

BANNABIKIRA SISTERS CELEBRATE
A HUNDRED YEARS
OF
SERVICE IN
RELIGIOUS LIFE

(A HISTORY OF THE CONGREGATION)

1910 -2010

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INTRODUCTION

A HUNDRED YEARS!

THANKS BE TO GOD!

PRAISE GOD!

People celebrate Jubilees for various reasons. The Daughters of Mary – Bannabikira Sisters Bwanda see it fit and appropriate to celebrate this Jubilee when their congregation marks a hundredth Anniversary of their foundation. The Lord has worked wonders by guiding, guarding and protecting this congregation for all these years.

This Jubilee is based on the Holy Word of God and His plan. We read from the book of Leviticus: (Lev. 25: 1, 8-12. The Lord said to Moses on Mount Sinai: “Speak to the Sons of Israel and say to them : “You will count seven weeks of seven times seven years, so that the seven cycles amount to forty-nine years. And on the tenth day of the seventh month you will sound the trumpet call; On the day of expiation you will sound the trumpet throughout the land. You will declare this fiftieth year to be sacred and proclaim the liberation of all the country’s inhabitants. You will keep this jubilee: each of you will return to his ancestral property, each to his own clan.”

This fiftieth year will be a jubilee year for you, in it you will not sow; you will not harvest the grain that has come up on its own, or in it gather grapes from your untrimmed vine. The jubilee will be a holy thing for you; during it you will eat whatever the fields produce.

The Israelites did as the Lord commanded them, and they celebrated the jubilees of the years that were the products of fifty; say a jubilee of a hundred years, of five hundred years, one thousand years or two thousand years. Gradually, the jubilees of twenty-five, seventy-five etc. came to be celebrated.

The Church took from that practice and started celebrating jubilees for the various years. She supports and encourages her children to celebrate the jubilees of people like married people etc; of places like parishes; of major events, for example: the Arrival of the first Missionaries in Uganda; the death of our Uganda Martyrs etc.

The Daughters of Mary are jubilant and over-joyed because of the marvelous things the Lord has done for them.

With all determination we venture to proclaim the year 2010 a JUBILEE

YEAR from every corner and especially from all the places where the Daughters of Mary serve, let one voice be unanimously raised to praise, glorify and exalt the Almighty, the all powerful God and sing to Him songs of gratitude.

There are many people who know the history of this congregation and the path it has trodden up to this day. However, there are many more people who still would like to know more about it. This book is intended to help them know those things in brief and to take it as a memorial of this jubilee. Whoever reads it will surely see how Jesus' word comes to fulfillment in this congregation. The smallest of all seeds has sprouted and grown to be so big and tall that even the birds of the air can come and rest among its branches (Mt. 13:31-32).

Our prayer is that let the Daughters of Mary in a special way, guided by the Theme of this jubilee which says,

“Rooted in Christ, We venture with Hope,”

be more zealous and committed to the service of God's people and His Church. Let this history of the Congregation be for them a lighted torch. Let them commit themselves daily to the following of Christ who called them to spread His word among the people of God, both young and old.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Committee that was entrusted with the work of writing and compiling notes about the history of the Congregation of the Daughters of Mary is very grateful and thankful to all the people who have assisted it to put this book in place.

First, we are grateful to our Superiors who have accompanied us in this work which they entrusted to us, looking for historical facts about this congregation; about the Founder - Archbishop Henry Streitcher and Mother Mechtilde, The Co-foundress and Formator.

We thank the Daughters of Mary Sisters whom we approached for consultation and for assistance in getting pictures that are in this book. We want to give very special thanks to our dear old Sisters in Sanatorium. These, because of their seniority in the congregation and the treasured experience they have, were for us the treasure house of Wisdom. Everything we wanted by way of information, we turned to them.

We turn to all the other leaders, who have also contributed to this book. We feel they have played a major role in this work. We have among them, Rev. Msgr. Dominic Katerega who so graciously accepted the work of correcting the book, and helped us in the arrangement of the material in this book. Thank you for your precious time.

We are also grateful to St. Joseph's Printery, Kitovu for the work of printing the book.

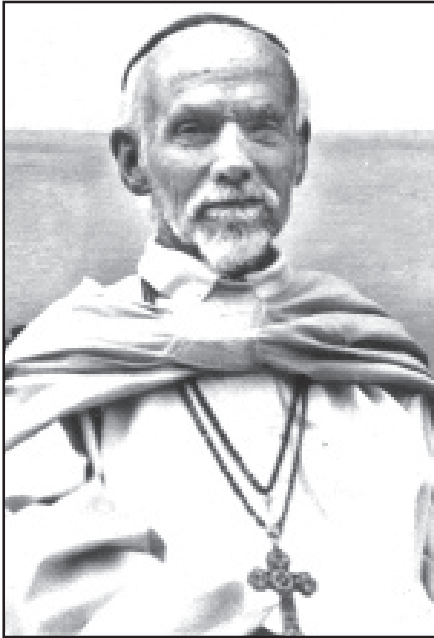
To all of you our helpers, we promise prayers, that the Lord may bless and keep you safe.

The Congregation of the Daughters of Mary is very happy and grateful, and with open hands welcomes all those people who have volunteered to become our Associates. The door is thrown open, come and let us together take God's News to the people!

CHAPTER ONE

THE FOUNDER AND FOUNDRESS OF THE CONGREGATION OF THE DAUGHTERS OF MARY SISTERS- BWANDA

This is a religious Congregation of Indigenous African Women, the first of its kind, in modern Africa south of the Sahara. The Holy Spirit inspired its founders to establish this Congregation at the right time and in the right place, where and when it was most urgently needed. Its founding date is 3rd - Dec. - 1910 in Uganda, East Africa.



Archbishop Henry Streicher (W.F.)
the founder.

"Overcome evil by doing good."

(His Court of ARM)



Mother Mechtilde (W.S.)
the co-foundress.

"God will continue His work among you even
when I am no longer with you"

(Her last Will, to the Daughters of Mary).

Throughout this book the names of Archbishop Henry Streicher (W.F.) and Mother Mechtilde will appear over and over again. This is not without reason. Archbishop Henry Streicher is the founder of the Congregation of the Daughters of Mary. This is the man God used, as his instrument, to carry out His plan of setting up the Congregation in question. As to Mother Mechtilde (W.S.) this is the co-foundress. This is the woman whose ability and capacity

formed the pioneer eleven girls, not only in virtues of Christianity, but also in religious life. Mother Mechtilde supported the congregation from its birth up to when it was able to bring forth competent members for effective leadership.

From the very beginning God prepared both Henry and Mechtilde for the special mission which he had in store for each. Although Henry and Mechtilde were from different countries and from different origins, each desired to be a missionary of Africa in Uganda, the land of Uganda Martyrs.

Behold, a great wonder, Bishop Streicher and mother Mechtilde did not only share the same inspiration of coming to Africa, to Uganda, as missionaries, but both found themselves united mind and soul in the task of founding an indigenous Congregation of African women for the evangelization of their own people.

THE CHARISM OF THE DAUGHTERS OF MARY

From the very beginning, when he was selecting candidates for membership to the Congregation of the Daughters of Mary, Archbishop Henry Streicher would carry out this task in a prayerful, total trusting spirit, with the aim of selecting candidates who had the capacity of teaching Catechism and aiming at candidates who were able to perform well the household duties.

The founder was intent on the above qualifications because these qualifications are the necessary materials for maintaining the spirit of “Motherhood”, which is the charism of the Daughters of Mary, and therefore as requirement for each candidate.

On this point the founder himself has the following to say; “I would like to start for our “lambs” a congregation of indigenous women who would work tirelessly for the salvation of souls with a motherly spirit.”

That spirit of a motherly heart is the charism of the Daughters of Mary. It is a foundational basis on which the founder built the Congregation.

The church herself highly regards this charism. In the document that raised the Congregation to the Pontifical Right, the church announces:-

“... taking as a model, the Blessed Virgin Mary and generously dedicating themselves to proclaiming Christ to the world with maternal love.” Cf

- Decretum Laudis

Moreover, at this time of ours, we have the words of his Holiness Pope

John Paul II of living memory. In his address to various religious institutes of women he says:-

“As a bishop of Rome, I beg you to be spiritual mothers and sisters for all the people. Be mothers for everyone without exception, but especially for the sick, the suffering, the abandoned, the children, the young families, in difficult situations. Go out towards them. Do not wait for them to come to you.” (cf. Pope John Paul II to Religious Women, p.11)

Here the charism of the Daughters of Mary is articulated, brought to the fore front and is very well elaborated.

We feel greatly encouraged by His Holiness’ message proclaiming that Religious women must be mothers to all peoples without exception: the sick, the suffering, small children, the youth and the elderly. So, it is among those categories of people that the Daughters of Mary carry out their apostolate of catechizing especially small children, teaching the youths in schools, nursing the sick and the suffering in hospitals and general clinics, raising people’s standards of living in social development, caring for the abandoned in schools of the deaf, the hand-capped and counseling the down cast.

The very constitutions by which the Daughters of Mary abide strongly exhort them all to perform their apostolate with and in the spirit of motherhood.

The Directory to their Constitutions reads as follows:

- (i) “When dealing with children, she (the Daughter of Mary) is to be gentle, thereby manifesting the spirit of motherly concern, taking Mary, the Mother of Jesus, as her model. (cf. Directory p.2 # C (iv))
- (ii) The Sister-nurse carries out her apostolate in the spirit of self giving with maternal love and care, (Ibid p.3 # 3a).

But too many challenges:

It is always said that every generation is marked by its uniqueness. The present generation, as never before, stands out in its challenges against the spirit of motherhood, hence challenges the charism of the Daughters of Mary.

The following are some of the notorious deeds which are witnessed today that mark the child and child-to-parent relationship:-

- (i) Parents murder their own children offering them as “sacrifices” to get money.
 - (ii) Parents torture their children; say by tying them with ropes on a bedstand leaving them in this state without food or drink, without a
-

blanket or any piece of clothes, the child eventually dies after a good number of days.

- (iii) Some parents burn their children's fingers or even arms simply because a child may happen to have stolen 100/- from a mother or father, so the punishment cripples or maims the child for life.
- (iv) At times parents prefer to spend every penny on drinking and therefore have no where withal for the child's school fees.
- (v) Stealing, murdering, robbing, indecent and immodest dressing, fighting and quarrelling have become acute vices deeply rooted not only in the adults of today but also in the youths and children. Cases have been reported here and there, where a small child of five, for example, has killed his father using a gun.
- (vi) Moreover, another phenomenon that marks our day concerning young people is the large number of street children that are found especially in our big cities.

Those are some of the cases, between parents and children, which challenge the Daughters of Mary in their charism of motherhood.

PRAYER AND SPIRITUALITY

In these many challenges the Daughter of Mary turn to God the Almighty who called them to religious life. Here, the spirituality of the Daughters of Mary is finding God in every action, every situation and every circumstance.

Therefore, in every action she undertakes in her apostolate, in every situation she finds herself, and in every circumstance, the Daughter of Mary seeks to discover and see the hand of God, the love of God, His generosity, His mercy, His might, His providence, His Holiness, and His goodness. In doing so and while deeply rooted in Christ, the Daughter of Mary lives the spirit of motherhood. She is therefore, a mother, right where she is and in whatever activity she might be involved.

She is a mother where there is a need.

She is a mother in whom love prevails.

She is a mother in her kindness to all.

She is a mother of mercy to all.

She is a mother who stands her ground when it is necessary.

She is a mother who anticipates the needs of the children.

She is a mother who trains and educates a child.

This is the Daughter of Mary, a woman in whom prayer and apostolate, prayer and action are not simply combined or put together, but integrated.

HIS LORDSHIP ARCHBISHOP HENRY STREICHER

Henry Streicher was born in Alsace in the town of Wasselonne, (France) in the year 1863, July 29, and was named Henry. His father's name was Jacques Streicher. He was a policeman and a very good Catholic; faithful and straightforward in living his religion. Henry's mother was called Ann Mary Hiebel. She too was a very good Catholic, extraordinarily faithful in her vocation as a mother and a house wife.

Jacques and Ann Mary had eight (8) children of whom four (4) died as infants. The eldest of the four survivors was called Mary, who became a religious in the Congregation of the Sisters of Nevis; there Mary met Bernadette Soubirous, (a future St. Bernadette Soubirous). In the congregation Mary was given the name of Hellen. The three remaining children of Jacques and Ann Mary, were boys. One of them called Joseph became a priest, another boy entered the army; and the third boy was Henry Streicher. As of this Henry, there developed a special bond between himself and his mother from his earliest days. That bond was reinforced by the fact that Henry became a sickly child from his infancy and therefore needed special care.

As a mother, Ann Mary took seriously the responsibility of raising a good family. At times she would read the Sacred Scripture to her children; she would also read to them the lives of the saints, as well as the News of missionaries' activities and life situations sent home through the Newspapers. She was always careful to interpret and explain to her children what she was reading as much as their mind could retain.

One day Ann Mary read to her children the life of St. Herman Joseph who was a mere child but who died a martyr in the mission land, for love of God and his people. Hearing this, Henry Streicher was deeply touched. He found deep inspiration from Herman's story and from then on became determined to enter the Society of the Missionaries of Africa (White Fathers) in order to evangelize the people and even die a martyr, yet he was then only six (6) years of age.

After his primary education, Henry entered the minor seminary of Pignelin which was a diocesan seminary. On graduating, Henry came out first in vernacular Exams, and was second in Latin. The staff as well as fellow

students all praised Henry for good manners and politeness.

HENRY STREICHER ENTERS A MAJOR SEMINARY

Henry graduated from the Minor Seminary of Pignelin in 1882. Completing a Minor Seminary meant, for the individual concerned, reflecting and meditating deeply on the seriousness of the choice he was about to make. A choice, not simply of becoming a priest, but a missionary, with all that the term “missionary” entails. It meant making a mature deliberation concerning that part of the world one is daring to spend one’s whole life as a missionary. But as for Henry he had already made up his mind to become a missionary of Africa and in Africa. He had already informed his parents of that decision of his and they had agreed with him. Consequently, Henry asked to enter the Seminary of the Society of the Missionaries of Africa (the White Fathers).

The Bishop in charge of Pignelin Seminary wanted to keep Henry to himself. He tactfully talked Henry into joining the Major Seminary of Pignelin at least for one year while considering his choice. The Bishop was hoping that within a year Henry might change his mind. He, therefore, refused totally to listen to Henry’s pleadings and would not dismiss him. Eventually, Henry had to agree to the Bishop’s demands, and he entered the Major Seminary of the Diocese of Nevis, taking this as God’s will for him; it was October 1882.

The staff at Nevis Major Seminary found Henry, a good promising student, just as the staff at Pignelin Minor Seminary did. At the end of the year the staff unanimously proclaimed Henry as “OPTIME” (very good in all things). With this reinforcement the Bishop of Nevis Major Seminary wanted the more to keep Henry, and the former went ahead to perform the rite of conferring tonsure to Henry which rite denoted that Henry was admitted as a candidate for orders to priesthood. So the Bishop sent Henry to teach in the Minor Seminary, the year was 1883.

HENRY ENTERS THE SOCIETY OF THE MISSIONARIES OF THE WHITE FATHERS

In 1884 Henry Streicher went back to the Bishop begging for permission to be allowed to enter the Society of the White Fathers known as Missionaries for Africa. The Bishop brought in an official doctor to examine Henry. The doctor’s conclusion was simply that Bishop should let Henry go to Africa since this is his burning desire because even if he retained him the latter would be of no use since he was diagnosed with T.B. With that, the Bishop allowed Henry to enter the Society as he desired. In his future life, Henry often

referred to this incident jokingly saying, “On my entry into the Missionary Society, the doctor gave me only two years to live but now look I have been a missionary for years.” Notice that Henry came to Africa in 1891 and was given only 2 years to live, as noted above, but he died at the age of 89 in 1952 having spent 61 years as a Missionary in Africa. This shows that his sickness upon which he was allowed to come to Africa was providential by which God fulfilled his plan.

THE LIFE OF MOTHER MECHTILDE CO-FOUNDRESS OF THE CONGREGATION OF THE DAUGHTERS OF MARY

The father of Mother Mechtilde was called John Verkley and her mother was called Mrs. Verkley, both natives of Holland in a town known as Haserwouder in Leyde. The family was blessed with 7 children. Mother Mechtilde was born on 6th February 1875, and was given the name of Catherine. The family was strong, steadfast and self-supportive, in which joy and love prevailed.

But it was in 1882 that the mother, Mrs. Verkley, died. Fortunately, the elder daughter, Jane, bore the responsibility of a mother, caring for each member in everything a mother would do for her child.

At the age of eleven (11) Catherine was allowed to receive her first Communion; it was on the 3rd of June, 1886, the Ascension Day and the day on which the Uganda Martyrs were executed at Namugongo. To Catherine this fact of the coincidence of the day of her first Holy Communion with the day of the death of the Uganda Martyrs, was a very significant event to which she would always refer with joy. For her studies, she was taken to the College ran by the Ursularians at Woerden. Here Catherine found her siblings who had preceded her. In her studies she was very good because she had mastered some of the doctrinal materials while at home. The sisters were pleased with her because she was gentle, kind to all, hard working and obedient.

With such aptitudes, Catherine was looked upon, by the sisters, as a treasure. They never wanted her to leave them after her college studies. Their aim was to train her to teach in their schools. But for Catherine her goal was to enter a congregation of missionaries. She had already read some of the pamphlets sent by the missionaries of the Society of the White Fathers, which spoke of the Uganda Martyrs and their extraordinary bravery and courage.

This information made Catherine “burn” the more with the fire of going to Africa for more evangelization. But when Catherine informed family

members of her burning desire to go to Africa, they strongly resisted the idea saying: “Going to Africa? That land where murder is an everyday experience, do you also want to join the dead?”

