



18TH AMECEA PLENARY ASSEMBLY

MALAWI 2014 - UPDATES

A Special Newsletter

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18TH AMECEA PLENARY OFFICIALLY OPENED

Thousands Turn Up For The Opening Ceremony Of The 18th Amecea Plenary Assembly



Thousands of Catholics and non-Catholics from all diocese of Malawi gathered at CIVO Stadium Lilongwe to join over two hundred delegates of the 18th Plenary Assembly of the Association of Member Episcopal Conferences in Eastern Africa (AMECEA), at the official opening Eucharistic Celebration that took place on Thursday July 17 2014.

Gates of the stadium opened at 7 o'clock in the morning as people from all over the city flocked into the stadium for Mass. Buses

Government guarantees Freedom of Religion in the Country

The government of Malawi will continue to promote freedom of religion and peaceful coexistence with all faith communities in the country.

Speaking during the mass that marked the official opening ceremony of the Association of Member Episcopal Conferences in Eastern Africa (AMECEA) 18th plenary assembly at Civo Stadium in Lilongwe, President Arthur Peter Mutharika called upon the Church to hold hands with government in unswervingly committing themselves to fighting secularism and promoting values that guide the faith community.

President Mutharika also commended the Catholic Church for the role it plays in Malawi and the Eastern Part of Africa in uplifting the lives of people.

"Allow me to express my gratitude to the Catholic Church here in Malawi and in the region for its continued support towards the development of the country in areas such as health and education. I look forward to continued collaboration aimed at bettering the lives of our people," said Mutharika.

He, therefore, said the regional body of Episcopal conferences is not only crucial to the church but also to the governments of AMECEA's member states.

"I am convinced that the selection of the theme could not have come at any better time than this, when Africa is very much affected by some secularist agenda coming from other parts of the world, with so many other forces of evil," he said.

He added: "With the digital revolution and globalisation, Africa is not an isolated continent. As such we are also experiencing the forces that are negatively affecting the cultures of the people all over the world."

In his remarks, the Chairman of AMECEA Most Reverend Tarcisius Ziyaye, who is also Archbishop for Lilongwe Archdiocese, said that Malawi stands to benefit a lot from the AMECEA Plenary Assembly as it is a time when Christians are drawn closer to greater com-

and trucks brought many others from various dioceses and parishes.

The celebration was honoured by the presence of the Head of State Prof Arthur Peter Mutharika, Honourable Saulos Chilima the Vice President, Apostolic Nuncio to Malawi and Zambia His Excellency Julio Murrat, the President of SECAM Most Rev Mbiligi, leaders of other churches and many government dignitaries.

Government security was tight throughout the celebration, which enabled people to participate freely during the celebration of Mass that was presided by Eminence John Cardinal Njue Archbishop of Nairobi and the Patron of AMECEA, with concelebrants that included, Archbishop Vincenzo Pagli, the President of the Pontifical Council for Family, among other.

The celebration, which started with a procession at 9 O'clock, lasted four hours, during which the joyful congregation sang and danced as they worshipped, thanking God for the successful preparation and for the success of the plenary.



mitment towards God.

"Malawi is a God fearing nation and such gatherings give us time for reflection and prayers. Our discussions will mainly revolve around Evangelisation, Witness and Conversion which will benefit the people of Malawi," he said.

The Archbishop commended the government for its continued support towards the church which testified a cordial relationship between Church and State.

During the celebration, Archbishop Ziyaye received a Pallium from Rome which symbolises the Authority given to him as the Metropolitan of Lilongwe and the Unity with the successor of Peter. Archbishop Ziyaye did not make it to Rome on June 29 2014, when the Holy Father, Pope Francis gave palliums to other newly assigned archbishops.



The 18th AMECEA Plenary Kicks off in Lilongwe

The much awaited 18th Plenary Assembly of AMECEA has kicked off in Lilongwe, Malawi with a Spiritual recollection which was led by Most Rev Thaddeus Ruwa'ichi, the Archbishop of Mwanza, Tanzania.

