

SECOND AFRICAN REGIONAL SUMMIT OF THE WORLD APOSTOLATE OF FATIMA

From the 6th to the 10th of October, 2010 the Second African Congress of the World Apostolate of Fatima took place at Abuja, Nigeria; precisely in the Papal Ground at Kubwa, Abuja, where some years ago the Holy Father, the Servant of God John Paul II, celebrated mass before an enormous crowd. The African Congress was entrusted to John Paul II as it considered the main theme of "The Fatima Apostolate in Africa and the New Evangelization in the light of the African Synods."

Seven countries sent nearly seventy delegates to this Second Regional African Summit: Côte d'Ivoire, Cameroon (where the First Regional Congress took place), Tanzania, Gabon, Botswana, Ghana and Nigeria (our excellent host). Nearly three thousand members of the WAF-Nigeria attended all the sessions of this Regional Congress and Third National Rosary Congress.

For this special occasion, the International President of the World Apostolate of Fatima, Prof. Américo Pablo López-Ortiz and the International Secretary, Nuno Prazeres, traveled to Nigeria. Prof. López Ortiz offered two conferences on "The New Evangelization of Africa and the Message of Fatima" and "Consecration to God through the Immaculate Heart of Mary". Mr. Nuno Prazeres offered a talk on "The Role of the International Secretariat in the Propagation of the Message of Fatima."

A special guest of honour was Nigerian Archbishop Jude Mary Thaddeus Okolo, Apostolic Nuncio to Central African Republic & Chad, who offered a talk on the "The Fatima Apostolate in Africa and the New Evangelization in the Light of the Synods of Africa". Archbishop Jude Mary is a member of the WAF since he was a child and as he witnessed, his vocation to the priesthood comes from his devotion to Our Lady of Fatima. As many other Nigerian priests attending the Congress, he was sponsored by the WAF International as part of the missionary effort of the WAF Secretariat to make possible their ecclesiastical studies.

The international delegates paid a visit to His Grace Most Reverend John Onaiyekan, Archbishop of Abuja and to the Apostolic Nuncio of Nigeria, His Excellency Most Reverend Augustine Kasujja. The WAF-Nigeria is in total consonance with the Church in Nigeria, working together for the New Evangelization of the nation.

A great gratitude goes to Prof. Michael Ogunu, the National President of the WAF in Nigeria, as well as to Reverend Father Mark Binang, National Chaplain, for their great job in coordinating a wonderful Programme of Events, including the Eucharistic Celebrations, Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, Candlelights Procession with thousands of participants, penitential services and confessions for all participants, meditation of the Holy Rosary, Brown Scapular Investiture and Installation of National Patrons/Patroness of the WAF Nigeria. One of them was the former International Lay Delegate, Mr. Maurice Archibong, who attended the meeting with his wife. Other special guests were His Eminence Edidem Emmanuel Ekpo Okon Abasi Otu V, Obong of Calabar and Natural Ruler, who is a member of the WAF-Nigeria and Mr. Dominic U. Jack, first organizer of the Blue Army in Nigeria and National Secretary for many years.

Some of the remarkable talks were: "The Brown Scapular of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel and the First Saturday's Devotion" by Prof. Michael Ogunu (a Carmelite Tertiary and National President of the WAF-Nigeria); "The Rosary as an Indispensable Instrument of Evangelization and an Unfailing Weapon against the forces of evil in African Societies" by Rev. Fr. (Dr.) Michael Sasa, Rector of the Sts Peter & Paul Major Seminary at Ibadan, Nigeria (more than 550 seminarians attend this seminary and some of them attended the Congress too as WAF members) and "Promoting the Sanctity and Dignity of Human Life among African communities" by Eng. Jerry Okwuosama, a Pro-Life Specialist.

A great contribution was made by His Excellency Bishop Evaristus Chengula from Tanzania, still an active diocesan bishop, who presided Holy Mass and offered a great witnessing of pastoral care with his presence as he has been doing for decades looking after the WAF in his country.

Several Executive sessions were held for the international delegates coordinated by Father Roland Bergneh, from Cameroon, Regional Coordinator for Africa and member of the International Board of Trustees of the WAF. These meetings were chair by Prof. Américo López-Ortiz, the International President of the WAF. A strong need for materials was expressed by the delegates, especially in French. The International WAF- Catalogue in English is much appreciated. All copies of dvd's and books in English were distributed and very well received. The dvd in English: "Fatima, Hope of the World - A Catechesis on Fatima" by the International President offers 13 Programmes of 28 minutes each on the main topics of the Message of Fatima to form national leaders at all levels and is available from the International Secretariat. Our gratitude goes to the WAF-India and the WAF-USA in developing some of these materials.

The delegates petitioned to the Holy Father an apostolic exhortation on the First Saturday's Devotion for the Universal Church. The original text was drafted by Mr. Polycarp, President of the WAF-Cameroon and Fr. Roland Bergneh, Regional Coordinator and approved unanimously to be submitted to the Holy See.

After five days of great discipline, personal sacrifices of many participants to the Congress and special reverence and love for the Good Lord and Our Lady of Fatima, mixed with unique human warmth and friendship, the Congress finished as a great success. It was like if "the sun have danced again" with a spiritual bouquet of graces and mercy poured on the many participants. The Church in Africa has a brilliant future.