By then, news had been spread of the killing of the two priests in Burundi, namely Rev. Fr. Deniaud and Rev. Fr. Pengier, murdered on May 4, 1881. Still, during that same year, on 21st December, three missionaries had been murdered in the Sahara desert, namely Rev. Fr. Richard, Rev. Fr. Morat and Rev. Fr. Polplard. All that shocking news made Catherine’s family members more furious seeing that she was insisting on going to Africa. In her turn, Catherine paid no attention to this news; her only desire was going to Africa as a missionary. Eventually, her family members dismissed her saying, “Go now and think of what you are about to do. We give you two years for reflection, after which we shall meet again and talk about this same topic.”

But God Himself, who had planted into Catherine’s heart, a seed of missionary service, did not withdraw this favour from her; as she went on pondering her call she proclaimed, “My decision to go to Africa is not from a desire to show off and to receive praise from people. No! My aim is to dedicate myself totally to God in a Religious Congregation which will enable me to do so.”

At that time the White Sisters had already established a house, in Holland, which was meant for the preparation of the girls aspiring to enter the White Sisters’ Congregation. This house was in Vuyht town some thirteen miles from Catherine’s home, so she decided to pay a visit to the White Sisters in that house. Then Catherine related her whole story to the Superior of the Community. In her response, the Superior said, “Up to now we have not yet sent any one of our Sisters on mission in foreign lands, or in central Africa, yet I know sisters are badly needed there. But if your family members want you to wait for a span of two years, fine no problem; indeed, for a girl to venture to go to Africa, she must be a mature woman in physical and spiritual matters, because things over there are not as easy as things over here in Holland.” This was the year 1893. Catherine returned home full of joy. She joined her step-mother, (her father had remarried), and together ran the family tasks, peacefully, since the step mother too, was a co-operative woman. The two years agreed upon between Catherine and her family members (as explained above), had lapsed, by 1894.

So, Catherine faced her parents to ask for permission to join the White Sisters. This time they all agreed and allowed Catherine to go and begin the process of initial formation as a postulate of the White Sisters. The parents provided all the materials required for this stage of formation.

CHAPTER TWO

BISHOP STREICHER'S JOURNEY BACK TO UGANDA WITH TEN PRIESTS, ONE BROTHER AND SIX WHITE SISTERS

While Archbishop Henry Streicher and companions instructed men, women and children and converted them to Christianity through a set course of about a year, the Catechumens had to live in a collective community at each of the very few mission posts of that time, children did not fit in and bishop Streicher was very concerned about the situation! He then expressed a desire for a group of volunteer women, who, with a motherly heart, would take care of both the spiritual and the physical needs of the children. That is, teach them alone, feed them and treat their sicknesses. When the work became harder, bishop Streicher went to North Africa and asked for helpers. He came back with six priests and six white Sisters including sister Mechtilde.

On his return, with the group listed above, Archbishop Henry Streicher followed the same route which he took on his first journey to Uganda. On June 28th 1899 they all arrived in Zanzibar. Here they found the sisters of the Congregation of St. Joseph who took care of them for the whole week they spent here waiting for the ferry run by the Arabs to take them to the main land. They arrived at Bagamoyo (Tanganyika) stayed for a few days preparing for their long journey to Uganda which took them three months. It was a journey full of haphazard and risky. There was going through thick dense equatorial forests, crossing fast flowing streams, and following only animal trodden paths. They had no clean water and ate very little food.

At times, a member would prove too weak to continue walking, then this one would be carried on a donkey (on which Bishop Streicher would at times be riding) and the Bishop then, would walk. Sister Mechtilde was one of those who got seriously sick and was to be carried on a donkey.

In brief, the group was exposed to unfamiliar, harsh, equatorial climate with its fierce hot sun, its heavy merciless down pour, its cold, thick, morning mists etc. This was the experience of the group for three months. Yes their love for God proved to be unconquerable. After six weeks of journeying, the group arrived at Ndala in Tanganyika, a White Father's House. Here the group rested for a while. Sister Mechtilde speaks of Bishop Streicher's spirit of love and service; she said that Henry Streicher was kind, compassionate

and caring for all the people without exceptions. He was like a parent to all. He was always the last of the group to make sure that everyone's need is served and that no member is left behind.

Another stopping place was Bukumbi (Tanganyika) where Bishop Hirth used to stay. It was here that Bishop Streicher on his way to Europe, had left four Baganda women with the intention of enabling them to prepare and equip themselves with the basic cultural common behaviour which the white sisters would need to exchange with the local people of their destination. These four women were:

Natalia Namutidde (who later became a sister named Sr. Anna), Maria Kufaamaaso, Virgin and Merania

So when the group of White Sisters arrived to Bukumbi, the above mentioned Baganda women were well prepared to initiate them into the local behavior.

THE GROUP ARRIVES IN BUGANDA

On October 18, 1899 the White Sisters arrived in Buganda. They stayed at Kisubi for a short while and proceeded to Lubaga. On that day a large number of the faithful had gathered to welcome their Bishop and those who came with him. At around 1:00 p.m. there was a signal that the Bishop was arriving.

People lined up the road to Lubaga Church. They welcomed the Bishop and those he had come with, by clapping of hands, with shouts of joy, and loving embraces. The visitors were impressed by the joyfulness, the welcoming gestures, and the respectful friendliness of the local people.

Then all the people moved to the Church, here the Blessed Sacrament was exposed for adoration and profound thanksgiving for the safe arrival of the group. In particular, people were attracted to the White Sisters. People here had never seen Religious White Women, this was something new. People looked intently at them and saw that the Sisters were happy, joyful and kind. The Sisters' White, long attire evoked profound respect from the Baganda. One of the questions the Baganda had to ask these Sisters was the meaning of the term "Virgins" (Ababiikira) by which the White Sisters were referred to. Later on, the answer to the question was given as "Women who are consecrated to God, and are not to Marry." People wondered the more, here were these healthy, happy, kind and joyful women, who had left their home to come to us, to Africa; and to crown it all, they were not to marry, for they were consecrated to God!

The White Sisters won the local People's Admiration. The latter desired to talk to the former; the language barrier which at first was proving a problem was gradually overcome. The White Sisters, in their turn, admired and loved the local people's attire, particularly women and girls who wore their back-clothes in full length down to the ankle.



The first White Sisters to come to Uganda:
Standing from left: Sr. Restituta, Mother Mechtilde and Sr. Speranza. Seated from left: Sr Joackim, Sr Santa Foi and Sr. Dorothea

THE HARD BEGINNING

At first the White Sisters encountered many problems in an effort to settle. Foods like bread, meat, milk, sugar, etc, which are essential to the White people, were not available. Moreover no one would think of giving chicken and eggs to the White Sisters since by practice at that time, it was a taboo for women to eat chicken and eggs. The soap they used for washing was the locally made type.

There was no such a thing as going for shopping since there were no shops. Yet, in spite of such problems, the White Sisters' attention was drawn to the problem of the local people's health. Cooperating with the local people, the Sisters took the initiative to identify a number of local trees, shrubs and herbs which proved to be medicinal for treating local sicknesses.

Many people came to visit the Sisters. Many became their friends including the great chiefs: Stanislaus Mugwanya, Apolo Kaggwa, (the chancellor) etc. Gradually the White Sisters, in their turn started visiting people in their homes from house to house.

THE WHITE SISTERS SETTLE AND BEGIN THEIR APOSTOLATE

When the White Sisters arrived in Uganda (Buganda), it was a very joyful and admirable occasion for the local people, because they had become familiar with the White Fathers and were working with them, but they had never seen religious white women. The former observed the latter very closely and scrutinizingly. Gradually the White Sisters and the local people came to know each other, came closer and began working together.



On arriving at Lubaga, the White Sisters met a group of women and girls trained by the White Fathers for catechizing both in words and actions. They were hardworking and committed to their work. On the other hand, these women and girls received the White Sisters joyfully and introduced them to the simple practices and the ordinary casual behaviour of the natives, as well as the local language. On the other hand the White Sisters were like an open book to these women and girls. From this open book the local people began to read and learn about religious life. They saw the kindness, the joy, the peace, the openness and the good relationships of the White Sisters, among themselves and with other people. But the local people had some questions to put before the White Sisters as time went on. Some of the questions posed by the natives were:

“Dear Sisters, it is rather sometime since you left home, do not you think that your husbands and your children are missing you and are wondering as to when you will go back?”

To which the White Sisters would give answer, “Dear friends, we people have no husbands, we have only Jesus Christ; and as to children, you are the only children we have. We are here to stay and we will never go back.”

In working with the White Sisters girls would pose many questions and the sisters would use that opportunity to instruct and to teach them. Those taught, in their turn, would pass the “good news”, to their friends who would reflect and meditate more on the “good news” received.

Gradually the girls began to ask the White Sisters as to whether their state of life (Religious Life), was only for them white women, or was it possible for black women as well. To which the answer would be given as follows:

“God does not discriminate among peoples or among nations. You too can enter Religious life, if God calls.”

Thus enlightened, the girls began to look into their lives, looking for some indications which God might be using to call individuals. Some of those girls came to “hear” clearly God’s call into Religious life. As their desire continued they presented themselves before Bishop Streicher saying,

“Your Lordship, we too would like to be like our “mothers”. (White Sisters); We have talked to them and they said it is possible”.

For Bishop Streicher, this was a clear answer to his constant prayer, which prayer? Well, Bishop Streicher himself said that his daily prayer was asking God to enable an existence of a congregation of indigenous Religious women for the sake of his apostolate.

The fact that it was the girls themselves who initiated the expression of their call to Religious life was a very good start for the Bishop. Confident that he would not sound as if interfering with the girls’ future life, he approached the chiefs in the area to tell them of their daughters’ desire making sure that they understood it and it was not him who was persuading them to become religious. The girls themselves would speak up to their parents, relatives and even to future “suitors” that they had decided to dedicate themselves to God.

Chief Stanislaus Mugwanya, a well known practicing Catholic was a great friend of Bishop Streicher. One day the latter approached the former in consultation. *“It seems to me,”* he said, *“that God may be pleased to call some of your children to Religious life. We are planning to take the first steps to Religious life with some of your girls who have spent a considerable time with us.”*

To this information, chief Stanislaus Mugwanya replied and said, *“My Lord Bishop, thank you very much for informing me of the idea, but as for me, let me tell you; you can easily tame a wolf and change it into a sheep; or you*

can tame a lion to the point of making it come to you at the signal obediently lying down before you like a dog before its master; you can do all of that, impossible as it seems; but you will never succeed to make our boys here not to take wives to themselves, nor our girls not to take husbands. I know my people; do not waste your time and your energy in an effort to make religious men and women out of our girls and boys.”

To these challenging statements the Bishop replied *“What is impossible with men is possible with God; there is nothing God cannot do if He wills. He can easily call religious and priests from among your own sons and daughters.”*

This exchange of ideas and views was a friendly talk, and the two characters, i.e. his Lordship Bishop Henry Streicher and Chief Stanslaus Mugwanya, parted as friends, smiling. But since the Bishop kept coming back to the topic, Chief Mugwanya eventually told him (the Bishop) to try his luck saying,

“Let us try and see what happens. I too give you my daughter called Angela Kyabalongo, to be one of the first girls to train as religious.”

This Angela Kyabalongo was already longing for joining the girls working with the White Sisters; so when her father told her that she was to go and work with the White Sisters, it was very good news for her and she could hardly wait for the day.

Eventually Angela joined the group of girls and women who were working with the White Sisters. They were working, they were serving and they were learning. The job for which each one was assigned became an occasion for inspiration, teaching and learning. The White Sisters working with the girl would use that opportunity to impart more knowledge, to train and to instruct the girl in that particular job / apostolate. Hence, the girls’ levels of catechizing, of nursing, of caring for the little ones and of raising peoples’ standard of living were greatly raised.

It was not until after eight (8) years since the White Sister had started working with the girls, that Bishop Streicher began to select from among them some with whom he might start the first steps towards Religious Life. Many as they were, only eleven (11) were selected. They were put into the care of Sister Mechtilde, the White Sister, who was to train them into the ways of the life they were aspiring for.

THE BEGINNING OF THE CONGREGATION OF THE DAUGHTERS OF MARY

One day, Angela Kyabalongo (who became Sr. Restetuta), and Anna Kirivaamuuki (who became Sr. Aloyzia), approached Bishop Streicher and said to him, “Bishop, we too, would liken to become like these “Mothers”, the White Sisters. We have already talked to them about this matter and they said it is possible for us to become like them.

The Bishop looked at them with compassion, knowing that the two girls were sincere in their request on the one hand, and yet, on the other hand, knowing that they had to go through a long period of probation. Then, looking at Anna the Bishop said, “Yes, with you there is a possibility, but with Angela I doubt, because being a daughter of a great chief, Angela you are not used to serving but to being served. Yours has been an easy life which knows no scarcity and lacking nothing. Therefore I doubt whether you will be able to live a Religious Life.” (Yet it was this same Angela who, on becoming a religious, took the name of Restetuta, and lived as a Daughter of Mary for 78 years).

On hearing that the Bishop did not hope that Angela could make it into a religious life, she was greatly disturbed. In tears, she ran to Sr. Restetuta, the White Sister, and narrated the whole story of what the Bishop had said. In response, Sr. Restetuta assured and encouraged Angela, saying, “Do not worry, Angela, coming from a well-to-do family does not hinder you from becoming a religious, so long as you are determined. I myself, come from a rich family, and I faced similar problems but the God who helped me overcome these hindrances will also help you. Sr. Restetuta advised Angela to put her trust in Mary the mother of Jesus, for guidance and encouragement.

Many other girls made known to Bishop their desire to enter religious life. On this point we read as follows from the White Sisters’ Journals. “Everyday large number of girls keep asking to allow them to enter religious life. The Bishop is acting with great precautions. Women come to congratulate us for our having made it up to religious life.”

At that time, the Bishop began to realize that the Lord is gradually responding to his prayer which he daily offered asking God to assist him establish a congregation of local native women to foster the apostolate of Evangelization.

Before going ahead, Bishop Streicher saw that this matter of founding a congregation of native women, necessitated talking it over with the chiefs and the elderly in the nation, to ask for their advice. He also took the initiative to meet people in groups, in order to explain to them slowly and consistently,

the meaning of religious consecration to God, a state of life which the Lord was preparing to bestow on their daughters. As an example he referred to the White Sisters whose parents gave them up to belong to Jesus alone, determined never to marry. These words sank deep into Mugwanya's heart and he related them afresh to his daughters, praising such a state of life. On learning that his father spoke well of religious life, Angela shouted with jubilation, "I like to be one of those girls".

Many women and girls continued to work zealously for the benefit of their spiritual growth and human development. On their determination and purposefulness depended selection for future candidates to start the initial formation in training for religious life

But Bishop Streicher was not to be harried in this matter, because for the candidates who manifested aptitude toward religious life, he would send to different parishes on probation, for a number of years at times as many as 8 years. The probation period would be a time for intensive catechizing, caring for the sick and educating the young. The candidates worked closely with the priests in the parishes. This practice formed a deep foundation base, among these candidates on which basic principles of religious life were established.

MOTHER MECHTILDE BEGINS THE FORMATION OF THE DAUGHTERS OF MARY

Bishop Streicher decided to select about 20 candidates with whom to start the formation of the Daughters of Mary congregation. He was happy when Mother Mechtilde was sent back to Villa Maria and he told her of his plan to start a congregation with twenty candidates and mother Mechtilde herself as their formator. In response Mother Mechtilde said that the number of candidates is too big for a new beginning and for her to handle into religious women. When the Bishop suggested the number as twelve, mother Mechtilde answered "The Apostles of Jesus were twelve in number and one of them turned a traitor, wouldn't it be much better if they were eleven?" Then both settled for eleven to be the desired number of the candidates. In selecting the candidates the following points would be aimed at as requirements from each candidate; good conduct, intellectual capacity, determination, love of God and love of others.

It was in 1908 that the following eleven candidates were called to start the initial formation for religious life.

Name	County of birth	Probation period
1. Virgin Yatuwaamaanyi	Kyaddondo	Lubaga Parish
2. Monica Gwaliwokukkiriza	Buddu	Ggayaza Parish
3. Anna Kirivaamuuki	Kyaddondo	Lubaga Parish
4. Agatha Simanyibwendiba Namirembe	Mawokota	Bukuumi Parish
5. Angela Kyabalongo	Kyaddondo	Lubaga Parish
6. Teresa Musubika	Kyaddondo	Lubaga Parish
7. Cecilia Ggwaliweemirembe	Busiro	Bujuni Parish
8. Monica Gwebuyiira	Buddu	Villa Maria Parish
9. Estella Bazaalamubiri	Buddu	Bukalagi Parish
10. Dalia Nampa	Buleemezi	Bujuni Parish
11. Teresa Tulinoomubeezi	Bulemeezi	Villa Maria Parish

With joy and in excitement, every candidate on receiving the good news, quickly packed up her belongings and came directly to Villa Maria where she would find both Bishop Streicher and mother Mechtilde, waiting for her.

THE FIRST POSTULATE

Since the building for the formation of the candidates was not yet finished, Bishop Streicher asked the Villa Maria white sisters for a part of their building to be temporarily used as a postulancy until the finishing of the designated house. So the first postulancy of the Daughters of Mary began in Villa Maria parish at the White Sisters' House which was called St. Marie. The Formation staff included;

1. Mother Mechtilde (Novice mistress)
2. Sister Dorothy (Assistant Novice mistress)
3. Sister Estella (Bursar)

Mother Mechtilde was born a leader in whom the two qualities of kindness and steadfastness blended to make her the desirable formator. She was a woman of much prudence whose actions spoke louder than words. The candidates therefore, she was forming got the best out of it. They recognized their responsibility as foundational basis on which future candidates for membership in the congregation would depend. If they proved themselves mature, responsible women, then many more would be recruited, but if they failed then the founding of the congregation would perhaps remain a dream.

When the house Archbishop Streicher was preparing for them was ready, he moved the postulants from Saint Marie the White Sisters' house to St. Leo House. It was on 21st November 1908, the day on which the Novitiate was opened. Up to then, the postulants were still wearing the native attire of bark cloth.



Postulants in bark cloth. (1913)

THE NOVICES RECEIVE A HABIT

It was the 20th March 1910 when the 11 Novices for the first time, put on a habit (of clothes) leaving behind their bark clothes.