In the morning, the bishops gathered at Bingu International Conference Centre for recollection which was closed by Eucharistic celebration. In the afternoon, the delegates reflected on the vision and mission of AMECEA which was co-presented by His Eminence John Cardinal Njue, Archbishop of Nairobi, Kenya and Msgr. Pius Rutechura, the Vice Chancellor of the Catholic University of Eastern Africa (CUEA).

AMECEA Secretary General Fr. Ferdinand Lugonzo said told the plenary that Apostolate and contributions of the family and Small Christian Communities to the work of evangelization will be among the crucial topics during the assembly.

Speaking at a press conference at Kamuzu International Airport in Lilongwe from where he had gone to welcome Cardinal Njue, Fr. Lugonzo said that seven topics have been prepared for discussion at the plenary.

“When you look at the broader theme for this Plenary,

Cardinal Njue urges Local Church to be More Self Reliant

His Eminence John Cardinal Njue, who is Archbishop of Nairobi in Kenya, has urged the local Church to move from being too dependent on foreign donations or missionaries and instead re-invigorate the pastoral vision of AMECEA to build a Church that is self reliant, self ministering and self propagating.



Addressing members of the press at Kamuzu International Airport in Lilongwe upon his arrival in Malawi on 14th July 2014, Cardinal Njue, who is also one of the Patrons of AMECEA, said that every time they meet as AMECEA Bishops, they are reminded that AMECEA is the mother of the spirit of building the local Church that is truly rooted in the life and aspirations of the People of God.

“We are reminded that yesterday is gone and today is today. Yesterday we used to stretch our hands to be supported by our founders and benefactors, the Missionaries. Today we have to learn to stand on our own,” the cardinal said. Cardinal Njue encouraged the local Church to move now towards being a local Church that is self reliant and ministered by her own people, laity, religious and priests.

“As indigenous Christians we are being reminded that we are the Church and we must take the responsibility of the mission of the Church to make sure that the seed that was planted by our dear Missionaries is properly watered and nurtured so that it can bear fruits.”

Cardinal Njue, who is also the Chairman of the Kenya Conference of Catholic Bishops, said that he feels very encouraged whenever they meet as AMECEA Bishops because it is an opportunity for them to think together on how to carry on the mission that has been entrusted to them. The Bishops of AMECEA have an enormous task of trying to make sure that they also



which is New Evangelization Through True Conversion and Witnessing to Christian Faith, two institutions are crucial; the apostolate of family and its contribution to the work of Evangelization and the Small Christian Communities, which is a brain child of AMECEA,” Fr. Lugonzo said.

Fr. Lugonzo said that the delegates will review and reflect on Small Christian Communities to see how effective they are, what gaps or challenges they are facing and propose what can be done to make them effective means of evangelization.

leave a better legacy for the future generation, he added.

In his concluding remarks, the Cardinal said: “I am impressed with the warm welcome that we have been accorded by the people of Malawi and with the presence of the Vice President of Malawi Saulos Chilima here at the Airport. This has given us a great impetus to fully participate in the Plenary Assembly up to its successful conclusion.

FRIDAY, 18TH JULY 2014 STUDY SESSION

Theme: Thanks-giving for Missionary Work and Prayer for Peace
Activity: Study Session
Animation: Ethiopia

TIME	ACTIVITY
0600	Morning Prayers (in private)
0700	Breakfast
0745	Departure to BICC
0830	Mid morning Prayers
0845	Presentation on the Family, by His Grace Most Rev. Vincenzo Paglia, President of the Pontifical Council for the family
	SESSION ONE
0910	1st Presentation and Plenary Input Topic: Early Missionary Work of Evangelization and the actual situation within the AMECEA region Presenter: Rev. Fr. Dr. Benedict Ssettuuma
1030	Tea/Coffee Break
1100	2nd Presentation and Plenary Input Topic: The environment (Cultural, Political, social) within which the Church is operating in the region. Presenter: Right. Rev. Eduardo Hiiboro, bishop of Tombura - Yambio, South Sudan
1215	Concelebrated Holy Mass
1300	Lunch
1500	Group Discussions
1630	Tea/Coffee Break
1700	Group Reporting
1800	Evening Prayer and departure to Residences
1900	Dinner at Respective Residences