

## First Day of the Novena at Kigungu – 8<sup>th</sup> February 2017



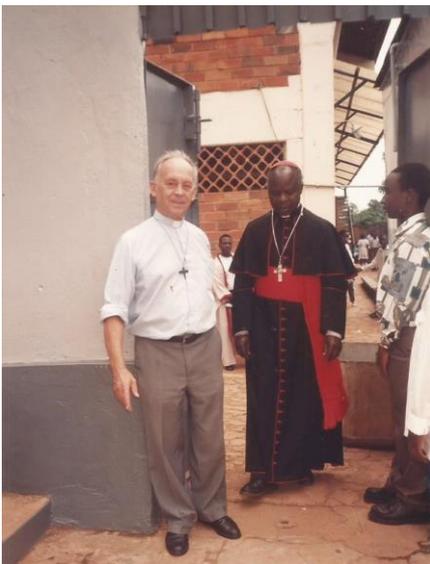
The first day of the Novena in preparation for the celebration of the 138<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the arrival of the two pioneer Catholic Missionaries in Uganda, Fr. Simeon Lourdel and Bro. Amans Delmas, was attended by about sixty Christians. The main celebrant was the Episcopal Vicar of Entebbe Vicariate, Rev. Fr. Joseph Ssebayigga, while the preacher was Fr. Richard Nnyombi M.Afr. Referring to the theme of the Novena which is also theme of the Archdiocese of

Kampala for this year: **Remember, Rejoice and Renew**, the preacher reminded the faithful of two events which were being remembered on this day: the death of Mr. Alexander Mackay (8<sup>th</sup> Feb. 1890) and the Feast of St. Josephine Bakhita, a former slave from Sudan whose feast day, since a few years ago, was chosen to be the International Day of Prayer and Awareness against Human Trafficking.

These two events and people, the preacher said, relate very well with the lives and works of the two pioneers missionaries. Mackay the protestant missionary, in spite of his opposition to the arrival of these Catholic Missionaries, indirectly helped them to shine out and the teachings of the Catholic Church which he opposed, for example, the devotion and veneration of the Blessed Virgin Mary. For St. Bakhita, he reminded the faithful of the charitable works of the pioneer missionaries of redeeming the slaves and caring for them. The lesson and inspiration from this, he said, is that we too should always strive to transform obstacles to our living out our Catholic faith into opportunities of



witnessing to it even with greater conviction. We too, like our ancestors in the Catholic Faith should get involved in the fight against all types of present day slavery experienced by our brothers and sisters, within and outside Uganda.



During this Mass, the faithful prayed in a special way for the peaceful repose of the soul of Fr. Christian (Kiki) Gillain, who was buried on this very day in Belgium. Fr. Kiki died on the 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2017 at the age of 89 years. He served in Uganda for 47 years and was a great devotee of the pioneer missionaries and the Uganda Martyrs. He contributed a lot in preserving and developing the places related to them, for example, Kigungu, Nalukolongo and Old Kampala. He encouraged local pilgrimages to these places. May his soul rest in eternal peace!

