

Global news bulletin 11th February

Female church workers raped and killed in South Sudan



Refugees
who fled the
recent
violence in
South Sudan
and crossed

the border into Uganda carry their belongings as they await transportation from a transit centre in the town of Koboko to a nearby settlement in Arua District, in northern Uganda Monday, January 6, 2014

Scores of female church workers were massacred last month as they sought refuge at a church in the central South Sudanese town of Bor.

The women, several of whom were elderly, had fled rebel attacks to hide in the St Andrew's Episcopal Church compound, when rebels descended on them, raping several of them before shooting them at close range.

"The women were from different parishes in the diocese and had converged in the church compound when they were killed," the Anglican Bishop of Bor, Ruben Akurdit Ngong, told World Watch Monitor by telephone from Bor. "This is very painful. They destroyed most of the churches in the diocese, but God is with us."

Five of the women – Dorcas Abuol Bouny and Akut Mayem Yar, both 72, Tabitha Akuang, 60, and Mary Alek Akech and Martha Agok Mabior, both 70 – worked as pastors in the church. A prominent lay leader, Agel Mabior, 72, was also killed.

"They were all clergy. They all worked at the church. They did different jobs, [including] Bible reading," South Sudanese Anglican Archbishop Daniel Deng Bul told local reporters.

South Sudan has been in turmoil since December 15, when a dispute within the army sparked fierce fighting in the capital city, Juba. Fighting spread quickly across the country and soon took on an ethnic dimension after President Salva Kiir alleged that his former vice-president, Riek Machar, was planning a coup.

The fighting has pitted army forces loyal to President Kiir, who is a member of the Dinka tribe, against rebel forces aligned to Machar, a member of the Nuer tribe.

The Dinka tribe is the largest in South Sudan; the Nuer is the second largest and boasts a deadly tribal militia known as the 'White Army' because its fighters rub white ash, extracted from burnt cow dung, over their bodies.

The White Army's main role in the community historically has been to raid cattle and protect the community, but recently it has transformed into a militia used for political gain.

The White Army is suspected to have carried out the massacre of the women and more than 2,500 others in Bor, a largely Dinka town.

"I believe the White Army attacked and killed the women hiding in the church compound. It is very disturbing to know they were abused before being killed," Reverend Mark Akec-Cien, deputy general secretary of the South Sudan Council of Churches, told World Watch Monitor by telephone.

"I don't think they were killed because they are Christians. The militia had also attacked, looted and destroyed shops, businesses, homes and other churches."

Since the conflict erupted, several churches have been attacked and looted, and pastors harassed, according to Akec-Cien. In Malakal, in the north of the country, the St Francis Catholic Church compound was attacked and looted in

mid-January, and the priest robbed. The local Anglican and Evangelical churches were also looted.

The most affected areas are the north-eastern states of Jonglei, Unity and Upper Nile. Bor, the headquarters of Jonglei State, was totally destroyed, with houses, food stores, shops, banks and churches burnt down and looted, according to the Episcopal Church of Sudan.

The United Nations said on February 5 that up to 7 million people, nearly two thirds of the country's population, were at risk of some level of food insecurity, with 3.7 million facing emergency or acute levels. About 900,000 people have fled their homes since December.

Although the conflict is largely viewed in ethnic terms, church leaders have called for peace and reconciliation, and stressed that the roots of the crisis are political. Both the army and rebel forces have been accused of abuses.

Plight of Seafarers

The Mission to Seafarers has drawn attention once again to the cost to the dangers facing seafarers.

It highlighted the following newspaper report - World trade's dirty secret: abandoned ships

More sailors have been abandoned by their employers than taken hostage by Somali pirates, a controversial practice to avoid big expenses.

http://www.thestar.com/news/world/2014/02/02/world_trades_dirty_secret_abandoned_ships.html?utm_content=buffer16b47&utm_medium=social&utm_source=twitter.com&utm_campaign=buffer

Salvation Army whistleblower fired, royal commission told

Former house parent at boys' home says he was given 48 hours to leave after he reported extreme punishment

Guardian - A Salvation Army worker who blew the whistle on a manager meting out extreme punishment to boys in a Queensland home was fired, an

inquiry has been told.

Retired Salvation Army Major Clifford Randall told the royal commission into child sexual abuse that in 1975, while a house parent at Alkira, a boys' home at Indooroopilly in Queensland, he saw one boy's shoulder become dislocated during a beating.



Clifford Randall (right) and his wife, Marina, leave the royal commission.

The manager of the home, Captain John McIver, was whipping a 12-year-old boy with a strap, when the boy put his hand back and McIver broke a cufflink, Randall said.

"He went ballistic, McIver grabbed the boy and threw him up against the wall, bruising his face and dislocating his shoulder," Randall said on Monday.

