



## ARCHDIOCESAN-MISSIONARY

### “REDEMPTORIS MATER” SEMINARY, KAMPALA

Yokana Musoke Rd. 39. Kawuku-Bbunga, P.O. Box 14125  
Mengo, Kampala (Uganda)

Dear brethren and friends of our seminary,

I am joyful and excited to address you for the first time as the rector of the Redemptoris Mater Seminary of Kampala. I am Santiago Martin a priest for the archdiocese of Washington DC. I was originally born and raised in Segovia, Spain. At the age of fourteen I joined the Neocatechumenal way and through the living experience of a community, I encountered the Church as a mother who nourished me in the faith; and the living presence of Christ in the midst of these communities eventually produces a fruit! During the World Youth Day of 2005 in Germany, I felt the call to the priesthood. Following the missionary spirit of our Charism, I was sent to the U.S.A where I did my formation towards the priesthood in the Redemptoris Mater Seminary of Washington DC. In 2015, I was ordained for this archdiocese.



After serving as parish priest for seven years, I felt the call to the mission for the universal church. Thus, in agreement with my bishop to undertake this new path, I spent a year and half in Oklahoma State as a missionary. Last January there was the need of a new rector in the Redemptoris Mater Seminary of Kampala and I accepted this new endeavor. On July 2<sup>nd</sup> 2024, I took charge of the new appointment as rector and following in the footsteps of my predecessors, Fr. Venanzio Pasotti and Fr. Davide De Arcangelis, I humbly entrust myself to the grace of God to continue with the mission here in Kamapala. It is only left to say that all those who have benefited from Fr Davide's and Fr Venanzio's missionary ministry in Uganda are very grateful of the work they have done, and I am a witness of it. I would ask for your sincere prayers knowing my human frailty and knowing that's God's ministry can never be done alone since it is the Church as a whole that makes present Christ in the world.

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Turning towards a different matter. As you may remember last Easter season on April 21<sup>st</sup>, we celebrated the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our seminary presided by the Archbishop of Kampala, Most Rev. Paul Ssemogerere, and during the Eucharist our seminarian, Joseph Santana received the ministries of Lector & Acolyte.

As God is confirming his vocation after eight years in the seminary and two years of mission in Vietnam, on December 2<sup>nd</sup> the pastoral council of the seminary met with Joseph to inquire about his journey on the vocation towards priesthood. After a time of examination, a resolution was taken; provided the call of the Church and the approval of the archbishop, Joseph will proceed to the diaconal ordination in this upcoming year. This news is a source of joy for all of us and we ask you to pray for him as he will enter this new journey to the clerical state.



*Above: Archbishop of Kampala, Paul Ssemwogerere  
and Joseph Santana*



*Above: Stefano Bertani and Maria  
Teresa Benignetti*



As regards our voluntary families, we say goodbye to our dear couple Stefano and Maria from Veneto who were in mission in the seminary. Last July they returned to Italy due to some health issues. We are so grateful for the help they provided among us. Our experience for those who have passed through the seminary is that they always come back! The communion that Christ brings among us creates joy. This joy springs from the fact that it is Christ himself who carries on the mission of the Church and, thus, these families have experienced what we are all experiencing, the mission gives you more graces than what you can give to the mission.

Since September, another couple offered to return to help in the seminary: Costantino and Giovanna. It is the third time they come to Kampala with us as they have experienced the joy of serving Christ in mission in our seminary.

*Left: Constantio Acquista and Giovanna Mattei*

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As every year our team of catechists gather us in a retreat weekend to update us about the last news of evangelization from our Charism. On the weekend of October 11<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> a hundred and eight brothers and sisters all over Uganda attended the convivence in representation of all the communities that live their faith. This year we had brothers attending from Kamapala, Masaka, Arua, Nebbi and even the refugee camp of Nakivale.



*Annual Retreat 2024, Namugongo, Kampala*



On November 24<sup>th</sup> we received the announcement of Advent from the missionary Itinerant team sent to Uganda in order to embrace this very important liturgical season that leads us to the birth of our Lord and Savior in this Christmas.

*Left: Advent Announcement 2024, Kampala*

### Families in Mission

A fundamental element that helps us to carry on the mission of our evangelization in Uganda are the two families in mission situated in Masaka. Masaka is a city mainly populated by the Ganda tribe, 130 km away from Kampala. These families are exercising Jesus's ministry of reaching out to the farthest sites of the country. Patricio and Silvana and their two daughters Michaela and Rafaela come from Ecuador while Elias and Celeste from Argentina with 8 children are a reference point for what that it means to be a Christian family. Their quiet living makes Jesus Christ present among the population of Masaka; they don't yet speak the language; they don't have a job yet their 8 children salt and leaven the people around them not only in the town but also in the school which the four older children attend every day. The native people of the Ganda tribe wonder at the presence of these children, 8 children who bring a question mark in the minds of the neighboring families that live around them. *Juan Ignacio; (10 years old), Felipe Antonio; (8 years old), Carmelo; (6 years old), Gillermina; (4 years old), Maria Isabel; (3 years old), Jacinta; (2 years old) and Maria Teresita; (1 year old)* who are they? why are they here? it is the wonder of God that has the power to uproot a tree, a family, from the Argentinian region and transplant it in the African nation. Only faith, the faith of Abraham has the power to achieve that.





Patricio, Sylvana, Elias and Celeste make present Jesus Christ living their faith all together with the communities in which they celebrate the word, the sacraments and grow in faith in Masaka. Moved by the witness of these families I drove to Masaka on October 22<sup>nd</sup> to celebrate the anniversary of the beginning of the papacy of Saint John Paul II. I visited for the first time Masaka and celebrated the Eucharist in their house. At a personal note, I really experienced made flesh Christ's words

in John's gospel: *"unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies. it remains just a single grain; but if it dies it bears much fruit."* (cf. John 12:24). Among the population of Masaka, these families are just a grain of wheat that God will make bear fruit in its due time. The last news we heard from them is that Celeste & Elias are expecting a new baby to be born around next April 13<sup>th</sup>. This baby will be the second child born in the mission. Only God who is the author of life can bring new life in an environment as difficult as it looks like in the mission of Masaka.

#### Some of our Needs

Finally, and not less important, we wanted to share with you some aspects of our financial situation in the seminary. On June 28<sup>th</sup> as the contract of our tenancy was expiring, we met with the Fathers of the Blessed Sacrament of Kimaanya Parish located in Masaka. They are the Landlords of the property we rent. The meeting was planned to sign the new agreement on new terms of tenancy. Thanks to the help of professor Francis Bwengye an experienced and well-known lawyer who assisted us in the dealings of the meeting the contract agreement was successful. The final outcome was a new contract with an extension of 5 more years beginning on January 1<sup>st</sup> 2025. However, due to the fact that the demands in Uganda are increasing the new contract raises the payment of rent to 2000 euros monthly which sums up to a total amount of 24.000 euros per year. This amount supposes for us an increase of 14 percent in the total budget of expenses we plan for every financial year.

In addition, this year we desire to participate in the Jubilee of Youth that Pope Francis has convoked in Rome. This pilgrimage will suppose a substantial expense since we need to apply for visas for our seminarians as well as flight tickets to Italy. As you well know we rely entirely on the providence of God who has willed the existence of this seminary. We though it will be important to let you know about our needs as we ask for your prayers. My personal experience has been that in sharing with those who are in need God always gives back more than what you can give. We continuously pray for all of you friends and benefactors.

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Wishing you a blessed and joyful Christmas Season,  
in the spirit of this little baby who comes to save us all.



Fr. Santiago Martin  
The Rector



**If you want to help us:**

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