The habit was a long dress trimmed out of the dark-blue material with a large belt and a cape of the same colour.

THE FIRST PROMISES

The first eleven Novices proved themselves mature and determined to move to the level of first promises in religious life. On the 6th of September 1910 a proclamation from Bishop Streicher announcing that all of them had been accepted to make their first promises arrived. In jubilation and rejoicing, the eleven novices gave thanks and praised God for having chosen them for the religious state of life.

The 3rd December 1910, was the day chosen for the Novices to make their promises in Villa Maria parish. On that day hundreds and hundreds of people came from different parts of the area, men and women, priests, relatives, friends, people from near and far, dignitaries of different levels to say nothing

of the young people who, at one time or another passed through the hands of any of the eleven Novices.



The Pioneer sisters in the congregation with the white sisters

Of the degenatories, the most happy was Stanislaus Mugwanya and his wife Mary Nampiima because their own daughter Angela Kyabalongo

(Sr. Restatuta) had been called to live in the house of God together with her cousin Anna Kirivaamuki (Sr. Aloyizia). The main celebrant at the liturgy was Bishop Streicher himself. He was joyful and wore an approving smile throughout the ceremony. At the end of the homily, Mother Mechtilde presented the eleven Novices to the Bishop, their founder to profess their promises. The following is the formula of the promises each Novice pronounced.

“I (name).....”

In your presence my Lord Bishop, and before you my Superiors and in the presence of all members present, I solemnly promise to observe Religious virginity and to obey the Bishop in all his commands concerning the constitutions of the state of life which I have freely chosen to follow.

This promise is valid up to twelve months”

Note that the Novices did not change their names but they kept both their Baptismal and surnames. At the end of the ceremony, Bishop Streicher announced that the title “Maama” is to be pre-fixed to each name; so, for example Angela Kyabalongo would be addressed as “Maama Angela Kyabalongo”, there by indicating the charism of the new born congregation of the Daughters of Mary “The Motherhood of Mary”.

THE POSTING OF THE NEWLY PROFESSED

Maama Virgin Yaatuwamaanyi
Maama Agatha Simanyibwendiba
Maama Teresa Musubika



Narozaali Convent

Maama Monica Gwaliwookukkiriza	}	Mitala Maria Convent
Maama Monica Gwebuyiira		
Maama Estella Bazaalamubiri		

Maama Teresa Tulinoomubeezi	}	Nandere Convent
Maama Angela Kyabalongo		
Maama Anna Kirivaamuuki		

Maama Dalia Nampa	St. Leo Novitiate to work
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Maama Cecilia Gwaliwemirembe with the White Sisters in forming the Novices.

THE THREE YEAR PROMISES

By the year 1915, there were 44 members of the Daughters of Mary and they occupied 12 convents. That year the first eleven members were allowed to renew their promises for three years. The same year had 14 Novices due to make their first promises. The annual retreat of that year was given by Rev. Fr. Van Wees who was the Chaplain at the time. Archbishop Streitcher would also come and give a conference to the retreatants. In his talks the Bishop emphasized two very important points namely; Constant continued prayer (in ones inner soul) and zeal for souls. At the end of the retreat three more convents were opened namely; Naddangira in Busiro County, Kahora (Hoima) in Bunyoro and Nyamitanga (Mbarara) in Ankole.

CHAPTER THREE

THE SHIFTING OF THE FOUNDATION HOUSE

SAINT MARY

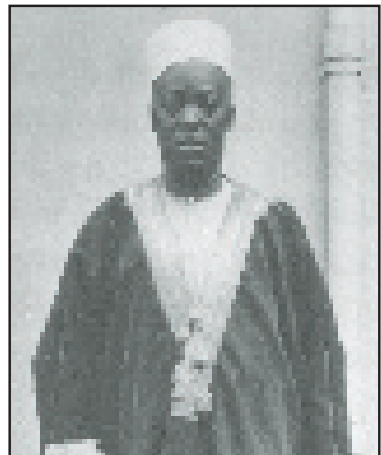
The first foundation house (Novitiate) for the formation of the Daughters of Mary was called St. Mary. It was part of the house of the White Sisters, Villa Maria convent. Archbishop Streicher negotiated with the White Sisters to release part of their house for the use of the formation of the first Novices of the Daughters of Mary while their proper formation house was being prepared.

SAINT LEO

Archbishop Streicher was still looking for means of raising a house in an independent place for the formation of his Novices. Having found a free piece of land near Villa Maria Parish he asked Bishop Leo Livinhac for the financial assistance necessary to build a Novitiate. On receiving the desired financial assistance, Archbishop Streicher elected an independent Novitiate House and he named it St. Leo in honour of Bishop Leo Livinhac, the founder of the white fathers and benefactor of the noviciate. Then the Novitiate moved from St. Mary's house to St. Leo. It was the formation House of the Daughters of Mary Novices for eleven (11) years.

By the year 1920, the number of the Daughters of Mary had increased to beyond that which St. Leo could accommodate. So once again Bishop Streicher had to think as to what to do. This time he was determined to build a Motherhouse for the Daughter of Mary on a large piece of land, safe and not far from him. On looking around he saw that the stretch of the land across known as "Mukunyu" had all the desired qualities for a Motherhouse. The land belonged to a Ssaza chief called Alex Ssebbowa. After discussing this matter with Mother Mechtilde, Bishop Streicher approached Alex Ssebbowa, the chief in question, and presented to him his plan.

On hearing the Bishop's request, Alex Ssebbowa responded even more generously than the Bishop's request, by granting him a land larger than he (the Bishop) had ventured



to ask for. With the following words on his lips. “For the betterment and advancement of God’s mission, I will move from this land and establish myself elsewhere” Alex left Mukunyu land and settled at Kijjomanyi, the land across.

THE BUILDING OF BWANDA MOTHER HOUSE

The work of building Bwanda Motherhouse involved many people, namely;

- The trained white fathers, Brothers and White sisters among whom were Brother Sylvetri, and Rev. Fr. Verdrines and the White Sisters.
- The Daughters of Mary, their Novices and a number of workmen took up land clearing.
- Much of the heavy work, including lifting heavy weights, chopping down big, hard trees, making bricks and tiles, breaking up hard rocks etc., all of which are today, handled by machinery with the help of electricity was done manually. So the number of workers increased; some were making bricks, others chopped them in pieces of equal sizes; wood and timbers from a distance necessitated carrying on heads, or pulling along with the help of ropes.

As some of the workers were unexperienced, the supervisors were to have their eyes wide open especially when it would come to handling materials that required skill. But because of their willingness, their determination, and enthusiasm, the workers not only exhibited their readiness to follow directives, but also grouped themselves into workable groups.

Alex Ssebbowa himself together with his men involved themselves into the work of building Bwanda Motherhouse.

It took about one whole year to finish the work. What stands now as the Bwanda Mother house, with all its complexes, is as a result of a premise, carefully and purposefully constructed and strongly built.

The date of 25th December 1921 remained an outstanding date for the Daughters of Mary. Besides being a Christmas for all believers, it was the date chosen to bless and to open Bwanda Mother House. The choice to do this task fell on Pere Van Wees, the Episcopal Vicar. In great rejoicing and joyful singing the faithful stood all along the large veranda singing the “Te Deum”. The whole ceremony was breath- taking. The following five days were devoted to transferring goods and property of the congregation from Villa Maria to Bwanda. By 30th December 1921 everything was properly installed at Bwanda; all the sisters moved in and Bwanda became the official Mother House of the Daughters of Mary down to the present day. The founder, Archbishop Henry Streicher gave it the title of “Holy Family

Convent Bwanda”.



Mother house Bwanda at its completion in 1925

THE MEANING OF THE TERM “BWANDA”.

When Pere Gres, the then Villa Maria Parish Priest, saw the joyful, progressive settlement of the congregation of the Daughters of Mary at Bwanda he exclaimed;

“Here the Daughters of Mary have come to establish themselves, here they will stay forever and from here they will reach out to others. Basimbye Bwanda.”

That statement made by Pere Gres, summaries the meaning of the term “Bwanda”. Bwanda is a name of a small creeping plant. It is a weed that you can hardly destroy because it has roots at every joint. It is a ground cover, has small leaves and beautiful purplish flowers. At noon hours when all plants and weeds are weakening because of the heat, the “Bwanda” (weed) is doing the opposite; it is then opening up all its flowers and spreading out its leaves, thus creating a beautiful carpet of greenish, purplish colours. The luganda proverb, therefore, which says “Omuntu gundi oba ekintu gundi kisimbye Bwanda...” Means that so and so has established himself/herself (itself) and is to stay forever because of the visible positive qualities manifested.



On giving up his land for the sake of God's mission as noted above, chief Alex Ssebbowa moved to a nearby village called Kijjoomanyi, and the place he gave up was called "Bakijjulula" meaning that the palace.... Has been transferred to another location.

THE WHOLE CONGREGATION OF THE DAUGHTERS OF MARY COME TO BWANDA FOR THE FIRST TIME.

The year 1922 is especially marked on the calendar of Historical events of the Daughters of Mary for the following reasons;

1. The first time the New place, Bwanda was holding a retreat and every daughter of Mary was attending this retreat.
 2. The members were excited about the place "Bwanda", it is large, specious, roomy and accommodating.
 3. Whereas in the past the sisters attended retreats at intervals and in groups this year 1922 was holding only one retreat and all members were attending it. Hence a wonderful chance for sisters who had not seen each other for ages, so to speak.
 4. Above all the founder Bishop Henry Streicher was celebrating his silver jubilee in Episcopate which was due 15-8-1922. But the Daughters of Mary celebrated the jubilee on 13-8-1922. It was a historical event, all the Daughters of Mary came for the occasion.
 5. In jubilation and rejoicing, they all stood around their founder showing their love, honour and respect for him.
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The Sisters gathering in Bwanda for the retreat for the first time in 1922

On his part the Bishop was almost overwhelmed by the simplicity of his Daughters. With dignity the sisters rose and came forward and each one gave him a small gift which she had prepared for the occasion. Such gifts however small symbolized the deep love within one's inner heart, which each one bore for the founder. By then the Daughters of Mary Numbered 133. In his speech of appreciation, Bishop Streicher exhorted "his daughters" to be faithful to their call, to be led by the directives of their charism and to strive for the following virtues;

- A strong faith
- The humility of the Virgin Mary, the handmaid of Nazareth
- That obedience whereby one leaves everything into the hands of God.
- A spirit of prayer
- The charity of brotherhood (sisterhood)
- That zeal for souls without self-interest

The Bishop then turned to the then chaplain Rev. Fr. Leo Vedrines who was also building Bwanda together with Brother Sylvestri and asked him to build a chapel for the congregation and was to dedicate it to the Holy Family of Nazareth as its patronage and the patron of the whole place of Bwanda.

The very first Novices to profess in Bwanda were of the same number eleven (11) just as the number of the very first group to profess as Daughters of Mary.

The following are the names of those who professed in 1922.

	Family Name	New Religious Name	County
1.	Maama Maria Namutebi	Sr. Benedicta I	Bulemeezi.
2.	Maama Veronica Nakalya	Sr. Christina I	Ssinga.
3.	Maama Rose Nalunkuuma	Sr. Candida	Busujju.
4.	Maama Yozefina Nabwami	Sr. Regina Maria	Mawokota.
5.	Maama Veronica Nayiga	Sr. Angela	Mawokota.
6.	Maama Martina Lukowe	Sr. Apoloniya	Kooki.
7.	Maama Elizabeth Namutebi	Sr. Camiliya	Bulemeezi.
8.	Maama Maria Namutebi	Sr. Yozefina	Ssesse Island.
9.	Maama Yuliana Natoolo	Sr. Chrizanta	Kooki.
10.	Maama Yuliana Nalwanga parted from the congregation		
11.	Maama Rosariya Beewoze parted from the congregation.		

The Novices who made their profession in 1923 were the pioneer postulants in Bwanda. During their Novitiate one of them Yuliana Namutebi by name got very sick. She was paralyzed, could not help herself at all and could not speak. In spite of every effort to bring about her recovery, Namutebi kept getting worse and worse. Consequently, Bishop Streicher gave permission for her to make her promises (vows). She died on 26th February 1924.

HOW DID MOTHER MECHTILDE COME TO CARE FOR ORPHANS?

One day in the year 1922 a man lost his wife who left behind a new born child. In sorrow and not knowing what to do the man took the baby with him and came to Mother Mechtilde. Seeing the father in tears, Mother Mechtilde took the baby, handed it to one of the ladies in charge to the relief of the baby's father. Soon the word spread around that Mother Mechtilde at Bwanda takes care of the orphans. Gradually, the number of orphans increased; new buildings were set up for them and the number of care takers increased, this was a great mission.

Orphans grew up into children and children grew up into boys and girls so it was necessary to find schools suitable for their age as soon as they reached school age. Some of those orphans were returned to their relatives. Others were taken by good and able families not only to train for jobs but also to learn cultural and social behavior. In this they succeeded, for today one finds that many are running their own families and educating their own children.



Mother Mechtilde was generous and cared for orphans of all ages



CHAPTER FOUR

EDUCATION IN THE CONGREGATION

The Education of Women

It has been noted above that from the very beginning Bishop Streicher had special care for women and girls who would commit themselves to working with him, and to working in Parishes. He ordered that such people should be trained in their work, and had to be taught reading, writing and basic mathematics, so that they might be able to read for themselves what they teach, to explain what they teach more clearly, to be able to read letters sent by their authorities concerning their work, organize their lessons plans in writing, show in writing the income and the expenditure of the money they use. Credit for this work go to the White Sisters, who wherever they went worked directly with women and the girls they found already at work of catechizing. Notice that at that time of beginnings there were no schools or centres set up for the education of women.

Seeing this situation Archbishop Streicher knew that without educating women, the whole national development would be at stake.



Some of the pioneer students of St. Theresa Secondary School. Inset is Sr Francis Borgia, the first Headteacher.

Consequently, in 1924 Archbishop Streicher went directly to the authorities and leaders in the country and showed them the urgent need of opening right away, the school for women training who would start schools for education of girls all over the country.

Bishop Henry Streicher gave the responsibility of establishing a school for women education to Mother Mechtilde, in her turn Mother Mechtilde handed over that responsibility to Sr. Frances Borgia W.S. her cousin. The Bishop also appointed Rev. Fr. Leo Verdrines the main constructor to head the urgent need of the work of building that school.

Fr. Verdrines was a hard working man, he committed himself to the task before him and in a short time the school was up. It was of two sections, one section for the teacher training itself, the other section was for the boarding school. News of the opening of the school of the girls' teacher training centre was quickly circulated and soon girls flocked in, they came from Uganda, Tanzania, etc.

For the smooth running of the school, the section of teacher training called "Normal School" was headed by Sr. Frances Borgia W.S. while the section for ordinary schooling was charged with Sr. Eliane, W.S.

It was not easy to run this school because of the many needs and necessities that were lacking, such as finance, books, teachers, syllabus, etc. but thanks

to Sr. Frances' initiative and creativity, the school began to run. She wrote a book in the form of a syllabus which gave means and ways of teaching and educating a child both from the Physical-Material point of view and from the Spiritual point of view.

a) Physical – Material Point of view:

To help a child grow in good health and with a tuned mind, refined in politeness so as to fit in society.

b) The other half of the book was devoted to spiritual formation in virtues, behaviours and practices of a good Christian.

The book also gave methodology.

Unfortunately this book was not printed.

The Material / Equipments.

The exercise books were sent, as well as ink which was in the powder form, lead pencils and pens, the slates, materials for sewing and knitting other things were all sent to the school, much of which were from the mother of Sr. Frances Borgia. When it came to teaching practice, the students would go for it to the “Primary Boarding School” ran by Sr. Eliane, as mentioned above.

THE INSPECTORS OF SCHOOL

In 1926 on 27th April, Mr. Morris, Director of Education, visited Bwanda Normal school and commented in his report.

“ Bwanda Girls Normal school, comprises of about twenty girls in training. The sister in charge is making very good progress and the girls show satisfying intelligence and aptitude especially in Grammar. The class-room and the dormitory accommodation is all that could be desired.”

1. Mr. Morris came back to the same school on 14th October, 1926, again he was very appreciative for the excellent running of the school.
2. Mr. H. Nevill, Inspector of schools visited the Girls' Normal school Bwanda, on 29th September, 1926.
3. The Governor of Uganda Protectorate, visited the school on 30th December, 1926, and was very grateful for all that was done in the school.
4. Mr. Standford, District Commission (D.C) of Masaka, also came to see the school, it was on 19th April, 1927. He was much impressed by what he saw.
5. Prince Joseph Musanje, son of Kabaka Kalema of Buganda, visited the school on July 6th 1927. He gave a good piece of advice to the students, namely:

To be good listeners and to act accordingly, never to neglect the local, cultural tasks that befall to women, such as cleanliness, hand-work, meal preparation etc.

Official visits to Bwanda Normal school mounted to 38 times within 9 years. All visitors went back joyful concerning the running of the school, its aim and goals as well as the staff itself.

THE FIRST TEACHING PRACTICE

The first teaching practice was not easy because the practitioner was practicing on the classmates themselves, while the supervisors involved the other part of the classmates. Every practitioner would be carefully observed and every detail of the lesson was monitored for discussion at the time of evaluation, aiming at helping the practitioner to become competent. At first teaching practice took one month, but after that first one, the rest that followed took three months, because time was needed for lesson-plans and lesson preparations, time for class for all students and time for evaluation. This teaching practice started on 29th August, 1927, and ended in December, 1927. Although before sitting for final exams, the students had had only 4 turns of Teaching Practice, their final exams were very good. They were ten (10) in number, 4 Sisters and 6 girls. Supervising the students' final Teaching Practice were: Mr. Sykes, Mr. Snoxol and Mr. Misagga Peter. This final Teaching Practice took place on 13th December, 1928.

On leaving the school, the supervisors were overheard whispering, "All the students have done very well!"

On 28th December, 1928, a report arrived from Makerere signed by Mr. Sykes saying "They have all passed very well, they are all praised for their joy and a sense of freedom when teaching.