Pope Francis on World Day of the Sick 2014

Tuesday 11 February, Feast of Our Lady of Lourdes, is the World Day of the Sick. The theme of this year's message from Pope Francis for the World Day of the Sick is: *Faith and Charity: "We Ought to Lay Down Our Lives for One Another"* (1 Jn 3:16). The full text of this year's message follows:

1. On the occasion of the Twenty-second World Day of the Sick, whose theme this year is *Faith and Charity: "We Ought to Lay Down Our Lives for One Another"* (1 Jn 3:16), I turn in a special way to the sick and all those who provide them with assistance and care. The Church recognizes in you, the sick, a special presence of the suffering Christ. It is true. At the side of – and indeed within – our suffering, is the suffering of Christ; he bears its burden with us and he reveals its meaning. When the Son of God mounted the cross, he destroyed the solitude of suffering and illuminated its darkness. We thus

World Day of the Sick 2014



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Message for World Day of the Sick 2014

find ourselves before the mystery of God’s love for us, which gives us hope and courage: hope, because in the plan of God’s love even the night of pain yields to the light of Easter, and courage, which enables us to confront every hardship in his company, in union with him.

2. The incarnate Son of God did not remove illness and suffering from human experience but by taking them upon himself he transformed them and gave them new meaning. New meaning because they no longer have the last word which, instead, is new and abundant life; transformed them, because in union with Christ they need no longer be negative but positive. Jesus is the way, and with his Spirit we can follow him. Just as the Father gave us the Son out of love, and the Son gave himself to us out of the same love, so we too can love others as God has loved us, giving our lives for one another. Faith in God becomes goodness, faith in the crucified Christ becomes the strength to love to the end, even our enemies. The proof of authentic faith in Christ is self-giving and the spreading of love for our neighbours, especially for those who do not merit it, for the suffering and for the marginalized.

3. By virtue of Baptism and Confirmation we are called to conform ourselves to Christ, who is the Good Samaritan for all who suffer. “We know love by this, that he laid down his life for us – and we ought to lay down our lives for one another” (1 Jn 3:16). When we draw near with tender love to those in

need of care, we bring hope and God's smile to the contradictions of the world. When generous devotion to others becomes the hallmark of our actions, we give way to the Heart of Christ and bask in its warmth, and thus contribute to the coming of God's Kingdom.

4. To grow in tender love, and a respectful and sensitive charity, we have a sure Christian model to contemplate: Mary, the Mother of Jesus and our Mother, who is always attentive to the voice of God and the needs and troubles of her children. Mary, impelled by God's mercy which took flesh within her, selflessly hastened from Galilee to Judea to find and help her kinswoman Elizabeth. She interceded with her Son at the wedding feast of Cana when she saw that there was a shortage of wine. She bore in her heart, throughout the pilgrimage of her life, the words of the elderly Simeon who foretold that a sword would pierce her soul, and with persevering strength she stood at the foot of the cross of Jesus. She knows the way, and for this reason she is the Mother of all of the sick and suffering. To her we can turn with confidence and filial devotion, certain that she will help us, support us and not abandon us. She is the Mother of the crucified and risen Christ: she stands beside our crosses and she accompanies us on the journey towards the resurrection and the fullness of life.

5. Saint John, the disciple who stood with Mary beneath the cross, brings us to the sources of faith and charity, to the heart of the God who "is love" (1 Jn 4:8,16). He reminds us that we cannot love God if we do not love our brothers and sisters. Those who stand with Mary beneath the cross learn to love as Jesus does. The cross is "the certainty of the faithful love which God has for us. A love so great that it enters into our sin and forgives it, enters into our suffering and gives us the strength to bear it. It is a love which enters into death to conquer it and to save us... the cross of Christ invites us also to allow ourselves to be smitten by his love, teaching us always to look upon others with mercy and tenderness, especially those who suffer, who are in need of help" ([*Way of the Cross with Young People*](#), Rio de Janeiro, 26 July 2013).

I entrust this Twenty-second World Day of the Sick to the intercession of Mary. I ask her to help the sick to bear their sufferings in fellowship with Jesus Christ and to support all those who care for them. To all the ill, and to all the health-care workers and volunteers who assist them, I cordially impart my Apostolic Blessing.

Ecumenical Patriarch says war and conflict not inevitable

War and violence are not inevitable and religious leaders can show another way, says Bartholomew, Ecumenical Orthodox Patriarch of Constantinople.

He was addressing the 17th Eurasian Economic Summit, speaking on behalf of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, a founding member of the World Council of Churches (WCC).

“As faith communities and religious leaders, we are obliged constantly to remind people about the obligation and responsibility to choose peace through dialogue,” emphasised the Patriarch.

The summit was held 4 to 6 February in Istanbul, Turkey by the Marmara Foundation.

“Human conflict may well be inevitable in our world; but war and violence are certainly not,” said Bartholomew. “If our age will be remembered at all,” he continued, “it may be remembered for those who dedicated themselves to the cause of peace”.

Speaking about interfaith dialogue, the Ecumenical Patriarch noted that “historical conflicts between Christians and Muslims normally have their roots in politics and not in religion itself.”

“Christians and Muslims have lived together, sharing the same geographical region, in the context of the Byzantine and the Ottoman Empires,” he pointed out.

These historical models, Bartholomew said, reveal “possibilities in our own world, which is shaped by pluralism and globalisation.”

“This is precisely why a dialogue, which acknowledges differences but also suggests ways to negotiate differences, may prove helpful to map out appropriate avenues of communication.”

“It is the only way of discovering the peace,” added the Ecumenical Patriarch.

* Speech by Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew at the 17th Eurasian Economic Summit in Istanbul: <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/Default.aspx?pageID=238&nID=62075>