

## **Mgr Henri Streicher (1863 – 1952)**

**“Vince in bono malum”**(Conquer evil with good)

*64<sup>th</sup> Death Anniversary*



Whereas, Fr. Simeon Lourdel Mapeera was given the title of “the Apostle of Uganda”, Mgr Henry Streicher, locally known as ‘Bishop *Stenseera*’, was himself given that of “the Apostle of Buddu” although during his time, his diocese extended beyond Buddu (Masaka). In fact, his diocese included Bunyoro, Toro and Ankole.

This year, 7<sup>th</sup> June 2016, is the 64<sup>th</sup> death anniversary of the ‘Apostle of Buddu’. Mgr Streicher was the last to pass on, of the founding fathers of the Catholic Church in Uganda in the different regions of the country. We take this occasion not only to remember some of his missionary activities, but also to seek from him some inspiration for our commitment to continue the good work he started in Buddu 125 years ago.

Mgr Streicher said that he received his vocation at the age of eight. He was inspired by the readings made to him by his mother about the life of the missionaries and martyrs. He was especially attracted by martyrdom! Because of his poor health, he was very much discouraged by his bishop to join the missionaries. However, because of his insistence, his bishop finally gave him permission to join the White Fathers.

In 1890, during his short stay in Carthage as a teacher in the Scholasticate, Card. Lavigerie talked to them about the problems in Uganda – persecution of the Christians and the killing of the martyrs,

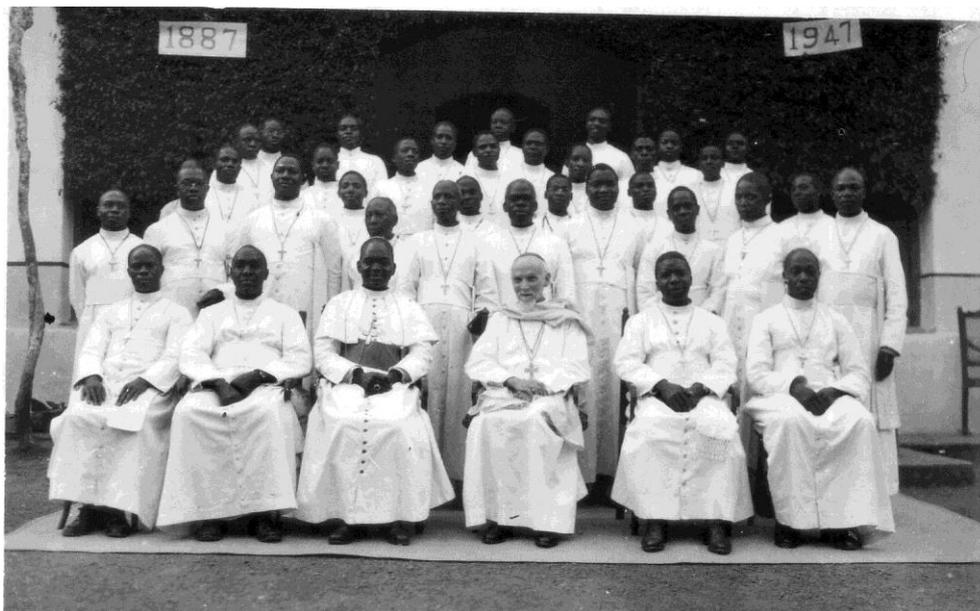
the religious wars that followed, etc. Following this talk, Streicher wrote to the Cardinal these moving words:

“The mission of Uganda has always fascinated me, because it has been the most dangerous and consequently the mission where a missionary has the best chances of finding what he desires: the suffering for our Lord and the martyrdom. Your eminence and most loving Father, prostrated at your feet at this moment, I humbly request you the grace, in the name of our glorious martyrs, the distinguished favour to go and replace on the battlefield the regretted Fr. Chantemerle\* who has just succumbed to death. If his eminence thinks that I am worthy, I will go and put at the service of these black people all that the good Lord has given me of strength, heart and good will; what I can assure to your paternal heart is that I will love them. I entrust this supplication into the hands of Our Lady of Africa”. (30<sup>th</sup> of May 1890. \*Fr. Jules Chantemerle died in Ssesse on the 1<sup>st</sup> April 1890)

Whoever reads about the life story of this ‘Apostle of Buddu’ will discover how much he tried, in spite of his human weaknesses like all human beings, to live according to the above words.