The following are the names of the students and the grade each one achieved.

Name	Written Exams	Teaching Practice
1. Sr. Terezia	90%.	A+
2. Sr. Majella	85%	A
3. Sr. Genevefa	80%	A
4. Sr. Evarista	80%	B+
5. Sr. Emmanuela, LSOSF	80%	B+
6. Sr. Salvator, LSOSF	80%	B+
7. Sr. M. Doloroza	70%.	B-
8. Sr. Loretta	75%	B+
9. Sr. Gemma	70%	B-
10.Sr. Solome	70%	C

On 31st December names of the Parishes where the schools were to be opened for the newly prepared teachers to start teaching as First Women Catholic Teachers in Uganda, fully qualified were named.

Gayaza, R.C.	Kyaddondo county	Sr. M. Doloroza
Lubaga, R.C.	Kyaddondo county	Sr. Solome
Lubaga, R.C.	Kyaddondo county	Sr. Salvator
Villa Maria, R.C.	Buddu county	Sr. Gemma
Bwanda Normal Sch.,	Buddu	Sr. Terezia
Bwanda Novitiate	Buddu	Sr. Genevefa
Bwanda Novitiate	Buddu	Sr. Loretta
Bwanda Novitiate	Buddu	Sr. Evarista
Bwanda Novitiate	Buddu	Sr. Majella
Villa Maria R.C.	Buddu	Sr. Emmanuel

These first teachers were followed by many more, for there were entries as well as graduates every year. Their standard was of the best quality. At times the school Inspectors would suddenly appear without prior information, but even then the Inspectors found both teachers and students well-prepared. These Inspectors were coming from Makerere College.

A report given by Mr. Sykes concerning a Test for teaching in Vernacular language.

To the honourable director for Methodology,

Dear Sir, I am glad to introduce to you the report concerning the students who sat for the exam mentioned above. The exam was given on 21st December, 1931. The exam supervisors were Mr. Snoxall and I myself.

The students performed very well. Their teaching practice was excellent, as I wrote in my former report saying, "Teaching in this school is always excellent. The practitioners, the students and the observers are always happy about this exercise. Let me, once again, congratulate Sr. Frances Borgia and her staff for the very good work done in this school.

All the students who have sat for this exam have passed very well and below are the scores for each student.

Name	Marks	Grade
Rose Nakubulwa (Sr. Dominica)	95.3%	A
Bernadetta Namusoke (Sr. Ancilla)	90%.	A
Sr. Filotea	87.5%	A
Katalina Nanziri (Sr. Philipina)	83%	A
Tereza Nakanwagi (Sr. Borgia) Gogonya	85.5%	A
Sr. Yulita	88.1%	A
Sesilia Namusoke (Mrs. Katende)	85.6%	A

Maria Nanfuka	79.5%	B
Yozefina Namugga (Sr. M. Augustina)	75.5%	B
Anyense Nakanwagi (Sr. Kostka)	78.3%	B

Inspectors would also look for;

Lesson plan, and lesson preparation:

Practitioners would make use of visual aids and apparatus in teaching, to make their lessons interesting, and meaningful.

When teaching: a teacher would make use of questions, which made students always alert and attentive.

The use of the blackboard is excellent.

Giving assignment or home work:

Students were encouraged to keep their exercise books neat and clean as well as looking after them.

Mathematics Lessons:

The report continue to say,

“This was a very interesting section of the lessons given here. Why?

The students were experts in Mathematics table of Multiplications.

Still surprising about these students, they were conversant in the

Multiplication tables of figure 16, 32, and 48, plus many other

Multiplication tables that are extraordinary.

Luganda Lessons:

We, as inspectors, were surprised to see how the Luganda language with its intricate grammatical rules strictly followed.

Biology Lessons:

It would be of very great help if the school is helped to receive powerful lenses, because, presently, the school owns very weak instruments. Strong lenses will enable students to see every part of, say a flower, a plant etc. Good news is that, I have been informed, that next year the lenses in question, will be here.

Reading:

Agnes Nakanwagi has been given this lesson of reading. But giving it did not materialize. Students were given too long passages to read without stopping when the reader makes a mistake so as to be helped to correct it. This was a weakness.

In conclusion, I say, in lower grades it may not be necessary to insist on pronunciation and on every grammatical detail which occur in a very long passage. Rather a small passage, read carefully and grammatically analysed according to the rules that govern the language will be of much help in this class.

Sir, I am your servant J. Sykes,
(Master of Method) Makerere College.

From 13th December, 1928 when the first Bannabikira obtained their teaching certificates, the Government highly appreciated Sr. Frances Borgia, W.S. for a high standard of performance the school had achieved. Her authorities, too, saw in Sr. Frances' achievement, a road that was leading to raising the woman's standard and level of education. The White Sisters' Superiors, therefore, chose Sr. Norbert, Sr. Leocadia, Sr. Aloysius and Sr. Anna Maria, to work with Sr. Frances in this mission of serving the nation.

The Primary school which was stopping at P.4 was now raised to P.6 (full primary).

The great and increasing demands of teachers (as nation-educators) made the authorities decide to start a Primary Teacher Training Centre (**P.T.T.C**). The Government welcomed the decision and it (Government) financed the building of two blocks for that matter.

The Vernacular Teacher's Training Centre (**V.T.T.C**) which was ran in Bwanda since 1928, did very well up to 1940. On 1st February 1940 the V.T.T.C was moved from Bwanda to Nkozi.

JUNIOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS

In 1955 **P.T.T.C** was moved from Bwanda and was also taken to Nkozi. Right away, the White Sisters started what came to be known as St. Theresa Junior Secondary School Bwanda, which they run up to 1962 when they (White Sisters) handed over the administration of that school to the Bannabikira in the person of Sr. Hermenegilda.

In 1964, the White Sisters handed over the administration of St. Aloysius S.S.S Bwanda to the Bannabikira sisters.

In 1972, the Sisters known as Sacred Heart Sisters, handed to Bannabikira Christ the King S.S.S Kalisizo in the person of Sr. Maria Leonsia who then became the School's Headmistress.

In 1973, the White Sisters handed to Bannabikira the administration of Lubaga S.S.S in the person of Sr. Mary Anselm.

In 1975, the White Sister handed to Sr. John of the Cross (Munnabikira) the Matronship of Villa Maria Hospital.

In 1972, the White Sisters handed over the responsibility of St. Immaculate Full Primary Boarding School Villa Maria to Sr. Felicia, Munnabiikira.

The following schools were opened by the Bannabikira, at that time:

- 1. St. Henry S.S. Buyege Kampala Archdiocese.
- 2. Bukulula S.S..... Masaka Diocese
- 3. St. Cecilia Primary School, Villa Maria..... Masaka Diocese.

Dispensaries (Basic Health Care Centre) started by Bannabikira Sisters include:

- 1. Nawanyago Dispensary Jinja Diocese
- 2. Kitaasa Dispensary Masaka Diocese
- 3. Katimba Dispensary Masaka Diocese
- 4. Madudu Dispensary Kiyinda Mityana
- 5. Bumangi Dispensary (Ssesa) Masaka Diocese
- 6. Villa Maria Nurses Training Centre Masaka Diocese
- 7. Nyansiango Dispensary Kenya

**TRAINING IN AND FOR VARIOUS JOBS
(PROFESSIONALISM IN THE CONGREGATION)**

From the very beginning of the congregation up to present time, the administrators of the congregation have deligently sought out ways and means of educating, training and forming the members for the various types of services as required by the changing times. This has been so in an effort to help the people they are serving. The table below shows clearly the different countries where the Bannabikira have gone for education/training and what courses they have done.

EUROPEAN COUNTRIES	NUMBER OF TRAINEES	COURSES TAKEN
Germany	11	Nursing, Carpentry, Shoe making, Tailoring making church vestments, making bridal Garments, making men’s, ladies’ and children’s wear, bee farming, candle making and Agro- Vet.
England	13	Nursing, Midwifery and Education.
Scotland	1	Home Economics and Education.

Ireland	3	Education and Nursing
Italy	10	Canon law, Formation, Spirituality and Catechesis.
Molta	1	Secretarial
America	45	Education, Nursing and Pharmacy.
EAST AFRICAN COUNTRIES		
Kenya	15	Accountancy, Secretarial, Education and Spirituality.
Tanzania	7	Communication, Education, Accountancy.
Zambia	8	Formation
Uganda	We have not indicated numbers but very many sisters have had their education in Uganda.	Education, Nursing, Administration, Agriculture, Counseling, Social Development, Art and design, Agro-vet, Catechesis, Catering, Special Education for the Deaf, Dumb and Blind.
OTHER COUNTRIES		
Egypt	2	Fisheries
Botswan	1	Medicine

N.B Among all those sisters indicated above, there are those with the following qualifications; P.H.D, Doctors, Masters, BA/BSC, Diplomas and Certificates.



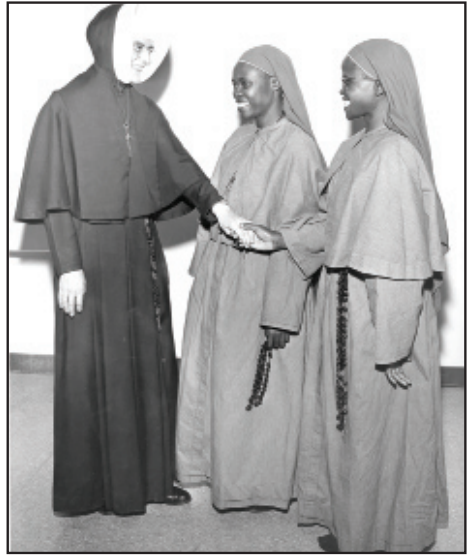
Student sisters arrive in America



Sisters with News men



Sisters with News men



Sisters with the Tutor



The Mother General visits Students

APOSTOLATE OF THE DAUGHTERS OF MARY

The following make up the apostolate of the Daughters of Mary.

Administration

Our founder and co-foundress laid down for us a strong foundation in the administration of the congregation. They put in place the General Council constituting of the Superior General and her four councilors. This General Council administers the affairs of the congregation. Presently the headquarter of the General Council is at Nyendo – Kasana near Masaka town on Bukakata road. It is called “Maama Mechtilde Generalate.”

Catechesis

The congregation has well trained catechists to do this work. We teach small children, young people and mature people religion in many parishes in different Dioceses.

Education

We educate people in primary and secondary schools, in TTCs, in Nurses Training Schools and at University level.

Nursing

We work in hospitals and dispensaries here in Uganda and Kenya.

Social work

We are working in social development fields, in Vocational schools and also in villages. We opened a school for the deaf, the dumb and the blind (St. Mark VII school for the deaf). Of late, we have put a section for the blind. So far the school has been on primary level, but a secondary section is being planned to start soon so as to give more help to those disabled children.



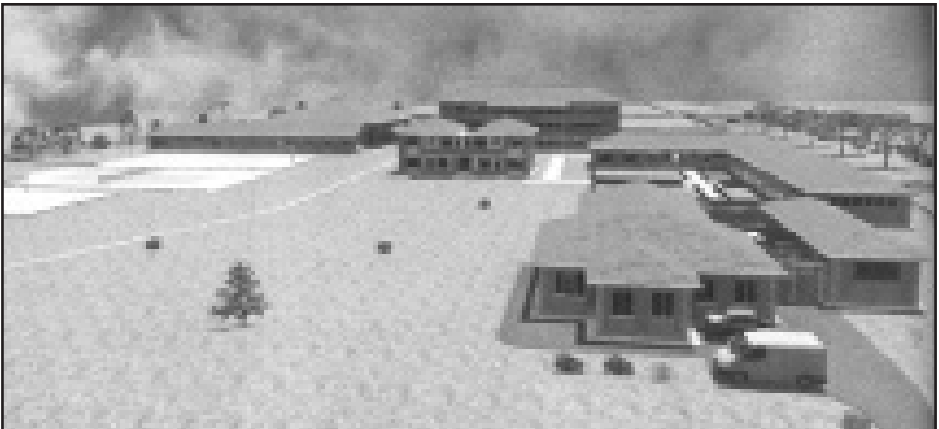
The deaf at their school in various activities

THE LAME, VULNARABLE CHILDREN AND SINGLE MOTHERS

The lame are among the under privileged and the Daughters of Mary sisters embarked on a great mission to avail them with “*Entandikwa*,” atleast in Masaka, to make them feel proud and able people who can make a meaningful living. The memorial project at Kyengera is yet another venue for the Daughters of Mary sisters to equip the vulnerable children and single mothers with life skills which will help them live a meaningful existence.



Sr. Resty Nalubega is always ready to serve the lame.



The artistic impression of Kyengera Memorial Project for vulnerable children and single mothers.

Agro-Vet

The Daughters of Mary are also farmers. As in the above sections for the deaf and the lame, we work with the youth and we help them to acquire skills that will be of use in their struggle for self-sustenance in the future. We do fish farming, agro-based activities at Kyato KADEP farm, pine tree planting etc.

CHAPTER FIVE

LEADERSHIP IN THE CONGREGATION

THE VISITATRIX

The Daughters of Mary assumed the responsibility of canonical visits of all their convents. In his prudence before acting, Bishop Streicher consulted firstly, Mother Mechtilde concerning letting the sisters take over the responsibility of visitatrix. The other White sisters were consulted as well as the pioneer group of the Daughters of Mary. So at the end of the retreat, in August 1923 he announced the exciting news to the Daughters of Mary that for the first time they were to choose five sisters to form a visitatrix board who from then on would visit every convent regularly just as Mother Mechtilde was doing.

The following sisters were chosen for the respective regions as indicated below;

1. Maama Secilia Nalube	Sr. Ursula	Buddu
2. Maama Berta Nakiwala	Sr. Agnes	Buganda
3. Maama Secilia Nabaloga	Sr. Filomena	Busoga
4. Maama Emma Nalwoga	Sr. Demetria	Bunyoro
5. Maama Anna Ttama	Sr. Concordia	Ankole

The task was well done and its encouraging results made Archbishop Streicher go ahead with the plans of preparing the Daughters of Mary for self-governing.

FROM PROMISES TO VOWS

From the very beginning, the goal of the founder Bishop Streicher was to raise the Daughters of Mary to the level of professed religious of a Diocesan congregation.

A WORD ON CULTURE CONCERNING VOWED LIFE IN UGANDA

In many African cultures especially in the past, a baby girl was a welcome gift in the family not only as a new member, loved and cherished, but also an incentive for future gain, a bank in whom much is saved that would be drawn on the day of her marriage because the future husband would have to bring so many cows, so much money etc in form of a dowry. Choosing to live a consecrated life meant denouncing marriage and therefore, denouncing the capacity to become a source of that large income for the parents and the family at large.

Therefore, to ask parents to make some financial contribution even for some continuous education of their daughter who was entering religious life was totally out of place.

Yet most of the families from which young girls came to enter religious life were only too happy thanking the Almighty for having chosen a member from their family exclusively for Himself.

In such a dilemma, the founder, Bishop Streicher had recourse to Rome in writing explaining the situation as described above.

In response, Rome allowed the young girls to consecrate themselves to God without financial contribution. The document granting that permission was signed by Pope Pius XI, dated 25 August 1925. Thus began the vowed life of the congregation of the Daughters of Mary as a Diocesan congregation.

THE ELECTION OF THE FIRST SUPERIOR GENERAL OF THE CONGREGATION

Having observed that the members of the visitatrix board had done their work of canonical visits satisfactorily. Archbishop Streicher and mother Mechtilde arranged for the election of the first Superior general. He began by calling together all the sisters who then numbered 150 and asked them to select sixteen (16) members from among themselves as delegates to elect a Superior General.

It was August 13th 1924, when the sixteen delegates began the serious task of elections. It was something new. The following day work continued but at the end of the day the Bannabikira got the first Superior General, Maama Cecilia Nalube by name who had been the assistant to Maama Mechtilde the co-foundress

To Maama Cecilia Nalube the first Superior General was added three other sisters as her co- workers namely;

Maama Angela Kyabalongo

Maama Agnes

Maama Dalia

Notice that the council has only three delegates, this is because Maama Mechtilde the co-founder was still supportive and active in the work of

administration, still leading but phasing in the administrative committee.

The day that followed the election of the first Superior General was that of Assumption of Our Lady in heaven the 15th of August (1924). It was that same day chosen for the opening of the Bwanda Chapel which was began in 1923. Thus Archbishop Streicher's order to Rev. Fr. Vedrines to build a chapel in Bwanda was fulfilled and it was dedicated to the patronage of the Holy Family of Nazareth. The ceremony of blessing the New chapel was carried

out by Archbishop Streicher himself in the presence of 130 professed sisters and 12 Novices.



Mother Cecilia Nalube (Sr. Ursula) first Mother General seated in the centre. Left is Maama Agnes (Sr. Yozefa), right Sr. Angella, Standing, Maama Agnes (Sr. Pulkeria I)

After all the sisters had made their retreat (in 2 turns) and had seen personally the first Superior General Cecilia Nalube, Bishop Streicher then handed over to the Newly elected council the power to lead the congregation of the Daughters of Mary. The Bishop had been leading the congregation in all matters since its foundation. On that he said the following to the newly elected Superior General

“You are to care for all your sisters. Be co-operative with the members of your council, making decisions together and in consultation. Let Mother Mechtilde share her experience with you, allow her to give you advice here and there, for she knows every Daughter of Mary perfectly well”.

THE NAME “SUPERIOR GENERAL” (Nnankulu)

Everyone who is part and partial of the Luganda language would surely ask as to how the name “Nankulu” which is a Luganda word in all its derivatives, had never been used before not even by our ancestors. This is how the name came about. At the time of the election of the first Superior General the delegates noticed that the one chosen to lead the whole congregation is holding a responsibility which is exceptionally wide, inclusive and critical. Therefore, this person needs a name or a title which will bespeak of the variety of qualities. The term Superior General does not qualify for the desired meaning, according to the local views. After the exchange of ideas and views, the delegates found that the term “Mukulu” is respectable and connotes responsibility and care.

