



# 18TH AMECEA PLENARY ASSEMBLY

## MALAWI 2014 - UPDATES

### A Special Newsletter

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## VATICAN CALLS FOR DEFENCE OF FAMILY

By Pamela Adinda and Anatoly Salawa



The President of the Pontifical Council for the Family Most Rev. Vincenzo Paglia has urged the Church to protect and defend the family at all cost, arguing that human beings are made for communion not loneliness.

Addressing the delegates at the Association for Member Episcopal Conferences in Eastern Africa (AMECEA) 18th Plenary Assembly in the capital Lilongwe on Friday, Archbishop Paglia said the family is still the foundation of society, a place where cultural and spiritual values are learnt and transmitted. "The extended family teaches its children the attitudes and behaviours of the whole community," he said, adding that "The crisis of marriage and the family is to be considered in the light of the individualisation of contemporary society. It seems that the 'I' is everywhere prevailing over the 'We' over family. Conse-

quently the rights of an individual take precedence over the rights of the family."

Speaking from the context of Africa, the Archbishop quoted the Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation, *Ecclesia in Africa* which says: "In the culture and traditions of Africa, the role of the family is universally considered as fundamental; open to the understanding of the family, of love and respect for life.

"Africa loves children and welcomes them joyfully as a gift from God. The sons and daughters of Africa love life. Practices contrary to life are nevertheless imposed on them by economic systems that serve only egoism and money," he said.

The Archbishop also observed that the threats to family life in today's Africa are many, such as breakdown of morals, the attacks on the unity of marriage, dissolution of family ties, and the increase in the de facto unions, as well as poverty, and increased unemployment that make it impossible for parents to fulfil their responsibilities.

"The family must be defended and protected so that it can render to the society the service that it expects, that is to give men and women who can weave a social fabric of peace and harmony in the society," he said.

"Children come to church for baptism and then disappear afterward; couples stay away from Church after receiving the blessings of the Sacrament of Matrimony; "this needs to be stopped," he said. The Archbishop said that a new pastoral perspective for the family is therefore highly needed. "My dear brother Bishops, what I propose is difficult and complex but cannot be avoided; we need a new alliance between the family and the Church to show the beauty of the 'Us' to the world that lives in sorrow of shortsighted pride."

He appealed to the AMECEA Bishops saying: "The Lord has entrusted to us a task that is both worth and fascinating, but He will not deny us His help in carrying it out."

### AMECEA Asked to be an Instrument of Faith

By Makeda Yohannes - Ethiopia

His Grace Archbishop Berhaneyesus Souraphiel CM, President of the Bishops Conference of Ethiopia, has asked the Church in the AMECEA region to be an instrument of Faith to the people of the region.

In his homily during the Eucharistic celebration which was animated by the Ethiopian Conference on 18 July 2014, the Archbishop said the 18th AMECEA Plenary Assembly is being held at a time the Church just canonized two Popes - Saints John XXIII and John Paul II.

Archbishop Berhaneyesus also highlighted the lessons that Christians can learn from His Holiness Pope Francis and Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI. "The first lesson that we can learn from them is showing mercy to others and asking the Lord for graces," he said, adding that "The first thing the Holy Father did when he was elected as the Successor of Saint Peter was asking the people to pray for him. Indeed all the congregation present at the St. Peter Square that day, and all those following the transmission prayed for him."

The Archbishop added that people can be witnesses to the fact that the Lord heard and responded to their prayers by looking at what the Holy Father has already achieved within this short period of time of his pontificate. "If we ask the Lord for

Mercy and Graces, we will see the Power of our prayer," he said.

Another lesson learnt from Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI, which Archbishop Berhaneyesus highlighted, was about his life. "Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI, after serving the Church as the successor of St. Peter, decided to resign in order to give room to someone in a better state of health to lead the Church. However, he decided to continue supporting the Church with prayer," he said.

He said that it is an opportunity for AMECEA to reflect on how the Church in the region can grow more in doing God's work.



