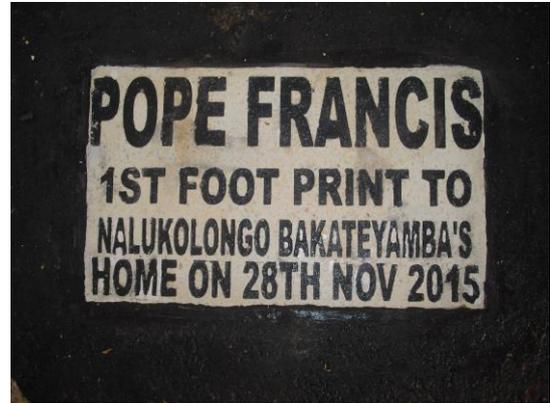


NALUKOLONGO, THE LAST STATION BEFORE NAMUGONGO

***Ekyoto* at Nalukolongo**

When, in 1923, the priests and leaders of the laity of Lubaga Parish, led by Fr. Modeste Raux (WF) and Chief Stanislaus Mugwanya, decided to build a memorial church at Nalukolongo in memory of Our Lady of Buganda (*Namasole wa Buganda*), the Uganda Martyrs and the Pioneer Missionaries, they also decided to make the annual pilgrimage at this place on the feast day of the Uganda Martyrs. They, in addition, decided that during this pilgrimage, there would be a *Kyoto*, meaning narrating to the pilgrims the story of the



Uganda Martyrs and the Catholic Church in Uganda. However, in the course of the development of the parish and the Church in Uganda, this pilgrimage and the *kyoto* did not continue for long! (*Kyoto* in Luganda means the hearth. Traditionally, like in other traditional societies, it was around the hearth in evening that the elders passed on to the young generations the traditions and customs about their respective families, clans and tribe.)

This year 2016, the idea of the *kyoto* at Nalukolongo has been revived during the Novena of the Uganda Martyrs (25th May – 2nd June).

Nalukolongo the last station before Namugongo



This revival was inspired by the fact that in the recent past years, hundreds of pilgrims, especially from the West and the South of Uganda, (i.e., from the dioceses of Kabale, Mbarara, Kasese, Fort-Portal and Masaka), have made Nalukolongo their last station before embarking on the last leg of their 'walk for God and the Uganda Martyrs' to Namugongo.

This stop over, in fact, fits well in this pilgrimage in the footsteps of the Uganda

Martyrs. The historical link between Nalukolongo and the Uganda Martyrs prepares well these pilgrims for the last part of their spiritual journey. Many of the martyrs followed their catechism classes at this place and thirteen of them, including their leader Charles Lwanga, were baptised at this place. Many came here to receive their *viaticum* in preparation for their imminent martyrdom. Nalukolongo is the only place where the remains of Charles Lwanga and Mathias Mulumba, the only remains of the martyrs that were secured, were buried for seven years (1886-1893). The

presence at this place of the tomb of the late Emmanuel Cardinal K. Nsubuga, a great devotee of the Uganda Martyrs, is another source of spiritual inspiration for these pilgrims. (See the historical facts about Nalukolongo on this website.)

Wake up, eat and drink and continue your journey

For these pilgrims, Nalukolongo is like that bush-tree in the wilderness under which Elijah was sleeping when the Angel of the Lord came to him, woke him up and told him to eat and drink and continue his journey to Mt. Horeb where he was to encounter the Lord, (1 Kings 19: 4ff).



Special preparations, therefore, were made this year to welcome them, not only in terms of providing them with some material needs such as water, food and shelter, but also and especially the spiritual needs in terms of the daily Eucharistic celebration

and the *kyoto* which included the historical inputs about the pioneer missionaries, the Uganda Martyrs and the Catholic historical sites within Kampala such as Nabulagala, Lubaga, Nabunnya, Kitebi, Jjugula, Nakivubo and of course Nalukolongo itself. And for those who wanted, they were guided to some of these places.

Challenges and commitment

Nalukolongo has a limited space to welcome these pilgrims but its main challenge to appropriately receive them is the lack of infra-structures and some of the essential materials. The most urgent of these are the toilets, bathrooms and tents.

But, in spite of these challenges, the commitment to welcome the pilgrims and use the occasion to have an annual *kyoto* remains. Like the pilgrims, the joint welcoming team which included the Good Samaritan Sisters, Mapeera and Amans Beatification Promoters and the leaders of Nalukolongo Sub-Parish, are ready to face these challenges trusting in God's providence and the generosity of the people of good will.

*Also read Pope Francis' speech at Nalukolongo on 28th November 2015.

❖ For any help, please contact the Superior of Nalukolongo Convent of the Good Samaritan Sisters - 0753.141.252, or Mapeera-Nabunnya Pilgrimage Centre – 0392001448. Thank you!