



POPE FRANCIS VISIT 2015




HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS OFFICIAL VISIT TO UGANDA
27TH -29TH NOVEMBER 2015
JOSEPHINE WRIGHT



ARU SISTERS RUBAGA

LUBAGA
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PARTICIPANT



Sister Jo Wright, rscj, of the Religious of the Sacred Heart in Uganda and the St. Gerard's Church community on Bowen Island, B.C., participated in the **Pope Francis** meeting with priests, seminarians and religious in **St. Mary's Cathedral in Kampala, Uganda**, on the evening of Saturday, **November 28, 2015**. Through Sister Jo, the St. Gerard's community took part.

The venue, which is known as Rubaga Cathedral, is shown from the front on the previous page. The building, which is long, is said to hold up to 5,000 people.

Sister Jo, who states that she was very grateful to be there, took the photo of her badge. Badges like that were worn to identify all participants. The news-agency photo of Pope Francis waving from a vehicle was taken as he arrived at the cathedral.

Here in dark red type is Sister Jo's description of the event:

By 3 p.m., most of the religious, priests and seminarians were already in Rubaga Cathedral awaiting the arrival of Pope Francis that was scheduled for 7 p.m. By 4 p.m. the cathedral was packed. The quietness of the congregation, clearly in prayer, was moving.

Outside, many hundreds of lay people were awaiting the arrival of Pope Francis. He arrived quite promptly at 7 p.m. and received a thunderous applause from the congregation. I was about three-quarters of the way back in the cathedral in the central section and had a

good close-up view of Pope Francis when he walked down the aisle on entering and again when leaving the cathedral. He looked tired, and my heart went out to him.

On reaching the sanctuary, he went up to the tabernacle, where he prayed quietly for several minutes. My heart was filled with gratitude for this man of God. After the usual introductions, Pope Francis went to a lectern and addressed us in Spanish, and a translator expressed it in English. What we didn't know then was that Pope Francis had departed from the talk he had prepared to give and addressed us extemporaneously instead.

It was amazing to see the liveliness and energy he had when speaking. I believe he feels impelled to give the message he shares. What he had to say was certainly focused for religious, priests and seminarians, but much can also be gleaned from his words by our lay brothers and sisters. By 8 p.m., Pope Francis had given his talk. We sang the "*Regina Coeli*," and he left.

Fortunately, Sister Jo made extensive notes. She has typed them up for St. Gerard's as a condensed version of the Pope Francis talk. Here they are in dark red:

I have a message for you to hear and act on. I will speak about three things: *memory*, *fidelity* and *prayer*.

Memory: In the *Book of Deuteronomy*, Moses says "Do not forget," and he says it very many times. Don't forget what God did

for his people. Ask for the grace never to forget but to keep alive the memory. The enemy of memory is forgetfulness. The most dangerous thing against memory is getting too comfortable. Be faithful.

Always be a witness. You must not live on just superficial things. You are part of the future, and a mandate the Church gives you is to be witnesses just as the martyrs who laid down their lives.

Fidelity: Fidelity to your vocation, fidelity to apostolic zeal. Fidelity means the way of holiness, being good missionaries. There are dioceses that have many clergy and others with few, and fidelity means offering to dioceses that need those people.

Fidelity is not to presume on the great treasure you have in the Uganda martyrs or the Pearl of Africa will be condemned to a museum. Keep the missionary spirit—offer priests so Uganda can always be missionary.

Prayer: Fidelity is only possible through prayer. If a religious or priest stops praying due to too much work, he/she has begun to lose memory and fidelity.

Prayer also means humiliation—to confess your own sins. You have to walk on both legs. You cannot have a double life. If you are a sinner, ask for forgiveness. Prayer always begins in recognizing oneself as a sinner.

Don't close into your closet this important treasure of memory. Have the true missionary spirit of Africa.

I ask you to pray for me. Thank you for listening to me.