Among the Baganda sub-culture the female names are often distinguished by the pre fix ‘Na’, as ‘Se’ is for male members. Therefore, write ‘Mukulu’ with the pre fix ‘Na’ and you get “Namukulu” but the word Namukulu is heavy on the tongue in Luganda, make it ‘Nnankulu’ and you are talking Luganda. The word is easy to pronounce in luganda and carries the desired message and meaning. Hence forth, ‘Nnankulu’ is the title given to every Superior General among the Daughters of Mary.

In the year 1925, the founder, Bishop Streicher, put the General Council of the Bannabiikira in full power of leadership; he made mother Mechtilde continue as a Novice Mistress.



Mother Rose Mary Nnamaganda, the present Mother General (Nnankulu) of the congregation of Daughters of Mary Sisters, Bwanda

IMPORTANT EVENTS WHICH TOOK PLACE DURING THE LEADERSHIP OF THE FIRST SUPERIOR GENERAL

It was during the first Superior General's term of office that the congregation was raised from the level of simply making promises to the level of taking vows namely poverty, chastity and obedience.

Instead of simply adding the title "Maama" to their baptismal name to distinguish them as religious, the title 'sister' was adopted to proceed the new name one would receive thus dropping both the title 'Maama' and the baptismal name.

The congregation began to spread out by sending members to other Dioceses.

THE SEQUENCE OF THE GENERAL CHAPTERS OF THE CONGREGATION

The first General Council has already been discussed at which the first Superior General was elected.

The second General Council took place on July 22nd 1931, and the following were elected for the General Council.

1. Rev. Mother Ursula, Superior General for a second term of office
2. Sr. Restetuta, Assistant Superior General
3. Sr. Immaculate, 1st Councilor
4. Sr. Concordia, 2nd Councilor
5. Sr. Florentina, 3rd Councilor

THE THIRD GENERAL COUNCIL

This council took place on 7th July, 1937.

The following were elected as members of the General Council

1. Mother Ursula, Superior General for a third term of office
2. Sr. Restetuta, Assistant Superior General
3. Sr. Concordia, 1st Councilor
4. Sr. Florentina, 2nd Councilor
5. Sr. Annunciata 3rd Councilor

THE FOURTH GENERAL COUNCIL

It took place on 7th July, 1943

The General Council members elected were as follows;

1. Mother Immaculate Superior General
2. Sr. Teresia, Assistant Superior General
3. Sr. Concordia, 1st Councilor
4. Sr. Vincensia, 2nd Councilor
5. Sr. Maria Xaveria, 3rd Councilor

THE FIRST MUNNABIKIRA TO HOLD THE POSITION OF A BURSAR IN THE CONGREGATION

Up to then it was Sr. Estella, the White Sister who was responsible for bursar-ship among the Daughters of Mary. On seeing that she was weakening, Sr. Estella asked the General Council which was acting then to choose a General Bursar from among the members of the congregation so she may have time to initiate the chosen member and phase her into the responsibility of bursarship.

It was in July, 1949 when the ballot fell on Sr. M. Norah to be the first bursar. She was a gifted Mathematician, a trained teacher and well acquainted with accountancy. She was the congregation's bursar up to her death on 17th December, 1990



Sr. Maria Norah, the first Bursar
General of the congregation
(for 35 years)

THE FIFTH GENERAL COUNCIL

This council took place in 1949 opening on 12th July.

The elections were as follows;

1. Mother Antoinetta, Superior General
2. Sr. Veneranda, Assistant Superior General
3. Sr. Maria Terezia, 1st Councilor
4. Sr. Cleofas, 2nd Councilor
5. Sr. Pelagia, 3rd Councilor

This General Council confirmed Sr. M. Norah as a bursar for the congregation.

SOME SAD EVENTS THAT OCCURRED AROUND THIS TIME

It was at this time that the saddening news of the death of mother Mechtilde, Co-foundress of the Daughters of Mary was heard everywhere. It was on the 4th of May 1950.

Two years later another blow struck the congregation of the Daughters of Mary. This time it was the death of their founder, Archbishop Henry Streicher, which occurred on the 7th June, 1952. Two years later in 1954 on February 23rd, the Assistant Superior General, Sr. Veneranda passed away. All these deaths dealt a heavy blow on the members of the congregation. To have lost the founder and the co-foundress almost at the same time was a very disturbing event. As to the replacement of Veneranda, it was Sr. Terezia who was chosen to replace her as the Assistant of the Superior General.

Another saddening event that occurred during this fifth General Council was that a deadly sickness that had never been experienced before attacked the congregation.

It was not only saddening but also frightening when eight (8) members of the congregation died a sudden death one after another in one month, the month of May.

1. Sr. Radegonda died on 12th May 1955
2. Sr. Lucia I died on 18th May, 1955
3. Sr. Yuliya died on 20th May, 1955
4. Sr. Nelly II died on 21st May, 1955
5. Sr. Emilian died on 24th May, 1955
6. Sr. Winfrida II died on 27th May, 1955
7. Pudensiane Nalunga (apostulate) died on 28th May, 1955
8. Sr. Thomas Aquianas (a Novice) died on 9th December, 1955

THE SIXTH GENERAL COUNCIL

This council was extraordinary because it was attended by His Excellency Archbishop Knox, who was the Apostolic Pro-Nuncio in East Africa at that time, and whose seat was in Nairobi. At the Chapter was also Arch Bishop Joseph N. Kiwanuka.



The following were elected on the General Council.

Seated from left; Sr. Pelagia, 1st Councillor; Mother Antoinetta, Superior General, for a second term of office, Sr. Evarista, 3rd Councillor. Standing from left: Sr. Cleophas, Assistant Superior General, Sr. Maria Norah (General bursar) and Sr. Teresia, 2nd Councillor.

THE SEVENTH GENERAL COUNCIL

This council opened on July 12, 1961.

The members elected were:

1. Mother Antoinetta, Superior General for a third term of office
2. Sr. Cleofas, Assistant Superior General,
3. Sr. Hilary, 1st Councillor
4. Sr. Pelagia, 2nd Councillor
5. Sr. Teresia 3rd Councillor

Sr. Teresia died on 13th August, 1962, and was replaced by Sr. Maria Cornelia.

According to Church law concerning Religious life, a member may not be elected three times as a Superior General, otherwise it would necessitate a permission from Rome. This is what exactly took place: a permission was asked from Rome for Mother Antoinetta to lead the Congregation as its Superior General for a third time and permission was granted.

It was Mother Antoinetta who asked Rome to allow the Congregation of the Daughters of Mary be raised to the level of Pontifical Order. Indeed it was January 16, 1958 when Pope Pius XII in a beautiful ceremony proclaimed the congregation of the Daughters of Mary a Pontific Congregation.

THE EIGHTH GENERAL COUNCIL

This council took place on the 12 July, 1967, and the following members were elected to the General Council. Mother Mary Vincent- Mother general, Sr Hilaria Nansasi, Sr Germinie, Sr, Stanslaus and Sr Maria Cornelia



Seated from left: Bishop Paul Kalanda, Mother Mary Vincent (Superior General), Bishop A.K. Ddungu, Sr Hilaria Nansasi (Ass. Superior General), Sr. Gerimina (1st Councillor). Standing from left; Sr. Stanslaus(3r Councilor), Sr. Maria Corneria. Later, Sr. Maria Cephas replaced Sr. Corneria(2nd Councilor)

N.B. The elected Superior General, Mother Mary Vincent, was in America on further studies at the time of being elected. She thereby came back, met with the chapter delegates, accepted the responsibility of being a Superior General, and because she was in the middle of her studies, was allowed to go back to America and finish up her studies which required another year. As to her office as a Superior General, the delegates chose Mother Antoinetta to be the acting Superior General until when Mother Vincent finished her studies.

THE NINTH GENERAL COUNCIL

This council opened on 12 July, 1973.

The Council members elected were.

1. Mother Mary Vincent, Superior General for a second term of office
 2. Mother Antoinetta, Assistant Superior General
 3. Sr. Patricia, 1st Councilor
-

4. Sr. M. Francis of Assisi, 2nd Councilor
5. Sr. Stanislaus, 3rd Councilor

THE TENTH GENERAL COUNCIL

Due to the war in the country, this chapter was pushed from July to December as indicated above, and permission to do so was granted by the Papal Nuncio who sits in Uganda. The Council members elected were:



From L-R: Sr Anna Sebastian (3rd Councillor), Sr. M. Theresa de Lisieux (1st Councillor), Mother Mary Francis of Assisi (Superior General), Sr. Stanislaus (Ass. Superior General) and Sr. Mary Leonisa (2nd Councillor).

THE ELEVENTH GENERAL COUNCIL

The eleventh General Chapter opened on 8th August, 1985, and the following were elected.

Front L-R: Sr. Maria Norbet (2nd Councillor) Mother Rosangela Nalubega, (Superior General), Sr. Mary Grace, (1st Councilor). Behind L-R: Sr. Gemma Nantume (3rd Councilor), Sr. Mary Leonsia, (Assistant Superior General)



THE TWELFTH GENERAL COUNCIL

This council opened on 9th August, 1991.

The delegates elected the following for the twelfth General Council, namely:



From L-R: Sr. Clare Cherubim (3rd Councilor), Sr. Mary Magdalen de Pazzi Nakiriggya (1st Councilor), Mother Rosangela Nalubega (Superior General), Sr. Gemma Nantume (Assistant Superior General) and Sr. Mary Norbert (2nd Councilor).

THE THIRTEENTH GENERAL COUNCIL

The thirteenth General Council was in 1997. The members elected for the General Council were:



From L-R: Sr. Rosemary Namaganda (2nd Councilor), Sr. Margaret Mary Namirembe (Ass.

Superior General), Mother Mary Magdalen de Pazzi Nakiriggya (Superior General) Sr. Catherine Nakatudde (1st Councilor) and Sr. Francis Damian (3rd Councilor).

THE FOURTEENTH GENERAL COUNCIL

This council was opened on 15th December, 2003. The following were elected for the General Council.



From L-R: Sr. Catherine Nakatudde (2nd Councilor), Sr. Margaret Mary Namirembe (Ass. Superior General), Sr. Baptist Vianney Tumushabe (1st Councilor), Mother Mary Magdalen de Pazzi Nakiriggya (Superior General for a second term of office), Sr. Felicia (Councilor, replacing Sr. Mary Chrizanto Namusoke).

(See **N.B.** below)

N.B. On September 14th, 2006, Sr. Mary Chrizanto Namusoke asked the General Council to allow her vacate her position / Office of being a member of the General Council. As she was exempted, the General Council chose Sr. Felicia to replace her.

THE FIFTEENTH GENERAL COUNCIL

This council opened on 7th September, 2009

The members elected for the General Council were;

Below from L-R: Sr. Theopista Namukasa (2nd Councilor), Sr. Lucy Theresa Nakalanzi (Ass. Superior General), Mother Rose Mary Namaganda (Superior General), Sr. Cotilda Naluggwa (1st Councilor) and Sr. Baptist Vianney Tumushabe (3rd Councilor).



As noted in the opening chapters of this History of the congregation of the Daughters of Mary, Archbishop Henry Streicher and Mother Mechtilde were in charge of leadership of the congregation at its beginning. Gradually as we have noted above the leadership responsibility passed to the members themselves down to the present day.

Now let us once more turn our attention to the last stages of the life of each, the founder and the co-foundress.

CHAPTER SIX

THE DEATH OF THE FOUNDERS

MOTHER MECHTILDE

Mother Mechtilde's annual retreat of 1949 (September) was the last one. After that retreat Mother Mechtilde began to show signs of weakness. Normally, the celebration of her feast day in November, was a cause of joy, happiness and jubilations for both Mother Mechtilde and all her well-wishers. But this time it was almost impossible to enter into a jovial mood. To avoid disappointing the community gathered for the occasion, Mother Mechtilde came about, but she could hardly spend enough time with the community.

Thus the 19th of November, her feast day of the year 1949 was unusual in comparison with the 19th November of other years. Mother Mechtilde continued to weaken as time went on and in December her doctor advised that she should be given a quieter room for better resting.

Mother Mechtilde expressed her gratitude and thankfulness to the community members, she also announced that according to how she felt she might not out-live that sickness. Therefore, “what I need”, she said, “is a priest to help me die a good death. I am not longing for longer living. The 75 years of service which I have spent in the Lord’s House is enough. I do not feel the capacity to continue serving”. The state of her health continued to deteriorate and by 1950 she could hardly move about without an assistant. As to receiving visitors, the doctor had ordered that she was not to receive visitors. This was painful for both mother Mechtilde and the Daughters of Mary. The latter longed to visit their “Mother”, listen to her loving message while still sound and say a word or two to her. Mother Mechtilde herself longed to take at least a glimpse of each of her daughters who might have come to see her. Things grew worse when Mother Mechtilde could no longer eat anything. It was then decided to take her to Kampala to be examined by the experts. The latter were suggesting a major operation but Mother Mechtilde told them that it would be a waste of time and she asked to be taken back.

On 10th Feb 1950, mother Mechtilde was brought back home to her “Daughters” the Bannabikiira. She was very sick and confined to her bed. She could not sleep and in all her pain Mother Mechtilde had her eyes fixed on the crucified Christ. She was heard to say, *“We are the other Christs. If Christ endured all the suffering for our sake, let me also suffer for the sake of all my children living and dead.”*

MOTHER MECHTILDE RECEIVES THE LAST SACRAMENTS

On 23rd February 1950, mother Mechtilde received the sacrament of Anointing of the sick, she was fully conscious and able to join the community present at the responsorial parts. Many Daughters of Mary and other people were around her in prayers. On that day she kept repeating, “How merciful our God is, to have made this sacrament of last Anointing through which He grants us his many graces/blessings.”

At this time Mother Mechtilde sent for all her children the Bannabikiira so that she might say ‘Good bye’ to them and they, in turn do the same. From that moment the members of the General Council began to send for the Daughters

of Mary wherever they were, by letters, by telephones and by messengers. As they kept arriving Mother Mechtilde would forget her pain as it were and began welcoming the sisters with a smile. To those who were in tears she would say “Beloved daughters do not cry in my presence, otherwise I feel overwhelmed”, but the sisters could not help crying seeing the painful situation of their mother and knowing that they are heading for “Orphanism.” To the different groups of sisters who kept pouring in, mother Mechtilde would say good-bye for good “because when you will have come for your next retreat, you will not find me alive.

“I PLACE YOU INTO THE HANDS OF MARY, YOUR VERY MOTHER, FOR SHE IS THE ONE WHO GAVE YOU TO ME, NOW IN MY TURN I GIVE YOU BACK TO HER. SHE WILL LOOK AFTER YOU IN A MUCH BETTER WAY THAN I HAVE BEEN ABLE. TRUST HER ALWAYS AND IN EVERY THING.”

Bishop Streicher himself would come often to pray for Mother Mechtilde in her sickness and to help her maintain her hope. Many priests and religious paid their visits to mother Mechtilde among whom was Sr. Nicolas W.S, a cousin to Mother Mechtilde. The Papal Nuncio whose seat was in Nairobi also came, sent by Pope Pius XII to bring the Pope’s special blessings to Mother Mechtilde and the indulgence for a good death. Thus Papal Nuncio arrived in Bwanda on 18th March 1950. he visited mother Mechtilde and passed on to her the message he brought.

MOTHER MECHTILDE IN AGONY ON 25TH APRIL 1950

After some time mother Mechtilde revived and was able to speak a few words but she was not aware of the agony she had gone through. Once she discovered that she was very near to the point of death, she felt sorry for herself for she wanted very much to die. So, she proclaimed, “By now I would have been in heaven seeing God, had it not been for your prayers that prevented me from dying.” Then she said to one of the attendants “if you see me again in agony, do not beckon to the sisters, only call them when you are completely sure that I am dead.”

But when she saw that days are passing and she was not dead yet, she called the Superior General of the Daughters of Mary and said to her “My daughter tell your sisters to stop praying for me to go on living, I pray let me go to God. I am afraid if I go on with this much pain I may easily lose the necessary aptitude to endure to the end.”

MOTHER MECHTILDE'S WILL TO HER DAUGHTERS, THE BANNABIKIIRA

Mother Antoinetta who was the Superior General at that time, then asked Mother Mechtilde, "Mother, yes, you are going to heaven but who are you leaving us with; that person whom we are to consult for a piece of advice here and there."

Mother Mechtilde responded saying "Dear Daughters I leave for you Mary the Mother of God, she gave you to me, so now I, in turn I give you back to her she is your mother who will take care of you always as a mother. She supersedes all others and there is no one like her."

The Bannabikira on their part were observing how their mother Mechtilde was wasting away. By the 1st May 1950, she could hardly receive Holy Communion. On the eve of 3rd May she was attacked by a hic-cough and she could not rest until the early morning hours when she slept only for a while. On the 4th May 1950, at 4:00am, Mother Mechtilde mother of Bannabikira, mother to hundreds of people, friend to all seemed to be rested for a while only to find that she was dead. She had ended her journey here below, the journey she started on 6th February 1875. Incidentally, it was that very day when she died on which it was decided to remove her from Bwanda to Kisubi. In a way for mother Mechtilde to have died in Bwanda, was a joy and a consolation for the Daughters of Mary since their Mother Mechtilde was buried in Bwanda and her tomb is safely and cleanly kept in Bwanda cemetery amid her daughters, the Bannabikira (R.I.P).



Infront is the Tomb of Mother Mechtilde

ARCHBISHOP STREICHER RETIRES FROM THE HEAVY EPISCOPAL DUTIES

Already in 1933 on March 25th, Bishop Streicher had written to Pope Leo XIII asking to retire from the heavy Episcopal duties. On June 1st 1933, his letter was answered granting his request. The Pope showed his gratitude to Bishop Streicher for his praise worthy Episcopal duties by bestowing on him the following honour;

The honour of the Archbishop of Brysis

The honour of Roman Counts

The honour of the knights of the Pope

He also sent a splendid Episcopal ring to Bishop Streicher.

To replace Archbishop Streicher, the Pope chose Bishop Edward Michard whose seat was in Lubaga. As a Bishop Emiretus, Archbishop Streicher chose to stay in Ibanda. Here his main duties were; Prayer, hearing confessions and caring for the sick. He was also doing some writing.

