital Youth Influencers Program. From the refinement of the PACTPAN anthem by youth leaders to the implementation of the strategic plan across all 37 units and activities, the focus remains on institutional unity, a strategic convergence on the mission of the Church in Africa, and the bridge-building vision of Pope Leo.

Quote of the Week

"To peace we whisper 'Forever.' Into this horizon the Risen One has led us." — Pope Leo XIV, Message for the 59th World Day of Peace

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News Analysis

Pan-African Catholic Theology and Pastoral Network (PACTPAN)

www.pactpan.org