

Cause for the beatification of Fr. Simeon Lourdel Mapeera and Bro. Amans Delmas

Opening Session of the Inquiry – 6th November 2016 at Lubaga

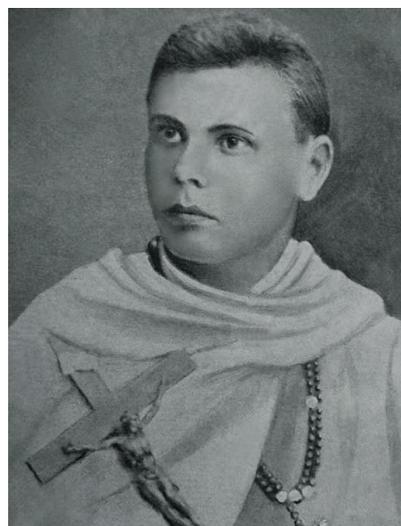


Bro. Amans Delmas 1852 -
1895

The wish to open up the inquiry on the cause for the beatification of Fr. Simeon Lourdel Mapeera dates back to the 1950s. On the 15th August 1959, Fr. Modeste Raux (1870-1965), a former superior of Lubaga and the initiator of the construction works of Nalukolongo Chapel in 1923, wrote a letter to His Grace Joseph Cabana, Archbishop of Lubaga, proposing to him the idea of opening up the inquiry for both Mapeera, *the first heroic apostle of Uganda* and Bishop Leon Livinhac, *the first Bishop of Uganda*. Archbishop Cabana replied to that letter on the 20th August 1959 saying that for Mapeera, someone was going to write his biography, while for Bishop Livinhac, he said that the Superior General was the person to initiate his cause. It is possible that at the time the focus was on the canonisation of the Uganda Martyrs, who, almost forty years after their beatification in 1920, their file had recently been re-opened.

The idea was revived by the late Emmanuel Cardinal Kiwanuka Nsubuga, who, in 1987 initiated the process of the inquiry for Mapeera when Rome gave him the green light (*Nihil Obstat*). Five years ago, His Grace, Dr. Cyprian Kizito Lwanga, did the same with Bro. Amans and received the *Nihil Obstat* from Rome. In canonical language, both Mapeera and Amans have the title of ‘Servant of God’.

However, according to the Church’s norms for conducting this inquiry, there are specific procedures which have to be followed meticulously. One of these is the ‘*opening session*’ or the ‘*first session*’ which is ‘conducted for the swearing of the oaths of all the Officials of the Inquiry, presided over by the diocesan Bishop’. This is the ceremony which will take place at **Lubaga on the 6th November 2016, during the Eucharistic celebration (10.00am) presided by the Archbishop of Kampala, His Grace, Dr. Cyprian Kizito Lwanga.**



Fr. Simeon Lourdel Mapeera
1853 - 1890

The venue, Lubaga Cathedral, is itself very meaningful in relation to this event. This is the very place where Kabaka Muteesa I said ‘YES’ in response to the request of Mapeera and Amans, to allow them and their



Lubaga Cathedral

conferees to settle in his kingdom to teach the Catholic Faith. On the 6th November 2016, 137 years later, we will be going to the same spot with another request, this time not to an earthly king, but to the King of heaven and earth, the King of Kings and the source of all holiness, asking Him to do great things for us through the intercession of his two servants, Mapeera and Amans, so that one day, they too, as it was for their spiritual sons, the Uganda Martyrs, may be counted among the Blessed and Saints.

Again, this venue has another historical significance for the Missionaries of Africa and the Catholic Church in Uganda. The present cathedral was specifically consecrated on the date of the 31st October 1925, when we were celebrating the centenary of the birth of our Founder, Cardinal Charles Lavigerie, who, indirectly, was the founder of the Catholic Church in Uganda by the fact that he was the one who sent these missionaries into this country.

The Archdiocese of Kampala has also opened up a centre – Mapeera-Nabunnya Pilgrimage Centre - to follow up on the activities – prayers, novenas, pilgrimages, providing books and souvenirs about them, that promote the devotion of these two Servants of God. It is located at Nabunnya (at the foot of Lubaga Hill), the third mission post founded by Mapeera in Uganda and where he spent his last days in this country and buried on the 13th May 1890. Visit our website for more information: <http://www.mapeeraandamans.org/>

In the history of the Society of the Missionaries of Africa, these two are going to be the pioneers of such an initiative taken by the Local Church. The Church in Uganda is responding to the call of Pope Emeritus, Benedict XVI, which he made in his Post-synodal Apostolic Exhortation, *Africae Munus*, saying that: “*I encourage the Pastors of the Local Churches to recognize among servants of the Gospel in Africa those who could be canonized according to the norms of the Church, not only in order to increase the number of African saints, but also to obtain new intercessors in heaven to accompany the Church on her pilgrim journey and to plead before God for the African continent.*” (# 114)

Today, the Church in Uganda needs more local *models on her pilgrim journey* as she seeks to renew herself and embark seriously on the *new evangelization mission*. Mapeera and Amans enjoy a privileged position among these *local models*! It is our hope and prayer that by revisiting their lives in the course of this inquiry, we will be *challenged, renewed and empowered* to follow wholeheartedly in their footsteps.

Nnyombi Richard, MAfr.



Nabulagala Memorial Chapel where the remains of Mapeera and Amans are buried.