



## Museveni warns on dangers of sodomy

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**President Yoweri Museveni and his wife Janet wave to Christians at the Catholic shrine. Left is Kampala Archbishop Cyprian Kizito Lwanga and right is Bishop Matthias Sekamanya**

**By Francis Kagolo**

PRESIDENT Yoweri Museveni has commended the Church for its strong stand against homosexuality.

He asked the clergy and African leaders to guard against Western culture, warning that the continent will end up eaten by homosexuality if they relax.

"The African Church is the only one that is still standing against homosexuality. The Europeans are finished. If we follow them, we shall end up in Sodom and Gomorrah," Museveni warned.

The two cities were burnt by God over their wickedness, according to the Old Testament of the Bible.

Citing his parents who joined Christianity 50 years after it had been introduced in Ankole region, the President said it is unwise for people to embrace new cultures just for the sake of it.

Museveni made the remarks while addressing thousands of pilgrims who paid homage to the Christian martyrs at the Church of Uganda shrine in Namugongo near Kampala yesterday.

The function, organised by West Ankole and Namirembe dioceses, was attended by Anglican bishops and clergy from across the country.

The function marked 124 years since 45 Christian converts, 22 Catholics and 23 Anglicans, were killed on the orders of Kabaka Mwanga II, for refusing to denounce their faith.

The majority of the martyrs were burnt to death while others were beheaded and castrated in 1886. The 22 Catholic martyrs were canonised by Pope Paul VI in 1964.

Applauding the martyrs for acting bravely against "immorality in Mwanga's palace", the President urged the congregation to emulate them to develop the country.

"These young men (martyrs) stood for cleanliness, truth and righteousness," he noted.

"I hear there was homosexuality in Mwanga's palace. This was not part of our culture. I hear he learnt it from the Arabs. But the martyrs refused these falsehoods and went for the truth, which is why we are honouring them today."

He commended the martyrs for rejecting the "dehumanisation of people through homosexuality" and advised gay

rights activists that Africa's resistance against homosexuality is historical.

"When they hear us fighting homosexuality, they think we do so because of religion. No. Even before religion came, we were against it and many other vices," he stressed.

Earlier, the guest preacher, the Bishop of Harare Church of the Province of Central Africa, Dr. Chad Gandiya, had condemned "the rapidly increasing" homosexuality in the world and asked the faithful to fight it.

"We are living in a world which is upside down. Some people talk about wicked things as if they are good. We need people to stand up for the truth and reject homosexuality," Gandiya said.

Museveni pledged sh100m towards the beautification of the martyrs' site to match the standards of the side of the Catholic Church. He caused laughter when he said the bush behind the martyrs' shrine was cursing the Church of Uganda. He asked the clergy to clear it.

The President reiterated his calls for the clergy to participate in the fight against corruption, especially at the local council level.

He also asked them to sensitise the local people to play their role in the universal primary and secondary education programmes.

"The Government has catered for the students' school fees, paid the teachers, and built classrooms and staff quarters. The parents should provide pupils with food and uniform."

Archbishop Henry Luke Orombi urged Christians to use the martyrs' day to renew their relationship with Jesus and abandon wickedness.

He likened Museveni to the martyrs for sacrificing for the development of Uganda and prayed to God to sustain him.

The Church of Uganda martyrs' shrine this time recorded massive attendance compared to recent years. The pilgrims came from as far as the DR Congo, Kenya and Tanzania. They picked soil from the spot the martyrs are believed to have been murdered, packed it in bags, hoping it will perform miracles.

Premier Prof. Apolo Nsubambi, Chief Justice Benjamin Odoki, deputy Speaker Rebecca Kadaga, health state minister Dr. Richard Nduhura and many MPs also attended the ceremony.

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