

TAPE (Stanza Vivaldi) Story he to the Fr. - to the S. - to the H. Sp. : as it was in the beginning so be it now & forever. Amen.

Pope Paul returned to Rome yesterday after another of his visits abroad, the first Pope to visit central Africa, though he'd been there before as Archbishop of Milan. The idea of the Pope travelling outside Rome has now ceased being a matter of news, excitement and wonder: but what he was doing those few days in Africa is worth a few moments thought, and deserves an echo in our prayers. The occasion, planned quite some time ago, was the dedication of a shrine to the Uganda martyrs: and being there for that, he also had a message for the Church of Africa, many of whose bishops were attending a conference in Uganda: and because of his concern for the suffering in the Nigerian civil war, he was making another (and seemingly again unsuccessful) attempt to bring about peace between warring brothers. It's this last purpose an effort which has had most of the publicity - which doesn't mean it should have any less place in our prayers: civil war is always horrible, and this particular one has been dragging on for so long, and it's so far away from us here in HK that perhaps we tend to forget about it, and about the anguish and suffering it's causing so many thousands of our fellow men. Perhaps, also, we're far enough away from it, from its complicated causes, to be able to take a detached view - detached, that is, from the grievances, accusations and counter-claims of either side, NOT from human sympathy and anxiety. The trouble is our newspapers and other news media tend to give one side of the case and that in terms of politics or economics, not of the vast human tragedy & waste that's happening there, and in other parts of the world too. The Pope's mediation efforts and his prayers are needed, and our prayers too. Without prayer, without God there will never be true peace, because there's more to men, more to the suffering and anxiety and fears of men than

a political problem, a social problem, an economic problem, a racial problem: and the men who, in best conscience and with best effort and expertise try to solve these problems themselves need guidance, need to know the heart of man, as only God knows it and can reach them. / It was another kind of inhumanity & cruelty, tho', which brought the Pope to pray in Africa. Unnecessary suffering, many people wd. say of the 50 or so Christians who chose not to renounce their love of and allegiance to Christ and were tortured and murdered for it. It's difficult if not impossible for many modern men to conceive of anything as being more important, more valuable than life itself - something that martyrs remind us of. They don't want to die, but given the narrow choice their persecutors leave them, they willingly accept death rather than obey an unjust perverted human wish. The unreasonableness, the cruelty, stupidity is really on the side of the persecutors who force such a situation: to give in to such force wd. solve nothing, wd. not make for any real peace in the world, for there can't be peace without love, including the love of God. The Uganda martyrs (who now represent Africa in the church calendar) were not victims merely of late 19th century colonial politics, as at least one recent feature article in a HK paper wd. have it. Many of them were quite young boys whose only crime was their refusal to indulge the perverted pleasures of the new, young, cruel and hated ruler who succeeded to the throne of Buganda shortly before their ordeal - and many of them too were not baptized till their martyrdom was almost upon them. But it's time for our prayer in music - and today, the Cherubic Hymn, from the Russian liturgy. MUSIC: PRAYERS.

Russ. Lit.
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I played for you that piece of music for the Eastern rite's liturgy because Wednesday, 6th August, feast of the Transfiguration, is one of the very big festivals of the Eastern Church, wh. we of the western rite don't pay so much attention to: or rather, our liturgy celebrates in different ways the revelation of Christ and His divinity wh. are the high-lights of the Eastern celebration. This point is not irrelevant to reflection on the Pope's recent visit to Uganda: for the Church in Africa is, perhaps understandably, still very much a west European style Church. To take its full place in the development of Africa, as Pope Paul pledged it to do, it will have to become more African — a very difficult evolution which will take time, patience and wisdom, and wh. also needs the help of our prayers and understanding. The health and well-being of the Church in Africa is not still remote & unimportant for us here — we are all brothers in Christ, and their problems & difficulties (different from our own, maybe) do affect us and the vitality of the whole people of God. So, while his memory is fresh these days, let us pray to a saint like Charles Lwanga to ask his intercession that our prayers be sincere and from our hearts, and that they be heard for the welfare and holiness of all God's people, especially those of his own country and continent. Charles Lwanga was only one of those burned to death on June 13, 1886 at Namugongo because he cared more for the welfare of the court pages in his charge than for the vicious whims of a young degenerate who today wd. probably find himself quite at home in our so-called sophisticated societies. Another victim of the same insanity (and there were equal numbers of Catholic and Anglican martyrs in this persecution) was Joseph Mukasa, whose other crime was to protest at the murder of an Anglican bishop. The world hasn't changed all that much since then. May the martyrs of Uganda intercede for all our needs _{today}.