**“*Vince in bono malum*”** (Conquer evil with good)

Mgr Streicher was a greater promoter of pious associations and devotions among the laity. Some of these were: 1<sup>st</sup> Friday of the month, Enthronement of the Sacred Heart in homes, Holy Hour, Fraternity of Mount Carmel (Cf. wearing of scapulars), Uganda Martyrs, frequent receiving of the Holy Communion, Communion of children, Adoration of 40 hours, Morning and evening prayers, Rosary and attending daily Mass. Being an active member of these associations and regular practices of these devotions is the best means to fight and “conquer evil with good” which was the episcopal motto of Mgr. Streicher.



***Priestly Diamond Jubilee & Episcopal Golden Jubilee (1887-1947)***

Here are some of the historical facts about Mgr Stenseera:

- **29<sup>th</sup> July 1863:** Born at Wasselonne in the diocese of Strasbourg, France. He was the son of James Streicher and Anne Hiebel. They were 8 children. One of his sisters was religious and one of his brothers a priest.
- **10<sup>th</sup> September 1884:** He entered the novitiate of the Missionaries of Africa at Maison-Carrée in Algiers, Algeria.
- **17<sup>th</sup> October 1886:** He made his Missionary Oath at Carthage.
- **23<sup>rd</sup> September 1887:** He was ordained priest at Carthage by Cardinal Lavigerie. Immediately after his ordination, he was appointed to the seminary of St. Anne in Jerusalem where he taught Church History, Holy Scriptures and Latin for two years.
- **1888:** He was appointed to Carthage (Tunis, Tunisia) in the Scholasticate.
- **1890:** He was appointed to Uganda. This is the year in which Mapeera died (12<sup>th</sup> May).
- **29<sup>th</sup> June 1890:** He left Algiers for Uganda in the 9<sup>th</sup> Caravan. In this group, there were 12 priests, 6 brothers and 2 auxiliaries.
- **February 1891:** He arrived at Nabunnya (Lubaga), the place where Mapeera died and was buried first. He was immediately appointed to Buddu with two other missionaries, Fr. Jean Gacon and Bro. Victor Claes Louis. They arrived in Buddu on the feast of St. Joseph, 19<sup>th</sup> March 1891 and their first mission post was at Kawaala (not far from Bukakata).



