



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

October 26, 2026

Begin your week with Sr. Helen Kasaka, the Pan-African Catholic Review and PACTPAN Updates

As an African proverb articulates, "Two hands wash each other." This statement underscores the importance of collaboration, as individuals are inherently interconnected and derive strength from collective effort.

Dear friends in Christ,

Greetings from Lusaka, Zambia. This week, we observe a significant demographic shift, noting that Africa now has a greater number of Catholics than Europe. We also extend our congratulations to the new leadership at the Catholic University of Eastern Africa and take this opportunity to acknowledge the invaluable contributions of African theologians.

Around PACTPAN this week

PACTPAN has established an online community for its members. This platform provides a collaborative space for individuals to connect, share resources, and engage with the initiatives of the network. Members who complete the registration process will have the opportunity to participate in thematic units and country chapters, attend events and webinars, and contribute to the preparations for the upcoming Congress. The network encourages members to register and actively participate in fostering a community that is grounded in collaboration, collective learning, and dedicated service to the Church in Africa.

Join the community: <https://community.pactpan.org/register>

Father Patrick Mwanja Appointed to the International Theological Commission

On 19 October, the Holy See Press Office announced the appointment of Father Patrick Mwanja, C.S.Sp., Vice-Chancellor of Tangaza University in Nairobi, as one of the new members of the

Vatican's International Theological Commission. This commission will serve for the term spanning from 2026 to 2031. Father Mwanja is affiliated with PACTPAN's Kenya Chapter. In a statement issued on 20 October, the network extended its congratulations and expressed optimism that his contributions would introduce African theological perspectives to the universal Church.

Spiritual Maturity of Religious and Pastoral Leaders

In an interview released on Saturday, 24 October, on the VoiceAfrique Catholic podcast, I engaged in discourse with Father Christopher Nyirenda, SJ, and the Deputy Director of the Jesuit Centre for Theological Reflection in Zambia (JCTR), regarding the concept of spiritual maturity in religious and pastoral leaders within the African context. Drawing upon a research initiative among Jesuits in Zambia, which is supported by the Templeton Foundation and promoted by PACTPAN. Father Nyirenda emphasized key qualities such as prayer, humility, discernment, emotional maturity, and community support. He also addressed the considerable pressures faced by leaders, including burnout, isolation, and financial challenges.

Listen to the interview: <https://youtu.be/BYsr3iaeCbw?si=HvZFoqVaKaZKFNK>

PACTPAN member urges stronger action against child marriage.

Dr. Sylvia Gaudence Ruambo, who coordinates PACTPAN's "Let the Little Children Come to Me" unit, has urged Tanzania to strengthen the laws that protect girls from child marriage and to enforce them more firmly. She made the appeal at events in Dar es Salaam marking the International Day of the Girl Child, held under the theme "End Child Marriage, Invest in Girls' Rights." Ending the practice, she said, is the shared duty of families, communities, government and institutions, the Church included.

Read the full story: <https://voiceafrique.org/end-child-marriage/>

In the wider Church

Africa now has more Catholics than Europe, Vatican figures show. The Vatican's Fides news agency reported on 16 October that Africa has 288.31 million Catholics, slightly more than the 287.24 million in Europe. Africa gained 7.58 million Catholics between 2023 and 2024, more than any other continent, and it was the only continent where the number of major seminarians grew. Worldwide, the Church counts 1.422 billion Catholics, or 17.8 per cent of the global population.

New leaders installed at the Catholic University of Eastern Africa.

Archbishop Gervas Nyaisonga, the current chair of the Association of Member Episcopal Conferences in Eastern Africa (AMECEA), has officially assumed the role of Chancellor of the Catholic University of Eastern Africa (CUEA). Concurrently, Rev. Prof. Elias Omondi Opongo, SJ, has been installed as the Vice-Chancellor, marking a significant milestone as he becomes the first Jesuit to occupy this position. During the installation ceremony, which coincided with the university's 45th graduation, Fr. Opongo articulated his commitment to prioritizing academic excellence, accountability, and financial sustainability, while also preserving the institution's Catholic identity.

During the graduation event on 23 October, Bishop Mark Kadima Wamukoya, the Chairman of the University Council representing the bishops' conference, urged the Catholic University of Eastern Africa (CUEA) to establish a degree program focusing on Small Christian Communities. The Bishop highlighted that the introduction of such a curriculum would enable the Church to assess the operations of these communities and improve their overall effectiveness.

These communities, where Catholics engage in prayer, Scripture reading, and mutual support, play an integral role in the pastoral life of the Church in the region.

Catholic Sisters and Lay Partners Convene in Chicago

Over 100 Catholic sisters and lay partners, supported by the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation's Catholic Sisters initiative, convened in Chicago alongside leaders from various Vatican dicasteries to initiate the five-year strategy of the initiative within the United States. Sister Jane Wakahiu, LSOSF, PhD, who directs the initiative, expressed her aspiration that this gathering would inspire innovative responses to the emerging needs of the communities served by the sisters. Discussions focused on collaboration, safeguarding, and the promotion of human dignity.

Looking ahead

In Tanzania, a day of prayer is scheduled for Thursday, 29 October. Bishop Wolfgang Pisa of Lindi, who serves as the chair of the Tanzania Episcopal Conference, has called upon Catholics to offer prayers for those who sustained injuries, went missing, or lost their lives following the elections on 29 October 2025. In a letter dated 23 October, he recommended that Masses be conducted in parishes, prayer centers, and Church institutions, urging the faithful to pray for unity, love, truth, and solidarity.

As November approaches, the Church prepares to commemorate two significant observances: All Saints' Day on Sunday, November 1, and All Souls' Day on Monday, November 2. On All Saints' Day, the faithful will honor the lives and contributions of all recognized saints, while the following day is dedicated to the remembrance and prayer for those who have passed away. In light of these solemn occasions, it is essential to reflect on the importance of community and the individuals who serve within it. As we engage with one another this week, let us extend our gratitude to those who work tirelessly to support and uplift our neighborhoods.

Wishing everyone a week that is both peaceful and filled with grace.

Stay Connected & Support Our Mission



Sr. Helen Kasaka, LSMI
Editor, *VoiceAfrique* Catholic
News Analysis

We welcome your feedback, reflections, and contributions. *VoiceAfrique* is expanding and seeking committed contributors who desire to strengthen African Catholic journalism with integrity, depth, and hope.

Contact: admin@pactpan.org

- We invite you to explore advertising opportunities with us.
- Support our mission and help us build a strong platform for African Catholic news analysis.
- If you know someone who would benefit from this analysis? Please forward this update.

Pan-African Catholic Theology and Pastoral Network (PACTPAN)

www.pactpan.org

www.pactpan.org