THE GOVERNMENT HONOURS ARCHBISHOP STREICHER

In 1934, on June 1st, the British Government bestowed the honour of “Commander of British Empire (C.B.E)” on Archbishop Streicher as a recognition for his good works. The day chosen for this ceremony was 7th March 1935 and it was carried out by Sir Bernard Bourdillion.

THE FIRST AFRICAN BISHOP

On 29th October, 1939, Uganda was greatly honoured by having the very first African Bishop, Archbishop Joseph N. Kiwanuka from Nakirebe in Mawokota County. He was a white father i.e a member of the society of the White Fathers. He was consecrated a Bishop by Pope Pius XII while Archbishop Henry Streicher was assisting.

TWO REQUESTS FROM ROME

When Bishop Streicher retired, he asked for the division of his Vicariate. But Rome wanted that there had to be native Priests first to start running their own parishes. Hence in 1934, 14 parishes in Buddu County were handed over to native priests under the leadership of a Vicar Delegate chosen from among them.

When, in 1939, Archbishop Riberi, the Papal Nuncio came to Uganda, he visited Archbishop Streicher in Ibanda to discuss the situation in Uganda.

A written document from Rome was clear, stating that a new Diocese had been created, the Masaka Diocese and Bishop Joseph N. Kiwanuka was appointed its Bishop, the Bishop of Masaka Diocese.

The Pope also requested that the newly named Bishop (Joseph Kiwanuka) go to Rome so that the Pope himself may consecrate him. This was in the letter from Rome dated 20th July 1939. The Pope also asked bishop Streicher to be present at the ceremony of the consecration of Bishop Joseph N. Kiwanuka to give the Pope a chance to thank and to appreciate Bishop Streicher for his great work of forming native priest.



BISHOP JOSEPH N. KIWANUKA
The first African bishop, south of the Sahara

The 29th October 1939, was a day of great jubilation, celebration and rejoicing, for it was the day when Father Joseph N. Kiwanuka became Bishop Joseph N. Kiwanuka after being consecrated by the Pope himself.

Note the Pope's final words to Bishop Joseph Kiwanuka after consecrating him. He said;

"If you live and work as a Bishop, then many more African Bishops will follow."

Bishop Streicher and the newly consecrated Bishop, Joseph Kiwanuka were welcomed in many places in Europe, congratulating the newly consecrated Bishop Joseph Kiwanuka and thanking Archbishop Streicher for his work of training native priests.

HOW THEY WERE WELCOMED IN UGANDA

Bishop Streicher and Bishop Joseph Kiwanuka arrived in Rubaga on 23rd February, 1940. People were very happy to see them and they entertained

them. In Villa Maria, they both arrived on 25th February 1940. People welcomed the two but with extra joyfulness bestowed on Bishop Joseph Kiwanuka who was being welcomed then in his own Diocese of Masaka. He told the audience that Bishop Streicher was to stay in Villa Maria in his house called “Tabarca”, for the Pope had asked him not to be very far from the New Bishop Joseph Kiwanuka.

In Villa Maria, Archbishop Streicher received visitors daily, many of whom included children who loved him and whom he loved very much.

THE GOLDEN JUBILEE IN PRIESTHOOD

Archbishop Henry Streicher celebrated his golden Jubilee in priesthood in Villa Maria Parish on the 15th August, 1944, the day of the Assumption of Our Lady in heaven. All his children, the priests, the religious and the laity all came in large numbers to the Bishop’s jubilee.

Our Holy Father the Pope, personally wrote and sent messages of congratulations and warm greetings to Bishop Streicher, wishing him well and praying that the Lord may fill him with his love and peace. The French Government too bestowed on Bishop Streicher the title of “Knight of the Legion of Honour.”

ARCHBISHOP STREICHER FALLS SICK

Archbishop Streicher spent a good time at Tabarca co-operating with priests, religious and all people advising them, listening to them and being with them. But gradually, he began to grow weaker and weaker.

On June 2nd 1952, Monday after Pentecost he felt he was catching a cold and on the following day, Fr. Marguier noticed that the Bishop was growing weaker and weaker and so told him. The Bishop’s response was, “Yes I do not feel well it seems I am approaching the end of my life.” But when he was not taken seriously, he continued to say, “I feel my legs are weakening, I feel cold all over yes I have lived long enough. ” On June 5th he awoke with the rest of all community members, said the morning prayer with them, but he could not say Mass. He asked for Holy Communion and asked his confessor to give him the sacrament of Anointing of the sick early, the following morning.

When Fr. Marguier was taken aback by what the Bishop said, Streicher went on to say that his request is to be taken seriously, “Because” he said, “I can die a sudden death and go like a lamp empty of oil.”

THE DEATH OF BISHOP STREICHER

By June 6th, priests, religious and the laity at large had been informed of the very weak condition of the Bishop. They all wanted to kneel by his bed and join in prayer of his last Sacraments. So they all came surrounded his bed and in this solemn atmosphere offered prayers for their father, Bishop Streicher. It was Fr. Le Veux who administered the Last Sacrament to Bishop Streicher after which Fr. Le Veux asked the Bishop to bless all his children around him.

He stretched out his arm and with joy and love blessed all his children around him. With that, the Bishop said to one of the White Sisters who were near him, (Sr. Paula by name), “How good it is to die.” He went on praying quietly sometime in Latin at times in French and some other times in Luganda.

Priests, Brothers and Sisters kept watch over their beloved Bishop.

On June 7th he was able to receive Holy Communion, but it came to be the last in his life; and it was Bishop Joseph Kiwanuka who gave this Last Communion to Archbishop Streicher.

There was a moment when Bishop Streicher raised up his eyes and in a gaze beamed with joy on his face and gave a beautiful smile. After a short while he lowered his eyes and three times repeated the words, “Jesus be my saviour.”

At about 2.00 pm Archbishop showed signs of parting. Fr. Le Veux offered a last prayer, once again gave him absolution and kissed him on the forehead and that was it, Bishop Henry Streicher was dead on the 7th June 1952 at 3.00pm. It was a Saturday of the most Holy Trinity.

The news of the death of Bishop Streicher soon spread all over; many people came bemoaning their beloved, offering prayer for him and receiving and sending messages of condolence. His remains were taken to the parish church, Villa Maria, where he was to be kept until Tuesday 10th June, the day he was buried.

The tomb of Archbishop Henry Streicher in Villa Maria Parish church.



Meanwhile people kept watch in prayer and meditation without ceasing from Saturday the day of his death until Tuesday the day of his burial.

The burial of Archbishop Henry Streicher brought people from many different parts of the world and of different beliefs. Present were:-

Mr. Moss P.A of Masaka a representative of the governors; Mr. P.M Kavuma (Katikiro) of Buganda who came in the name of Kabaka, the honourable chief justice and many other honourable people.

Bishops included

1. Bishop Joseph Kiwanuka,
2. Bishop Joseph Cabana,
3. Bishop Vincensio Billington
4. Rev. Fr. Juffermans who represented Bishop Grief

Many sisters came from every corner of the country.

At 10.15 am, Bishop Joseph Kiwanuka and a number of priests celebrated a requiem Mass. After Mass, Rev. Fr. Lefebure, Vicar to Archbishop Cabana delivered a speech which contained a brief account of the life of Bishop Streicher, emphasizing his admirable missionary works, the foundation of the congregation of the Daughters of Mary, his training of the indigenous young men into priesthood, the establishment of the Brothers of St. Charles (Bannakalori) and his major role into the ordination of Father Joseph Kiwanuka as well as his being consecrated the first Ugandan Bishop. Fr. Lefebure praised Archbishop Streicher for his compassion for the sick, for the rejected and in a special way called upon his audience to pray then and always for the repose of the soul of Bishop Streicher.

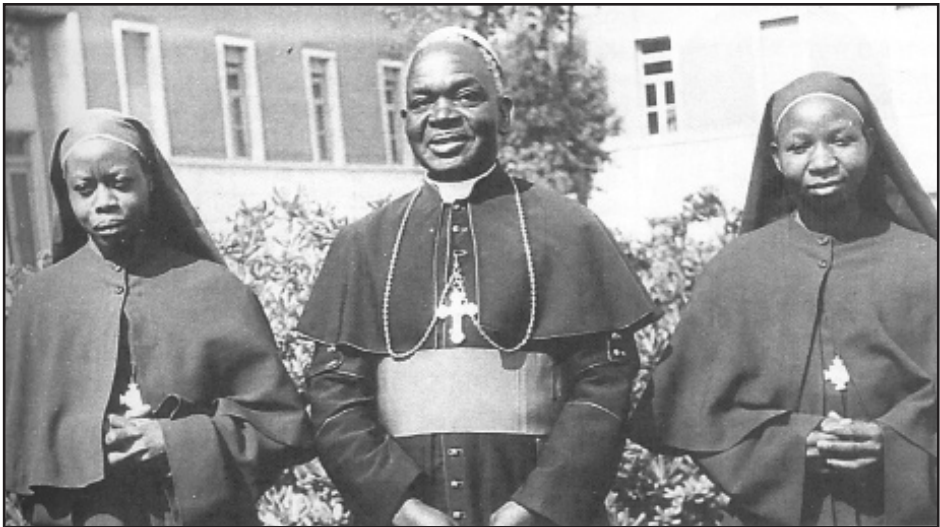
After the final prayers and the blessing of the remains of Bishop Streicher, twelve (12) native priests carried the body to its burial place which was right there in the church building. This last moment was very touching when bewailing and bemoaning was beyond control as people took their last look at the body of their beloved Archbishop Henry Streicher. Gradually the body was lowered into the grave prepared for it in Villa Maria Parish Church.

Archbishop Henry Streicher, founder of the congregation of the Daughters of Mary together with Mother Mechtilde the congregation's co-foundress had met in God's providential plan on this great mission of establishing the Daughters of Mary and had worked together co-operatively. In their departing for eternal life, it was Mother Mechtilde who preceded Bishop Streicher for two years, after which Streicher also followed only to meet Mechtilde for their reward of eternal life from the Lord himself.

In Bishop Joseph N. Kiwanuka, the first Ugandan Bishop of Masaka Diocese we see an outstanding fruit of their (Streicher's and Mechtilde's) labour. Bishop Joseph Kiwanuka had his catechetical instruction from Sr. Margaret M. Alcoque, a Daughter of Mary in Mitala Maria Parish.

When Bishop Joseph Kiwanuka became a Bishop of Masaka Diocese, the congregation of the Daughters of Mary fell under his jurisdiction since the congregation's mother House is in Masaka Diocese. He found the congregation at its youthful stage of 29 years only and laboured for its development in all spheres from 1939-1961.

He took a great interest in the congregation and looked for means of raising its standards. He was the first to take sisters abroad, i.e going to Rome to study canon law, namely; Sr. M. Cornelia Nayiga & Sr. Jane Frances. He helped the sisters train for music e.g. playing the organ and raising the standard of their learning; and it was during his episcopate that the Daughters of Mary came to wear shoes.



From L-R: Sr. Maria Cornelia Nayiga, Archbishop Joseph N. Kiwanuka and Sr. Jane Frances

CHAPTER SEVEN

DIRECTION AND GUIDANCE IN THE CONGREGATION

OUR CHAPLAINS

The first Chaplain for the congregation was Pere (Father) Gorju a Frenchman by birth, a countryman of Pere Loudel Mapeera. He was a staunch religious man, strong in faith and in behaviour. This was the priest that was the first to be appointed by Archbishop Henry Streicher to lead, instruct and guide the first Novices of the first Black African women religious in Uganda in 1908. From the stock of religious knowledge and experience that filled his heart, Pere Gorju put down notes for the instruction of his novices and from such notes he produced the precious book known as “The catechism of Holiness”,



which is found in the Bannabikiira sisters' convents.

It was unfortunate, in the thinking of the Daughters of Mary that Pere Gorju stayed in the work for a very short time. He started in November 1908 and left for another appointment in June 1910.

The notes he made when preparing lessons for the novices were so helpful in the formation of a religious, that as soon as the novices knew that Father was leaving, they asked Mother Mechtilde to approach father and ask him to put these notes in book form. Mother Mechtilde advised the novices to approach the Bishop and present their request. This the novices did and Archbishop Streicher accepted their request. Pere Gorju arranged all the notes he used when teaching the novices into five sections.

- Means to Acquire Knowledge of God and of Ourselves.
- The Duty that God expects of us.
- How God assists us.
- Obstacles to Holiness and the means to overcome them.
- What makes light the person's endeavors for Holiness.

Archbishop Streicher approved of this book and signed it for printing on January 6th 1915, the day of Epiphany on which we celebrate the Lord's

revelation of himself to the nations. The book was given the title; ‘THE CATECHISM OF HOLINESS’ and it was printed at Bukalasa White Fathers Printing Press. This is one of the many books written by Pere Gorju. When Pere Gorju left Bwanda chaplaincy, he was appointed first Editor of the first newspaper in Uganda called MUNNO in 1911.

When saying good bye to the novices, Pere Gorju said this; “All that I have been teaching you is in this book. Whoever will put them into practice will attain holiness.”

Pere Gorju became Bishop of Urundi and died on December 14th 1942. He was buried in Bukalasa cemetery.

When this Father was transferred from Bwanda there started a line of missionary chaplains who afterwards were replaced by the native Diocesan priests starting with Msgr Peter Kukeera. 1957 – 1960.

The following is the list of priests who have served in Bwanda as Chaplains.

Pere Gorju	1908 - 1910
Pere walter	1910 - 1923
Pere Verdrines	1923 - 1932
Pere Roche	1928 - 1941
Pere Vanhoove	1932 - 1934
Pere Masool	1936 - 1938
Pere Faligot	1941 - 1945
Pere Joire	1934 - 1955
Pere Derely	1938 - 1942
Pere Clement	1945 - 1951
Pere Viel	1945 - 1951
Pere Le Veux	1952 - 1957
Pere Guillot	1952 - 1957
Pere Chauleur	1956 - 1957
Pere Lelong	
Pere Buffard	1957 - 1957
Pere Marguier	
Pere Ziwal	
Pere Van Wees	
Pere Malilje	
Fr. Peter Kukeera	1957 - 1960
Fr. John Kakweezi	1957 - 1959
Fr. Raphael Kabuye	1960 - 1965

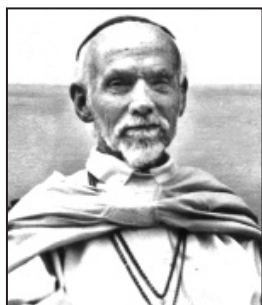
Fr. Michael Kasigwa	1965 - 1965
Fr. Timothy Ssemwogerere	1965 - 1970
Fr. Joseph Mawanda	1969 - 1970
Fr. Gabriel Ssebudde	
Fr. Benedicto Nsubuga	1976 - 1979
Fr. Leonard Lule	
Fr. Gabriel Kibirige	
Fr. Benedict Ssetuuma	1980 - 1982
Fr. Philipo Kiyimba	1980 - 1984
Fr. Gervase Mukasa	1982 - 1985
Fr. Charles Kayemba	
Fr. Emmanuel Kituba	1986 - 1987
Fr. Lawrence Jjumba	1987 - 1988
Fr. Jerome Lubega	1986
Fr. Michael Mugerwa	1988 - 1991
Fr. Peter Wamala	1989 - 1991
Fr. Charles Mukasa	1991 - 1993
Fr. Charles Ssentenza	1998 - 2002
Fr. Joseph Bukoola	2000 - 2004
Fr. Francis Xavier Musolooza	2002
Fr. Paul Lumala	2005 - 2006
Fr. Cosma Kaboggoza	2006 - 2010
Fr. Stephen Ssenkubuge	2010

The Daughters of Mary are very grateful to all of you our Fathers in Christ for the excellent work you have done for the congregation.

THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESES WHERE THE DAUGHTERS OF MARY SERVE

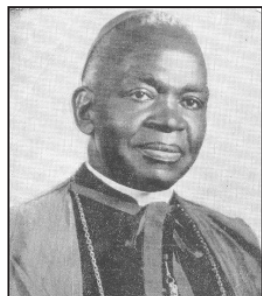
A. The congregation has its Headquarters in Masaka Diocese and it has gone through the following foster bishops.

1. The first Bishop was our founding Father,
-



Archbishop Henry Streicher himself. He guided us until his retirement in 1933.

2. The second Bishop Edward Michaud who took responsibility for the Buganda Vicariate until 1939 when the new Masaka Diocese was created. We are particularly grateful to him for re-organizing our constitutions.



3. Archbishop Doctor Joseph Kiwanuka of happy memory. He looked after the Congregation from 1939 until 1962. He brought us to the happy event of the Decretum Laudis in 1958.



4. The Rt. Rev. Bishop Emeritus Adrian Kivumbi Ddungu. He walked with the Congregation in its life through happy and sad events.



5. Our Father, the Rt. Rev. Bishop John Baptist Kaggwa, Bishop of our Mother Diocese, who supports us very much in our apostolic endeavors. We thank you very much.
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The first Bishop to call the Bannabikira to his Diocese was Msgr Biermans of Nsambya Diocese. The first Daughters of Mary in that diocese served in Nkokonjeru Parish in Kyaggwe in 1919. The next group of Sisters was sent to Namiryango Parish in 1920. The third group went to Iganga and Budini in 1923. Then four more Sisters were sent to Nkokonjeru, and these were Sister Immaculate, Sr. Christine, Sr. Florentine and Sr. Henry.

In 1924, Msgr. Biermans asked for more Sisters. When the number of Sisters he asked for could not be obtained, he was given only four Sisters and these were Sr. Monica, Sr. Stephania, Sr. Lucy and Sr. Euzebia who started Namiryango Convent in Kyaggwe. During the time when the Daughters of Mary served in Nsambya Diocese, many young girls were attracted to religious life. The sisters gave them the necessary training and some were admitted into our Noviciate in Saint Leo.