*Fr. Jean Gacon*

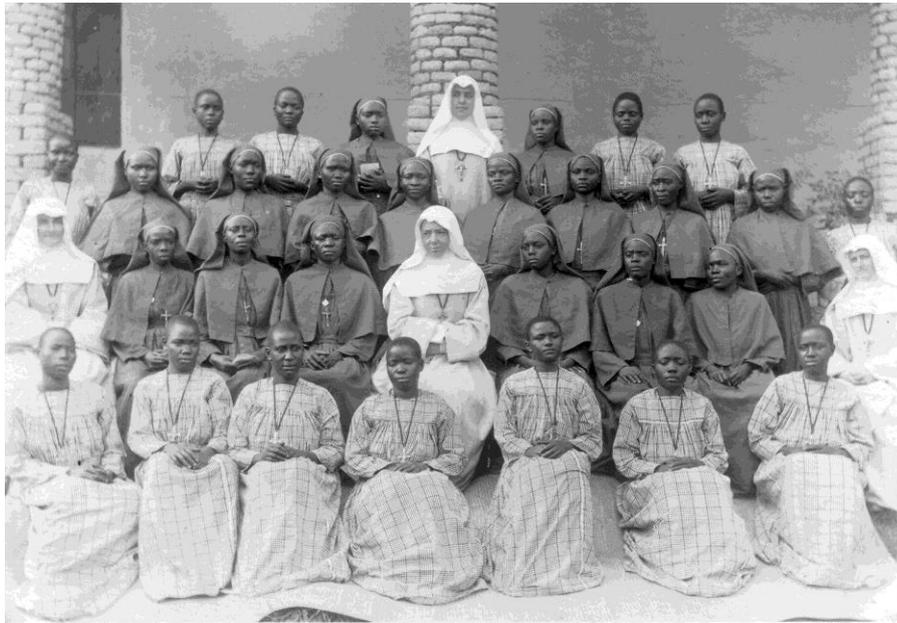


*Bro. Victor*

- **January 1892:** Catholic-Protestant war. The missionaries and the Christians at Kawaala took refuge in Bukoba / Kiziba. Their plan was to start a new mission in Kiziba but the atmosphere being less welcoming, they decided to come back to Buddu in April the same year. They found that their mission at Kawaala had been looted and destroyed. They decided to move to the village called Lubale which was later named Villa-Maria (Immaculate Conception).
- **1897:** He was appointed bishop of North Nyanza Vicariate to replace Mgr. Antonin Guillermain who died suddenly on the 14<sup>th</sup> July 1896 at Villa-Maria. NB: Mgr Guillermain is buried in the chapel in Bukalasa Seminary cemetery.
- **15<sup>th</sup> August 1897:** He was ordained bishop at Kamoga (Mwanza, Tanganyika) by Mgr Jean-Joseph Hirth.
- **1897:** Political rebellion against the colonial government, led by Mwanga and his supporters. Some of the rebels were Catholic chief leaders, for example, Gabriel Mujaasi. Mgr Streicher

had advised all Christians not to support the rebellion. Church properties were attacked and destroyed. The rebellion was suppressed and Mwanga was replaced as king by his one year old son, Prince Daudi Chwa.

- **1899:** From his journey to Europe and the Mother House of the White Fathers in Algiers, Mgr Streicher came back to Uganda with 12 Missionaries and 6 Missionary Sisters of Our Lady of Africa (White Sisters). They arrived at Lubaga on 18<sup>th</sup> October 1899. These nuns were the first religious women in Uganda.

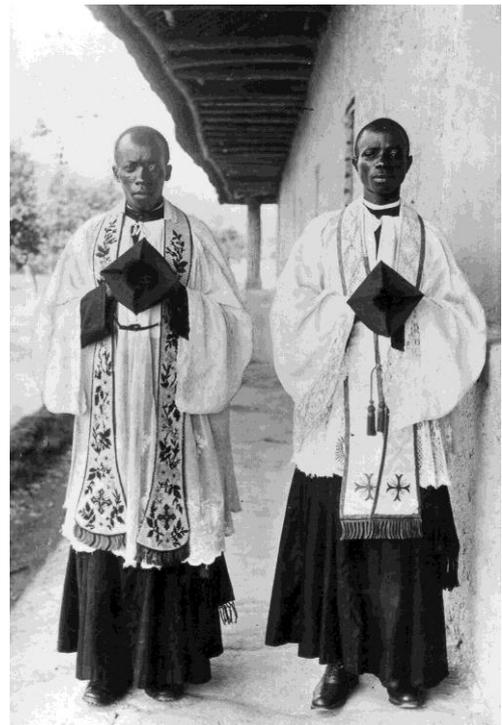


*Bannabikira*

- **1<sup>st</sup> November 1899:** Consecrated his vicariate, as recommended by Pope Leon XIII, to the Sacred Heart of Jesus.
- **2<sup>nd</sup> November 1901:** Presided the ceremony to transfer the remains of Frs Simeon Lourdel Mapeera, Denoit Camille and Bro. Pierre Tertyre, from Nabunnya to the burial chapel in the cemetery behind Lubaga Cathedral.
- **1902:** Started the Catechist school at Lubaga. It was transferred to Mitala-Maria in 1903 and then to Bikira in 1905. Mgr. Streicher was a great promoter of the catechists' vocation right from the beginning of his missionary work at Kawaala in Buddu.
- Although at first he was not very favourable to the idea of promoting local priestly vocations as proposed by Mgr. Hirth, he later on embraced the idea and worked tirelessly to make it a reality. He did the same with vocation of the religious men and women. Bukalasa and Katigondo seminaries were started during his time.
- **1910:** He founded the Congregation of the Bannabikira Sisters (Daughters of Marys or commonly known as the Bwanda Sisters). At the beginning, he considered the vocation of these sisters to be that of 'women catechists' which has remain part of their religious charism.
- **23<sup>rd</sup> September 1912:** Priestly Silver Jubilee.
- **1913:** Visit to Europe / Vatican with Baganda chiefs: Stanislaus Mugwanya, Alexis Ssebowa, Prince Joseph Musanje and Benedict, son of Mugwanya. On 11<sup>th</sup> March they were received by Pope Pius X.