## Archbishop Ziyaye Challenges Malawians To Be God-Fearing People

By Jameson Salima

Chairperson of AMECEA has challenged Christians in the country to match their daily lives with their faith in God in order to build the country's reputation as a God-fearing nation.

Most Reverend Tarcius Ziyaye made the remarks at a press briefing at Kamuzu international Airport in Lilongwe on 14th July 2014 when he was welcoming a delegation



of AMECEA members who had come to attend the 18th AMECEA Plenary Assembly in Lilongwe.

“How do you witness that we are a God-fearing nation when there is a dichotomy between what we do and what we believe in?” he said.

Archbishop Ziyaye hinted that it was only genuinely God-fearing citizens who have the power to overcome social and economic challenges facing their respective nations.

He also called for a good and strong Church-State relationship. “The Church must not be seen as a foreign entity to the country,” he said.

The conference, which is held every three years, has attracted over 200 delegates from 10 AMECEA member and affiliate countries, which include Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Sudan, South Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Djibouti.

## AMECEA Bishops Urged to Use Missionary Strategies to Evangelise

By Fr. Winfield Kunda-Communications Secretary-Zambia Episcopal Conference

Bishops of AMECEA have been urged to employ Missionary strategies to enhance the works of evangelisation in their respective dioceses.

Presenting his paper at the ongoing 18th AMECEA Plenary Assembly, Fr Benedict Ssettuuma, a Catholic scholar from Uganda, said the strategies used by the early missionaries, if well applied, can be very effective as proved to be successful at a time when evangelisation was harder and more demanding.

“All missionary societies applied almost the same strategies, creatively adopting them to their local situations,” Fr. Ssettuuma said in his presentation titled ‘Early Missionary work of Evangelisation and the actual situation within AMECEA region.’”



He cited the formation of competent and self-reliant local clergy and religious, inculturation and human promotion as the key ones, adding that local clergy is fundamental for evangelisation to take root in the AMECEA region. Other missionary methods included being a good stranger-visitor, missionary journeys, travels and pastoral visits, and prudently promoting popular devotions and popular piety.

On inculturation, Fr. Ssettuuma urged the local Church to borrow a leaf from those Missionaries who took a positive view of African cultures and in them sought to find the concepts, terms

and ways of expressing the Christ-event and the Christian life. ‘A number of the first ever printed works in the local languages were produced by the Missionaries. They did a great work and that is a great challenge for us,’ he said.

He emphasised that fighting poverty and supporting the liberation of people from all forms of oppression is at the core of human promotion and all agents of evangelisation must deliberately prioritise this.

Fr. Ssettuuma stressed that popular devotions and piety can only be supported if pastoral agents live a lifestyle that can be admired by the people.

“Once these are developed, a profound spirituality will be developed among all Christians of the region,” he concluded.

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### SATURDAY, 19TH JULY 2014 STUDY SESSION

Theme: The Family  
Activity: Study Session  
Animation: Kenya

TIME	ACTIVITY
0600	Morning Prayers (in private)
0700	Breakfast
0745	Departure to BICC
0830	Mid morning Prayers
0845	USCCB/CRS Delegation
	<b>SESSION TWO</b>
0910	<b>3rd Presentation and Plenary Input</b> Topic: New Evangelization as an opportunity to work towards true conversion and witness to Christian Faith (emphasis on the role of family life and Small Christian Communities) Presenter: Rev. Prof. Fr. Clement Majawa, Director of School of Post-Graduate Studies, CUEA
1030	Tea/Coffee Break
1100	<b>4th Presentation and Plenary Input</b> Topic: Role of Seminaries and other Houses of Formation in enhancing New Evangelization Presenter: Right Rev. Charles Kasonde, Bishop of Solwezi, Zambia
1215	Concelebrated Holy Mass
1300	Lunch
1500	Group Discussions
1630	Tea/Coffee Break
1700	Group Reporting
1800	Evening Prayer in common
1900	Dinner at Respective Residences