Msgr. Bierman, however, was desirous of starting a new religious Congregation of his own in his diocese. So Mother Kevin started the Congregation of religious Women. The famous Congregation known as the “Little Sisters of Saint Francis” (LSSF). She started it at Nsambya Parish in the Franciscan Sisters’ convent. After the Diocesan Bishop had had a religious Congregation started in his diocese, the Daughters of Mary gladly handed over their services in the diocese.

The second Bishop to invite the Daughters of Mary to his diocese was **The Rt Rev. Bishop Francis Xavier Lacouresiere**, Bishop of Rwenzori Diocese. When Rome divided the Buganda Diocese and created two new dioceses, namely Lubaga and Rwenzori, the Daughters of Mary had already established themselves in Ankole, Bunyoro, Kigezi and Mwenge in Toro. By the time Msgr F.X. Lacoursiere was appointed to Rwenzori Diocese, the Daughters of Mary were like elders in the area. They went to Ankole in 1914 and started working in Bunyarugulu, by the time the Bishop settled in his diocese, the Bannabikira had already five (5) convents in Ankole (2) in Bunyoro where they started in 1915. In Kigezi, Kabale Parish, which was opened in 1926 and then in Toro at Butiiti opened in 1919.

During those years: 1914-1926, the Daughters of Mary got many girls who wanted to join the Congregation. Msgr Lacoursiere did not take long to see the need for a religious Congregation in his diocese. So he started his own Congregation for the diocese of Rwenzori. How was he going to start, and where were the first candidates? Who was going to train these candidates and form them as religious? His first decision was to come to Bwanda and put his ideas before Mother Mechtilde and other superiors concerned. The matters

were difficult but soon the solution was reached. Every girl from Bishop Lacoursiere had to pack-up her belongings and go back to her diocese. Only those in Bannabikira religious habit were allowed to stay behind. You can't imagine what it was like at Bwanda. All were in tears: those going and those staying.

Many of those obliged to leave Bwanda decided to go back to their homes. The first group in the Rwenzori diocesan Congregation received their religious habit in May 1937. Their Novice Mistress was Rev. Sister Nicolas, Rev. Mother Mechtilde's niece who used to come to Bwanda to consult her aunt regarding the formation work. Some time later, Bishop Lacoursiere requested for Bannabiikira to assist in the work of formation of the novices. He was given two Bannabiikira Sisters namely: Sr. Scholastica and Sr. Euraria. These went to Toro in 1941 and they helped in educating the young novices in the work and the virtues befitting African religious women. These young religious were the Pioneers of the Sisters of St. Theresa known as Banyatereza.

The third Bishop with whom the Daughters of Mary worked, was Archbishop Emmanuel Kiwanuka Nsubuga, Archbishop of Kampala Archdiocese. During the time he was Archbishop of Kampala, the majority of the well established Bannabikira convents were in Kampala Archdiocese.

His Eminence **Emmanuel Cardinal Kiwanuka Nsubuga** will always be remembered for his great concern for the sick and disabled, "BAKATEYAMBA" as he named them. He founded a religious congregation known as the "Good Samaritan Sisters" whose work is to look after the sick and the disabled, and he asked the Daughters of Mary to help with the work of training them. These Sisters, the Good Samaritan Sisters are doing an excellent work with the Bakateyamba especially those at Nalukolongo and Katalamwa.

In the same Archdiocese, we have been serving under His Eminence **Emmanuel Cardinal Wamala**, the friend of all people and now we have His Grace **Archbishop Cyprian Kizito Lwanga** who is spending all his time and energy on the physical and spiritual development of religious people. The Daughters of Mary are indeed very grateful for this concern and care.

The Fourth Bishop is the **Rt. Rev. Bishop Cyprian Kihangire**. When Rome made Bishop Cyprian Kihangire the Diocesan Bishop of Hoima Diocese in 1965, four parishes: two from Bugangazzi and two from Buyaga were incorporated into his new diocese. These were Bujuni Parish, with Bannabikira convents opened in 1913; and Mugalike with Bannabikira convent opened in 1938. Those Parishes were in Buyaga County. In Bugangazzi there were

Bukuumi Parish with the Sisters' convent opened in 1914, and Kakindo Parish with the Sisters' Convent opened in 1955.

The Fifth Bishop is the Rt. Rev. **Bishop James Odongo**, Bishop of Tororo Diocese in Bukedi. When he started his work in Tororo Diocese, there were no Bannabiikira in that area. It was he himself who applied for Bannabiikira Sisters to go and serve in his diocese. The Daughters of Mary were sent to four parishes, namely: Kidetok, Kyere, Ngora and Situmi.

The sixth Bishop is Rt. Rev. **Bishop Joseph Willigers** of Jinja Diocese. When Bishop Willigers took the new diocese of Jjinja, the Daughters of Mary had no houses in that diocese. So he applied for the Daughters of Mary to serve in his diocese. They were sent to Nawanyago and Jjinja Lubaga Parishes.

MISSIONS WHERE THE DAUGHTERS OF MARY HAVE SERVED AND WHERE THEY ARE STILL SERVING

Please Note.

The first column is for the year when the Sisters' convent was established; the second column is for the name of the Parish and the last column is for apostolate for which the sisters were sent to that parish.

YEAR	NAME OF PARISH	APOSTOLATE
1910	Villa Maria Parish St. Leo Convent in Buddu	Noviciate, Catechism, Schools and clubs / Societies
1910	Nandere in Bulemeezi	Catechism and School
1910	Mitala Maria in Mawokota	Catechism and School
1910	Narozaari in Buddu	Catechism and School
1911	Biikira in Buddu	Catechism and School
1912	Ggayaza in Kyaddondo	Catechism and School
1912	Katende in Mawokota	Catechism
1912	Kitovu in Buddu	Catechism and School
1913	Busuubizi in Ssinga	Catechism and School
1914	Bujuni in Buyaga	Catechism and School
1914	Bukuumi in Bugangazzi	Catechism and School
1914	Bunyaruguru in Ankole	Catechism
1915	Naddangira in Busiro	Catechism and School
1915	Hoima in Bunyoro	Catechism
1915	Nyamitanga in Ankole	Catechism
1916	Kasozi in Kkooki	Catechism and School
1916	Bukalagi in Ggomba	Catechism and School
1918	Masindi in Bunyoro	Catechism
1919	Ibanda in Ankole	Catechism

1919	Butiiti in Tooro	Catechism
1919	Nkokonjeru in Kyaggwe	Catechism
1920	Namiryango in Kyaggwe	Catechism
1921	Bwanda in Buddu	Catechism and School
1922	Villa Maria in Buddu	Catechism and School
1922	Nulajje in Bulemeezi	Catechism and School
1922	Kitabi in Ankole	Catechism and School
1923	Iganga in Busoga	Catechism
1923	Budini in Busoga	Catechism
1924	Kyamaganda in Buddu	Catechism and School
1924	Katigondo Seminary in Buddu	Domestic Work
1926	Kabale in Kigezi	Catechism
1928	Lubaga in Kyaddondo	Catechism and School
1929	Mubende in Buweekula	Catechism and School
1930	Bukulula in Buddu	Catechism and School
1932	Mutoolere in Kigezi	Catechism and School
1932	Nyakibaale in Kigezi	Catechism and School
1934	Nkozi in Mawokota	Catechism and School
1937	Mugalike in Buyaga	Catechism and School
1938	Butale in Ankole	Catechism
1939	Vvumba in Ssinga	Catechism and School
1940	Gulu in Acholi	Catechism
1940	Nakasongola in Buluuli	Catechism and School
1940	Sanatorimu in Bwanda – Buddu	Recovery
1940	Butale Seminary in Ankole	Domestic Work
1943	Naluggi in Ssinga	Catechism and School
1943	Nkoni in Buddu	Catechism and School
1945	Bigada in Buddu	Catechism and School
1947	Kitaasa in Buddu	Catechism and School
1947	Kasaala in Bulemeezi	Catechism and School
1950	Buyege in Busiro	Catechism and School
1950	Bukalasa Seminary	Domestic Work
1951	Nabbingo in Busiro	Catechism
1952	Bumangi in Ssesa	Catechism and School
1954	Lwaggulwe in Buddu	Catechism and School
1955	Kakindo in Bugangazzi	Catechism and School
1956	Nkozi T.T.C. in Mawokota	Training College
1956	St. Aloysius J.S. in Buddu	School by White Sisters
1958	Kijjukizo in Kabula	Catechism and School
1963	Kalungu in Buddu	Catechism and School
1963	Nkozi Hospital in Mawokota	Medical Services
1963	Nabbingo Parish in Mawokota	Catechism and School
1964	Kimaanya in Buddu	School
1965	St. Aloysius S.S. handed to	

	Daughters of Mary	School and Formation
1966	Kasanga in Bukonjo	School
1967	Kidetok in Tororo	School
1967	Ngora in Tororo	School
1972	Christ the King S.S. handed over to Daughters of Mary	School
1973	Villa Maria Hospital in Buddu	Medical Services
1973	Lubaga Hospital in Kyaddondo	Medical Services
1974	Trinity College Nabbingo in Busiro	Education
1974	Bwera Seminary in Ankole	Domestic Work
1977	Kitovu Hospital in Buddu	Medical Services
1978	Nyansiongo in Kenya	Dispensary
1980	Katimba in Mawogola	Dispensary and Women's Club
1981	Kyamuliibwa in Buddu	Formation (Postulate) & Catechism
1988	Bududa in Bugisu	Catechism
1989	Losilang in Kotido	Medical Services (Dispensary) & Women's club
1992	Ruzo in Burundi	Medical Services
1993	Ndeebe in Kyaddondo	Pastoral / Social Work and School
1999	Bigada (re-opened)	Catechism and School
1999	Nazareth (Closed)	
2000	Kitovu Hospital	Medical Services
2001	Buchunya in Bugisu	Catechism and Social Work
2001	Kitovu Priests' Rest House	Domestic Work
2002	Mitala Maria Hospital in Kampala	Medical Services
2002	Nabbingo Domestic School in Kampala	Domestic School
2003	Mbuye in Buddu	Catechist and School
2003	Regina Pacis in Nairobi	Catechism
2005	Kasozi in Kkooki (Closed)	
2006	Barbaton in South Africa	Medical Services
2006	Kyere in Teso (Closed)	
2006	St. Augustine University in Tanzania	Education
2006	Mulago in Kampala	Social Work
2008	Nabbingo in Kampala (Closed)	
2010	St. Anthony of Padua in Tanzania	School

In this work of teaching catechism, the Daughters of Mary have taken the Word of God to many people. We are grateful to the Lord for choosing one of us, Daughters of Mary, Rev. Sister Amedeo R.I.P. and using her to perform

His wonders in order to draw people to Himself. We pray that He allows her to perform more undoubtable miracles, that the Church may raise her to the rank of the Blessed.

May our Founder, Bishop Henry Streicher, Mother Mechtilde - Co-Foundress and all the departed Daughters of Mary pray for us!



DEVELOPMENT OF THE DIFFERENT APOSTOLATES OF THE CONGREGATION

From the very beginning of the Congregation, the Daughters of Mary have worked seriously to develop the work of Apostolate and the following shows what they have so far achieved.

EDUCATION

On top of teaching in Primary Schools, Secondary Schools and Teacher Training Centers, the Daughters of Mary also teach in Universities like; Kyambogo University, Katigondo National Major Seminary, The Catholic University of Eastern Africa (CUEA) and St. Augustine University of Tanzania.

NURSING PROFESSION

To the work of nursing the sick in hospitals and dispensaries, the Daughters of Mary have extended their services to training nurses in Nurses Training Centers like in Villa Maria NTS and Lubaga Hospital.

RUNNING VOCATIONAL SCHOOLS

In their concern for all children, the Daughters of Mary observed that there were many children who could not go to higher schools because of lack of school fees or because of limited academic ability. So the Sisters started vocational schools like the following:

- i) Pere Cadet, Gayaza Vocational School, Kampala Archdiocese.
 - ii) St. Mary – Mitala Maria Vocational School – Kampala Archdiocese.
 - iii) St. Mary – Kasaala Vocational School - Kasana-Luweero Diocese.
 - iv) St. Anne – Villa Maria Vocational School - Masaka Diocese.
 - v) Bishop Stenseera Mult-Purpose Vocational Training School, Bwanda – Masaka Diocese
 - vi) Kitabi Vocational School – Mbarara Archdiocese.
 - vii) Nyakibale Vocational School – Kabale Diocese.
-

Subjects Taught

- i) Secretarial Work
- ii) Hotel Management
- iii) Catering
- iv) Sewing: Ladies & Gentlemen's ware
- v) Hair fashions
- vi) Crafts etc...

HELPING THE DISABLED CHILDREN

In order to help the children of the nation most especially the deaf and blind, the Daughters of Mary opened up a school for the deaf at Bwanda, ST. MARK VII SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF. It started with twelve children and two teachers, namely Sr. Immaculate Rose Namakula and Sister Pauline Nandawula. At present there are 240 pupils including 20 deaf and blind children.

More information on this school:

This school not only teaches academic subjects, as they are given in primary schools, but also teaches these children practical subjects, like carpentry, modern farming, knitting sweaters, computer etc.

Our pupils sit the same Primary Leaving Examinations (PLE) as pupils in other normal schools do, and up to now, they have been performing quite well.

We are planning to add a nursery section and a secondary school as well.

EXTENSION OF OUR APOSTOLIC SERVICES

i) THE DAUGHTERS OF MARY ENTER KENYA

In the year 1977 the Superior of the Congregation together with her council saw that it was time to extend our services to the neighbouring country, Kenya. The Superior General at that time was Mother Mary Vincent who undertook the journey to Kiisi in Kenya to meet the Rt. Rev. Bishop Mugendi of Kiisi Diocese. Her request to the Bishop was that the latter accepts the Daughters of Mary to go and work in his diocese. The Bishop welcomed the idea and expressed his need for nursing sisters. In answer to his request the Superiors selected two sisters namely; Sister John Christopher and Sister Cecilia Nakayima. These were sent first to Nairobi to study Swahili in preparation for their mission in Kenya.

Rev. Father Stupuna P.P. Welcomed the Sisters joyfully. The nursing apostolate started right away as was requested by the Diocesan Bishop. The community

around was very pleased with the new apostolate and especially the nursing which had started so close to them, together with the Sisters that had come to their area. So the Bannabikira convent was opened in Nyansiongo.

As time went on, there appeared some girls, natives of Kenya, who voiced their desire to join the congregation. As we write, the number of sisters of Kenyan origin is growing fast. We are very grateful to the Lord who has attracted them to us. A new Formation house known as “Rose of Lima Formation House” has been built in Kenya - KIISI for the aspirants. We are also running a nursery and a primary school in Nyansiongo, Kenya.

KARAMOJA

In 1989, Rt. Rev. Bishop Paul Kalanda, approached the Superior General of the Congregation, Rev. Mother Rosangela Nalubega and requested for the Daughters of Mary Sisters to go and serve in his diocese. The Superior gave him sisters to work in Losilanga Parish, now in Kotido Diocese. The sisters are doing Nursing and Social Development. In clubs they teach hygiene, personal care and personal development.

TANZANIA

The Jubilee year 2010, has seen the Daughters of Mary traversing to Tanzania to spread the word of God. We now have a convent in Kattama Diocese. Thanks to Bishop Ludovick J. Minde, ALCP/OSS, bishop of Kahama Catholic Diocese, who invited us.

CONCLUSION

We are grateful to the Bishops of the dioceses where we work for giving us duties through which we are able to serve God’s people; for giving us the necessary assistance in our religious and spiritual life, by giving us priests who guide us and for your parental co-operation.

To the priests in the parishes where we work, thank you for the moral and spiritual support. Many thanks to our Benefactors, including religious men and women, plus the laity, both male and female; those from here and those from abroad.

Each Munnabikira is deeply grateful to every other Munnabiikira for the mutual support that has enabled us, to carry on God’s work for these last Hundred Years!

May God, Our Father be Glorified and Praised for doing all this for us and for showing us His love and mercy to such degree!
Now, it remains for every Daughter of Mary to rejuvenate herself and to

resolve to still lead a better life. Celebrating a hundred years does not mean coming to a finish. Like a traveler, when he stops for a rest, it does not mean he has arrived. What we are being called to is to work relentlessly until that day when “God will be All in All” 1Cor. 15:28.

CHAPTER EIGHT

A WRITTEN DOCUMENT DECLARING THE CONGREGATION OF THE DAUGHTERS OF MARY (BANNABIKIRA) A PONTIFICAL RIGHT CONGREGATION

The Declaration reads as follows:

On 16th January 1958, the Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith, issued a declaration announcing that the Congregation of the Daughters of Mary (Bannabikira) has been raised to the level of the Pontifical Right. Below is the document in question;

“Bishop Henry Streicher, then the Bishop of Uganda was always eager to spread the Catholic Religion in Africa. To that end, early in his episcopate he organized a group of women to render service demanded in the many and various parish tasks. It was from this small group of women that Bishop Streicher started what came to be a religious Congregation, with the permission of the Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith. Later on, in 1925, Bishop Streicher introduced this Congregation to the Roman See and named it the Congregation of the Daughters of Mary.

This Congregation had been blessed from its beginning for it quickly began to grow and to spread, carrying its services to many other dioceses in Uganda and outside of Uganda.

At a given moment, the Superior General of the Bannabikira wrote to Rome requesting that the Congregation be raised to the level of Pontifical Right.

In Rome, this document of request was handed over to a special Committee of experts of the Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith, to study it carefully and in details. The committee did its duty leaving no stone unturned.

Meanwhile letters and documents were coming in from Bishops (and other Church authorities) in whose dioceses the Bannabikira serve. In the end the committee gave its final approval that the Congregation of the Bannabikira be raised to the level of Pontifical Right, and be placed under the care of the Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of

the Faith. The members were advised to continue observing their constitutions now on probation". (end of Declaration Document).

It was on 16th January, 1958 when Our Holy Father Pope Pius XII in a colourful ceremony in Rome and a mid shouts of joy and jubilation that performed the Rite of pronouncing the Bannabikira Congregation a Pontifical Right, the first one to reach that level among the African religious Congregations of our modern times.

But note that in all other matters the Congregation remains under the jurisdiction of the Local Ordinary where the Congregation is located in accord with the Canon Law. The Congregation then was given 7 years probation to practice and live its constitutions.

