

## **Pope Francis' Address at Mapeera-Bakateyamba Home**

Nalukolongo, Kampala, Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> November 2015

Dear Friends,

Thank you for your warm welcome. I wanted very much to visit this House of Charity, which Cardinal Nsubuga founded here in Nalukolongo. This is a place which has always been associated with the Church's outreach to the poor, the handicapped, the sick. Here, in early times, slave children were ransomed and women received religious instruction. I greet the Good Samaritan Sisters who carry on this fine tradition, and I thank them for their years of quiet and joyful service in this apostolate.

I also greet the representatives of the many other apostolic groups who serve the needs of our brothers and sisters in Uganda. Above all, I greet the residents of this home and others like it, and all who benefit from these works of Christian charity. For this is a home. Here you can find love and care; here you can feel the presence of Jesus, our brother, who loves each of us with God's own love.

Today, from this Home, I appeal to all parishes and communities in Uganda – and the rest of Africa – not to forget the poor. The Gospel commands us to go out to the peripheries of society, and to find Christ in the suffering and those in need. The Lord tells us, in no uncertain terms, that is what he will judge us on! How sad it is when our societies allow the elderly to be rejected or neglected! How wrong it is when the young are exploited by the modern-day slavery of human trafficking! If we look closely at the world around us, it seems that, in many places, selfishness and indifference are spreading. How many of our brothers and sisters are victims of today's throwaway culture, which breeds contempt above all towards the unborn, the young and the elderly!

As Christians, we cannot simply stand by. Something must change! Our families need to become ever more evident signs of God's patient and merciful love, not only for our children and elders, but for all those in need. Our parishes must not close their doors, or their ears, to the cry of the poor. This is the royal road of Christian discipleship. In this way we bear witness to the Lord who came not to be served, but to serve. In this way we show that people count more than things, that who we are is more important than what we possess. For in those whom we serve, Christ daily reveals himself and prepares the welcome which we hope one day to receive in his eternal kingdom.

Dear friends, by simple gestures, by simple prayerful actions which honour Christ in the least of his brothers and sisters, we can bring the power of his love into our world, and truly change it. I thank you once more for your generosity and love. I will remember you in my prayers and I ask you, please, to pray for me. I commend all of you to the loving protection of Mary, our Mother, and I give you my blessing.

*Omukama Abakuume!* (God protect you!)