- **1912:** He invited the Mary Reparatrix Sisters (locally known as Entebbe Sisters or Blue Sisters) to come to Uganda. Their primary mission would be perpetual adoration. The ‘Immaculate Heart of Mary Reparatrix Sisters’ (Gogonya Sisters) began as a ‘Third Order’ of these sisters.
- **29<sup>th</sup> June 1913:** He ordained the first Ugandan priests: Bazilio Lumu and Victory Mukasa Womeraka.
- **1914-1918:** 1<sup>st</sup> World War. About forty missionaries were mobilised. This had a negative impact on the missionary work in the vicariate.
- **19<sup>th</sup> May 1918:** Ordination of Mgr John Forbes, his coadjutor.
- **6<sup>th</sup> June 1920:** He assisted at the ceremony of the beatification of the Uganda Martyrs in Rome.
- **1926:** He invited the Brothers of Christian Instruction (commonly known as ‘Kisubi Brothers’) to come to Uganda.
- **15<sup>th</sup> August 1922:** Episcopal Silver Jubilee. On this occasion, he ordained Mgr Julien Gorju, the first Apostolic Vicar of Burundi.
- **31<sup>st</sup> October 1925:** He consecrated Lubaga Cathedral in commemoration of the centenary of the birth of Cardinal Lavignerie.



*Mukasa*

*Lumu*

- **1927:** He founded the Institute of the Bannakaroli Brothers (Brothers of St. Charles Lwanga)
- **1930:** He founded the Uganda Martyrs’ Guild.
- **1932:** Mgr Edward Michaud was appointed his coadjutor. He was already bishop of Tabora and had been ordained by Mgr Streicher.
- **1932:** He asked Rome to retire.
- **1933:** His request for retirement was accepted. On this occasion, he was appointed Archbishop of Brysis. He retired at Ibanda in a new Vicariate of Rwenzori where he spent 12 years as a

simple missionary, preaching, confessing, looking after the sick, visiting people and receiving them at the mission.

- More than 40 mission posts (parishes) were founded during his time. Some of these were: Mitala Maria, Nandere, Busubizi, Bujuni, Narozali, Hoima, Mbarara, Entebbe, Kannabulemu (Nazareth), Butiti, Butende, Gayaza, Bukalagi, Naddangira, Kitovu, Bunyarugulu, Masindi, Ibanda. Also Mahagi and Mudzi-Maria (Congo DRC).
- **29<sup>th</sup> October 1939:** He witnessed, in St Peter's Basilica in the Vatican, the episcopal ordination of Mgr. Joseph Kiwanuka, by Pope Pius XII. He was co-consecrator with the Pope. 11 other bishops for mission lands were ordained on the same occasion. NB: Mgr Streicher ordained Kiwanuka priest 26<sup>th</sup> May 1929.



*Villa-Maria Church*

- **1945:** He left Ibanda and went back to Villa Maria.
- **1947:** Episcopal Golden Jubilee.
- **7<sup>th</sup> June 1952:** He died at the age of 89 at Villa Maria.
- **10<sup>th</sup> June 1952:** He was buried in the Church of Villa Maria.

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**“For the one who has been standing uprightly, let the joy of the jubilee bring more strength in him / her to be able to run even faster than before on the path of holiness;  
let the one who has been limping try to speed up; and for the one who has been laying down like a dead body in immorality the day of forgiveness has dawned, let him or her stand up!”**

(Mgr Streicher, in preparation for the golden jubilee of the arrival of Fr. Simeon Lourdel Mapeera and Bro Amans Delmas celebrated on the 20<sup>th</sup> January 1929)