



UNCCLA President Christmas Message 2025: To the Lay Faithful of Uganda "Gloria in Excelsis Deo!"

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

The Mystery of the Incarnation: God with Us

As we gather to celebrate the birth of our Saviour, Jesus Christ, I greet you with the joy and peace that only the Prince of Peace can provide. Christmas is far more than a historical remembrance; it is the living reality of Emmanuel—God with us. In the silence of the manger, we witness the profound humility of a God who chose to enter our human story, not in a palace of power, but in the poverty of a stable.

This act of Incarnation tells us that every human life, every village, and every national struggle is seen and loved by God. By taking on our flesh, Christ has sanctified our earthly existence. Therefore, our celebration must not be a mere escape from the world's challenges, but a deep immersion into the hope that Christ brings—a hope that reassures us that darkness, no matter how thick, can never overcome the Light.

The Light of the World and Salt of the Earth

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus tells us: *"You are the salt of the earth... You are the light of the world"* (Matthew 5:13-14). This is not just a title; it is our fundamental identity as the Catholic Laity.

- **As Salt:** Salt preserves and gives flavour. In a society sometimes tainted by corruption, bitterness, or division, we are called to preserve the moral fiber of our communities and bring the "flavour" of the Gospel to the secular world.
- **As Light:** We are called to dispel the shadows of fear and misinformation. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden; our faith must shine through our public choices.

This mission is beautifully echoed in the Apostolic Exhortation *Africae Munus* (The Commitment of Africa). Pope Benedict XVI reminded us that the lay faithful have a specific responsibility to "Christianise" the social, political, and economic order. He wrote:

"The lay faithful... are called to bring the brightness of the Gospel into the heart of the city... particularly in the workplace and in the political sphere" (Africae Munus, 128).

As we approach the January elections, remember that your "salt" must prevent the decay of injustice, and your "light" must guide the way toward the common good.

A Season of Hope Amidst National Elections

This year, our Christmas celebrations fall at a unique and providential moment in Uganda's history. As we enter the New Year, we prepare for presidential and parliamentary elections. We acknowledge that for many, this season brings a mix of high expectations and genuine anxiety.

However, the message of the Manger remains: "Do not be afraid." The light that dawned in Bethlehem over two thousand years ago still shines today. It is a light of hope that transcends political cycles and party colours. Our ultimate security is not rooted in earthly power or the strength of any individual, but in the sovereign love of God who guides the destiny of all nations.

Our Call as the Laity: A Sacred Duty

Our faith must not be left at the church door; it must follow us into the polling booth. As we prepare to vote, I urge you to:

- **Exercise Your Right with Prayer:** Approach the upcoming elections as a sacred duty of stewardship. Seek the wisdom of the Holy Spirit to choose leaders who reflect the values of justice, human dignity, and servant leadership.
- **Be Agents of Reconciliation:** *Africae Munus* reminds us that the Church in Africa is called to be a "sign and instrument of reconciliation and peace." In your communities and on social media, let your words be seasoned with grace. Reject violence, tribalism, and sectarianism. Remember that after the elections, we will still be neighbors, and we will still be one family under God.

- Trust in God's Sovereignty: While we do our part as diligent citizens, let us remain calm and steadfast, knowing that *"Many are the plans in a person's heart, but it is the Lord's purpose that prevails"* (Proverbs 19:21).

Vision for 2026: Pilgrims of Hope

As we cross into 2026, let us renew our commitment to the Jubilee theme of being "Pilgrims of Hope." Let our homes be places of prayer and our public lives be a testimony to the Gospel.

May the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of the Church and Queen of Peace, intercede for our beautiful country, Uganda. May the Holy Spirit grant us a peaceful election and a year filled with the abundance of God's grace.

I wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Peaceful, Blessed New Year 2026.

For God and My Country.



Gervase Ndyababo
PRESIDENT, UNCCLA