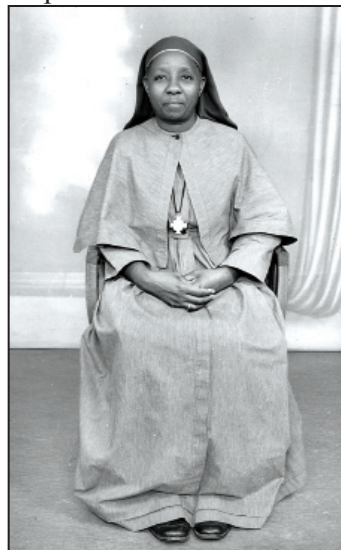
In conclusion the Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith, in accord with the power from Pope Pius XII, had confirmed this Declaration in all its details, and it is not to be contradicted. Issued in Rome, Office of Sacred Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith on 16th January, 1958.

*Signed by P. Cardinal Fumasoni Biondi
Chairman
+ Peter Sigismondi, (Secretary)*

NEWS OF THE DECLARATION OF PONTIFICAL RIGHT REACHES BWANDA

On 8th February, 1958 at about 6:00 p.m a big envelope was received with other letters from the Post Office. It was addressed to the Superior General, and was coming from the Papal Nuncio. The superior General read the document, got excited, but was able to control herself and to keep the whole news to herself until the proper time.

The following day at around noon when everybody was present and settled in the big recreation room, the Superior General entered holding a big envelope and with a smile on her face. As she entered she told all the Sisters to kneel and she intoned a hymn to the Holy Spirit. After the hymn all the Sisters sat, eyes on the Superior General. Still smiling, she broke the news to the Sisters, "Our Congregation, dear Sisters has been raised to the level of Pontifical Right, and this is the document that carries the



Mother Antoinetta

news and is from the Papal Nuncio”. All the Sisters burst into shouts of joy, clapping of hands, singing, rejoicing, dancing, jumping here and there, in short, Bwanda was all covered with shouts of joy. Soon neighbouring people flocked to the scene wondering what has happened.

By then all bells in Bwanda were ringing, drums were banging, and all musical instruments were playing. Rev. Fr. Mubiru and Rev. Fr. Kalange, arrived with their cameras ready to take photos. On their arrival, the chaplain, Msgr. P. Kukeera together with the two (Fr. Mubiru and Fr. Kalenge), offered a prayer of thanksgiving in the form of Benediction together with the community that had gathered.

The day chosen for the open celebration of this occasion was the 25th March, 1958. It was rightly chosen because of the following reasons:

- a) That day, 25th March, 1958 was the day of the official celebration of Pentecost. It was, therefore, befitting to centre the whole occasion on the Holy Spirit, for his guidance and support of the congregation.
- b) As to the day of the week, 25th March, 1958 was a Sunday, so it was only right and just to celebrate the occasion on a Sunday, a day of rest from heavy work, a day of gathering to praise God.
- c) When Bishop Joseph Kiwanuka, the then Bishop of Masaka Diocese was elected to that position it was on that day, 25th March, 1939, that the news was publicized.

PREPARATIONS

Invited Guests numbered to 300, so cards were quickly dispatched to notify each of them.

Renovations were made, and at the sign-post of “Welcome to Bwanda, was to stand the British Flag. The second Flag, that of Buganda, was to stand near the Fathers’ offices. The third flag was to stand below the steps entering the mother house chapel.

Neither was the cemetery neglected. It was all renewed, to fit the occasion since it was on account of those buried there that the Congregation was celebrating. Without their commitment, we would not have been able to make it.

Everything went on as was planned. The celebrations on the 25th March, 1958 were very well performed. Please, here you are referred to the booklet written by the late Fr. Clement Kiggundu, entitled “Bannabikira p. 50-80.

THE MASS CELEBRATION

It was at Villa Maria, on the Pentecost Day, as mentioned above. Visitors' arrivals were an unending scene from every corner of the country and outside. Vehicles, motor-cycles, bicycles, footing, etc. were all means of bringing people to Villa Maria Church.

The honourable VIPs included:

- The Papal Nuncio,
- Archbishop L. Cabana,
- Bishops from all dioceses of Uganda,
- Priests, Seminarians, Religious men and women from various Religious Institutes.
- Government – Ministers, Ugandan and from outside.
- Honourable ladies and gentle men.
- The Bannabiikira themselves and the Novices were in large numbers.

The church itself, the surrounding compound and front yard of Bishop Henry's house were all covered with people.

The Procession to the place prepared for Mass Celebration included:

- The Papal Nuncio, Msgr Gaston,
- Msgr. Victor Mukasa, one of the first African priests in Uganda,
- A large number of priests and religious.

The procession then moved slowly and with dignity to the altar of God in the Villa Maria Parish Church while the organ was playing loud, clear, and with sweet melody. The seminarians of Katigondo were leading the singing. Then the Papal Nuncio went up to the altar to start Mass. At exactly 9:45 a.m. The Papal Nuncio preached in English, while Father Micheal Mugerwa was translating into Luganda. For the first time loud speakers appeared and were used in Villa Maria Church. This helped to cast the voice to the large crowd that extended to the far corners, so that each person received the message from the preacher, the Vicar of Christ here below.

THE CONTENT OF THE PREACHING

IT IS THE SPIRIT THAT INSPIRES.

“Right Rev. Archbishop, all Bishops present, priests, religious Sisters, religious brothers, and all beloved faithful. In the early chapters of the Holy Bible we read as follows, “While a might wind swept over the waters”.

To understand this passage, we need to remember that the Spirit of God roamed the whole world.

At the time of creation that Spirit of God began to act and to do the work of God, not only in the world but also in the inner soul. It was the Holy Spirit

that inspired the Prophets, the same Holy Spirit speaks to us and gives his message in the Holy Bible. It was the Holy Spirit who prepared us, human beings, to receive the Incarnate Word. This is the message which is clearly understood in the New Testament when the Spirit prepared, in the womb of the Virgin Mary, a body that was to be taken up by the Word at the time of Incarnation. The Spirit still does the same thing today in the Church.

On Pentecost, the Holy Spirit started his work of preaching to the nations, and still does the same thing today. It was the Holy Spirit who strengthened the founders of religious institutes. It is now fifty (50) years since Archbishop Henry Streicher founded the Congregation of the Daughters of Mary, Bannabikira.

These fifty years have not been a bed of roses, there have been problems and difficulties which the Congregation has gone through. The Pope, therefore, decided to give Bannabikira a document of appreciation known as *Decretum Laudis*.

It is true, it was the Holy Spirit who inspired each of the Bannabikira Sisters to enter religious life. True Religious Life necessitates leaving the world, leaving the paying jobs, and taking up God's work to which he calls an individual for salvation. From the very first Pentecost up to this one we are celebrating today, every Pentecost has been highly celebrated. I am Certain and sure that I don't deceive myself when I say that Our mother, the Church, is overjoyed to see that your Congregation has been confirmed with a declaration from the Pope. It is the very first Congregation in the whole of Africa to have reached this level.

Our Holy Father wished he could be here, but he could not. So what he did is to send this message by a telephone. It reads;

"My representative in Mombasa, I am overjoyed to see the Spirit of Religious life spread, I am sending my apostolic blessing". In a short time, dear Superior General of the Congregation, I will hand this letter to you. You are to grow in Religious Life through and with the help of the Rule of Life. Keep to it and help your Sisters to observe it.

The Rule of Life is not a burden, but a summary of the Spirit of the Congregation which you must live for all to see.

The Spirit of the Congregation is the Spirit of service, co-operating with the Bishops, the priests and aiming at spreading Catholicism in this world. We must give thanks to God and the Pope for the blessings received today in this part of Africa".

After the Papal Nuncio's preaching, the Superior General and her councilors

all rose and went to receive the document of the declaration. It was at 11:30 a.m that the document was placed in the hands of the Superior General. Then Fr. John Chrisostom Matovu, intoned the Confiteor (I confess to Almighty God). He added prayer for obtaining full indulgence which read.

“Father in Jesus Christ, honourable Bishop Gastone, God’s and Pope’s messenger who had been delegated to lead us in these parts of the world, give a full indulgence to all present. You give this indulgence under the same circumstances as normally the church does so. Pray for the well-being of Our Holy Father Pope Pius XII and peace in our Mother, the Church.”

OTHER SPEAKERS

ARCHBISHOP J. CABANA

“Rev. Msgr. Dominic Kizza, representatives of Bishop Joseph Kiwanuka, and who has delegated me to speak to this audience on this day of jubilation, I could not refuse your wish to delegate me.

To begin with, I congratulate you Superior General with all your councilors, all the Daughters of Mary Sisters, for the great honour which is bestowed on you as the very first Congregation in the whole of Africa to receive this honour. Looking back, I say, I was blessed to have worked with Archbishop Streicher and I know very well what was on his mind. Now I want all to picture our beloved Archbishop Henry Streicher sitting right here in our midst as we sing and clap for him from the bottom of our heart Congratulating him for the joy and gratitude he is experiencing now.

Picture him thanking God for the special grace God has bestowed on the work he (Archbishop Streicher) had started, resulting in what we are experiencing today, the fruits of his labour. Clap your hands now and shout for joy. (and the whole gathering did so).

Another person who, I think, is overjoyed and can hardly sit or even stand, is Sister Mechtilde, a woman whom we cannot forget. Let us congratulate Sister Mechtilde in our Local Kiganda way.....shout for joy, clap your hands, sing praise, raise your arms and dance. I think no one is surprised by our shouts, singing and powerful clapping of our hands, (this was in honour of Mother Mechtilde).

Now when I raise my eyes to look into the heavens I see another wonder. I see a large section of people following the Lamb of God wherever he goes. This large group of people consists of the Bannabikira Sisters who have left this world and are now rejoicing in heaven with their Mother Mechtilde. These dead Sisters are your delegates, you can beckon to them and ask them to prostrate before the Mighty God in thanksgiving for his goodness to us and

the great wonders he has bestowed on your congregation.

Dear friends let us not forget our Holy Father the Pope, who is with us now in the person of his delegate here present. Now to show our gratitude and thankfulness for all his goodness to us, let us all rise and repeat this phrase after me,

“Thanks be to Our Holy Father” the Pope “Thanks be to Our Holy Father” the Pope.

THE SPEECH OF THE REPRESENTATIVE OF BISHOP KIWANUKA

Most Rt. Rev. Papal Nuncio, Rt. Rev. Archbishop, Bishops, Priests, Governmental Dignitaries, Rev. Brothers and Sisters, all of you our visitors, you and I feel sorry to see that the local ordinary of this diocese, Bishop Joseph Kiwanuka, is not present on this very great occasion. I am sorry because I, his representative, cannot welcome and thank you the way Bishop Kiwanuka would have welcomed you let alone to thank you and to appreciate you.

In his name I thank you whole heartedly for what you have done, I am to report this to his Lordship as soon as the occasion is over. Let me begin with a special thanks to the Papal Nuncio who in his kindness has accepted to be here with us, and to lead us in this prayer of thanksgiving, as a Papal Representative who has raised the level of the Congregation of the Daughters of Mary. Archbishop, Henry Streicher, who is now in heaven, must now be filled with joy to see that his goal is eventually achieved. Deep appreciation to all Bishops who, each in his own way, has helped the Daughters of Mary because our Holy Father Pope Pius XII has depended on their reports favouring Bannabikira to raise the Congregation to a higher level of a Pontifical Congregation.

Now I turn to the Daughters of Mary themselves, in the name of the Most High, and in the name of our Bishop, I congratulate you and I thank you for all you have gone through and have endured, most of which, the Baganda thought, could not be endured. In fact this is the reason why so large a gathering including the Papal Nuncio is here.

Finally, I am appealing to all of our guests, and to the Daughters of Mary themselves, always to be praying to God so as to be able, to carry, together with us, this grave responsibility laid on your shoulders, in prayer and in cooperation. Thus God may deign to use this Congregation to spread his religion and to raise our nation.

THE SPEECH OF THE SUPERIOR GENERAL

“For many of you, this might be the first time to hear a woman speak in public, but this is it; I appreciate the Presence of the Papal Nuncio, the presence of Archbishop Joseph Cabana who helped us so much while still the Bursar in Entebbe, the presence of D.C. and your presence all of you.

As a Congregation, we appreciate the cooperation and the mutual support we receive from different peoples.

The raising of our Congregation to the Pontifical level is a grave responsibility, yes it is an honour, but with a greater accountability which must be exemplified in the life of each one of us, individually and as a community”.

Yes there was much rejoicing and gladness, everyone was served to his / her satisfaction. Foods, drinks, disserts of all kinds were all served. Peoples’ departure was between 2:00 and 3:00 p.m.

ENTERTAINMENT

The main item was a delightful play exhibiting the history of the life of the Congregation from 1908 to 1958. It was staged by the Bwanda students, presented in both Luganda and English. It was an impressive play both enjoyable and instructive.

A MESSAGE FROM THE KABAKA OF BUGANDA

Because of his other demanding commitments, the Kabaka of Buganda could not make it. He only sent congratulatory messages. However, he was not satisfied with this. So he decided on another day to come to Bwanda himself.

On 18th August, 1958 bells rang, calling the Bannabikira, the White Sisters, the Novices, all invited dignitaries for the occasion, and all peoples gathered in front of the chapel. They all lined up in groups. After a while, the Kabaka’s car appeared, with a small banner indicating his presence. The Sisters, and all peoples, sang, clapped and danced for joy. When he came out of the car, the chaplain, Msgr. Peter Kukeera, welcomed him and he was taken to his designated place.

Msgr. Peter Kukeera presented a message of thanksgiving , brief history of the life of the Congregation, introduced to him the Superior General, her councilors and showed him the letter of appreciation from the Pope. “The Decretum Laudis.” He showed him the strong women who had led the Congregation for all those years, namely; Mother Ursula, Mother Immaculate,

and Mother Antoinetta (the then Superior General).

MSGR. PETER KUKKEERA'S MESSAGE TO THE KABAKA

- He informed the Kabaka of the great mission the Bannabikira Sisters carry out by serving the nation in religion and education.
- That the Sister pray for the well being of the nation – its leaders and how the Sisters prayed long and hard during the Kabaka's exile.
- He introduced the White Sisters to the Kabaka pointing out the excellent work they do for the nation. He finally, presented the Kabaka with a gift.

Then honourable Ssekiboobo, on behalf of the Kabaka, gave a vote of thanks for all that was done, and wished them well.

Then, the Kabaka and his attendants were taken for refreshment, after which the Kabaka appeared on the high verandah, talked to some Sisters and at 2:15 p.m waved farewell to the Sisters, again, amid singing, clapping and shouts of joy, he left Bwanda.

CHAPTER NINE

THE REST HOUSE: SANATORIUM

In the year 1935, when Bishop Edward Michaud was the Buganda local Ordinary, he spoke his mind about the Bannabikira sisters who were then aging. He said:

"It is right and fitting to establish a home, detached from the Motherhouse in a peaceful location, and free of noise and commotion. This home is to be for the retired aging sisters. This will be the place where every aging sister will find restfulness and tranquility of mind until her departure to eternal rest." The Bishop's suggestion was a welcome news, a place was found and construction began. The place then was named SANATORIUM, meaning "a place of rest."

The place was to accommodate two types of Bannabikira Sisters;

- Those weakened by sickness, let them come over for treatment
- Those weakened by age, let them come and rest.

The Sanatorium house was opened in 1940. As to the present, sanatorium has developed and advanced in many ways;

In numbers of occupants which include the weak, the sick and the elderly.
The trained nursing staff and non- trained caring staff.
We are very grateful to all our benefactors, may God reward you abundantly.

NB. It was his Lordship Rt. Rev. Bishop Edward Michaud who gave the Bannabikira a permission to have the Blessed Sacrament in their convents.

THE DEAD SISTERS

In former days, it was arranged that the dead sisters be buried each in the parish where she died, and so the following sisters were buried in the parish of their death;

- Maama Tereza died in 1924, was buried in Gayaza, Kyadondo
- Maama Blandina died in 1917, was buried in Bujuni.
- Sr. Dezideranta died in 1927, was buried in Lubaga
- Sr. Demetria died in 1929, was buried in Lubaga
- Sr. Nelly I died in 1929, was buried in Virika, Toro
- Sr. Stefania died in 1932, was buried in Rushoroza, Kigezi
- Sr. Adera died in 1942, was buried in Kitovu
- Sr. Matia Mulumba died in 1954, was buried in Lubaga
- Sr. Nelly II died in 1955, was buried in Lubaga

As time went on when one of the General Councils convened, there was much deliberation about the above point. The local, cultural point about the remains of the dead to the ancestral/ hereditary land was reflected on and openly discussed.

It was then decided that in line with the local, cultural custom which is very appropriate, each of the dead sisters must be buried in Bwanda unless if doing so would be impossible.

This was very good news for all the Bannabikira sisters.

BURIAL OF THE DEAD SISTERS

The manner of the burial for the Bannabiikira sisters did not differ from that of the local cultural way. So namely to wrap the dead body into layers and layers of back clothes and the bury the body. But as things changed, burying the dead in coffins gradually became common and was no longer conined to rich people. So, when at one General Chapter, the idea of burying the dead sisters in coffins surfaced, it was only gladly welcome and passed as a resolution to be put into practice with immediate effect. Each grave was also



Above is the Cemetery where all the Daughters of Mary are buried.

In the next pages, we have tried to compile the photos of all the members of the congregation. They are in their sets and the year of their first profession. You can easily trace any Daughter of Mary Sister, even those who died already.

However, where you see an empty space, we have failed to find the photo to attach, but the name is the correct one.

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ARCHBISHOP HENRY STREICHER

The Founder of the Daughters of Mary Sisters - Bwanda



Artistic impression of Kyengera Memorial Project for vulnerable children and single mothers.



BANNAFONT Water Plant



**BANNABIKIRA SISTERS
CELEBRATE
A HUNDRED YEARS OF
SERVICE IN RELIGIOUS LIFE**

(A History of the Congregation)



(1910-2010)

