



ARCHDIOCESAN MISSIONARY REDEMPTORIS MATER SEMINARY  
Yokana Musoke Rd. 39- Kawuku-Bunga;  
P.O. Box 14125 – Mengo, Kampala (Uganda)

Kampala, 23 December 2023

Dear brethren,

As we experience the anxious and joyful wait during the last days leading up to the birth of the Lord Jesus, we also prepare ourselves here in Kampala to welcome the incarnate Love.

As always, even at the end of this civil year, we have many reasons to thank the Lord who, after descending on earth in the flesh, does not get tired of continually coming into our lives to comfort and sustain us. First of all, the seminary of Kampala celebrated its first 10 years on 21 September. We hope to be able to celebrate a thanksgiving Eucharist with the Archbishop later this year to bless the Lord's work.



A great gift was that we were all able to participate in the WYD in Lisbon during the summer, thanks to the important help of some benefactors, which also allowed us to spend some time on holiday in Italy and to participate in the international convicence of seminarians in Porto San Giorgio in September.

It was during this meeting that a new seminarian, Axel Jaret Aguilar, was assigned to our seminary; Axel was born in the USA, although originally from Mexico, and is 20 years old. We never take for granted the great grace of receiving a few new vocations each year from young boys willing to seriously question their lives and God's will. Despite their wounds and frailties, they open themselves to the possibility that God is calling them to a full life, and we all become spectators of how



The new seminarian Axel Jaret Aguilar

the Lord can really enter people's lives and change their history.

Another grace received this year is the rosary group, made up of some forty young people from the cities of Kampala, Masaka and Arua, who made themselves available to pray the rosary every day before the tabernacle, interceding for our seminary. A few weeks ago, we invited these young people to the seminary and spent a beautiful Sunday together, alternating prayer with moments of sharing and communion.



Some of the youths involved in the rosary group



I would like to tell you about one last fact, unusual but at the same time beautiful, that the Lord has given us. In the city of Masaka, 130 km from Kampala, there are two families on mission, one family comes from Ecuador and one from Argentina. They arrived last March and help the Masaka diocese by supporting evangelization and living among the people, showing what it means to live as a Christian family. They left their securities, jobs, homes, relatives and local communities and came to Uganda following a call from the Lord, looking for work and learning the language. To make a long story short, the Argentinian couple, Elias and Maria Celeste, conceived their seventh child here in Uganda and as the birth approached, apprehensions grew (the first birth in Africa may certainly be scary for people coming from Western Countries). So, after weighing up various possibilities, they decided to come and give birth in Kampala, where there are facilities that can guarantee better care, in particular a

new hospital dedicated to maternity and neonatology. Elias and Maria Celeste thus spent their last days before giving birth in Kampala and we hosted them in the seminary. On the night between 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> November, labour began and we left for the hospital; thank God at 3am the streets of Kampala were free and we were able to cover in less than half an hour a distance that often takes two hours because of traffic. When we arrived at the hospital, I stayed with them for the entire duration of labour (about 10 hours). At the time of delivery, however, the couple asked me to stay with them in the delivery room as a translator, as their English is still poor and in case of any complications, the midwife would ask the father and mother what decision to make.

To me it was a true gift from the Lord, an experience I never expected to have, to see a baby



girl born and thus experience a fatherhood that almost goes beyond the purely spiritual. The birth went well even if with a moment of apprehension because little Maria Teresita had the umbilical cord wrapped around her neck.

The midwife's skill allowed the cord to be easily removed and the baby girl emerged completely from her mother's belly without any problems.

November 28<sup>th</sup>, the date of her birth, is a very special day for us and for Africa. It commemorates the first apparition of the Virgin Mary in Kibeho, Rwanda, in 1981. The apparitions, recognised by the Church as miraculous events, were then repeated for two years, echoing in Africa and throughout the world a strong call to conversion that remained largely unheard. The Lord wanted, in our opinion, to put a seal on these families' mission in Uganda, placing them under the



protection of his loving “African” Mother and he allowed the seminary to participate in this event, highly unusual for a seminary, welcoming this first child of the mission in Uganda and, in some ways, also of the Redemptoris Mater seminary in Kampala.



The Argentine couple with Maria Teresita next to the statue of the Virgin of Kibeho together with us at the seminary.

I would like to end by asking you to pray for us and for the future of this seminary: at the end of 2024, the lease we have will end and in February we will meet the Blessed Sacrament Fathers, who own the house, to discuss how to continue. They would like to take back the house but we still have nowhere to go and the conditions they would like to set for a renewal of the contract are decidedly unfavourable to us. Please support us with your prayers, in preparation for the February meeting, so that the Lord may prepare the hearts of our landlords and also open ways for the future of the seminary.

The precariousness in which the Holy Family of Nazareth had to take its first steps consoles us and makes us reconsider our own precariousness. From Jesus, Joseph and Mary we learn to entrust ourselves to God and to let him lead history and take care of this child of his, the seminary.

In these last days, I was thinking that Christmas is the time of the decisive choice. This child, as Simeon says to Mary "is here for the fall and rise of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be contradicted, so that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed" (Lk 2:34b-35). Whereas at Easter Christ gives himself completely and freely in body and soul by dying for us, at Christmas he comes as a helpless child who, in a certain sense, asks us to protect and honour him with the gift of our whole life. This is what we hope for us formators and seminarians, trusting in the Lord's help in the formation of priests completely given to the

Lord, happy to be led by a child. This Christmas we wish you all this simplicity that is happiness.

We remember you in our prayers, a warm embrace.



Fr.Davide De Arcangelis

Rector

For those who would wish to help us

**DOLLAR ACCOUNT**

Bank: I.O.R. – Vatican City

Address: Cortile Sisto V, 00120 Città del Vaticano, Stato di Città del Vaticano

Headed to: SEMINARY ARCHDIOCESAN REDEMPTORIS MATER – KAMPALA

IBAN: VA73001000000046152002

BIC Code: IOPRVAVX or IOPRVAVXXXX

Reason: Donation to the RM Seminary of Kampala

**UGANDA SHILLINGS ACCOUNT**

Centenary Bank - Lugogo Branch

Address: Forest Mall, Lugogo By-Pass, Kampala (Uganda)

Account n. : 3100105082

Bic/Swift Code: CERBUGKA