

A martyr Church in the heart of Africa

Witness of the love of God



BISHOP JOSEPH WITTEBOLS

“Life will have no meaning if it is not given”

Biography:

Bishop Joseph Wittebols was born on 12 April 1912 in Etterbeek (Belgium). He made his first religious profession in the congregation of the Priests of the Sacred Heart of Jesus in 1932. After his ordination as a priest, he sailed to the Congo in the autumn of 1938. In Stanleyville (Kisangani), he established Sacred Heart College, which he directed until 1949. At that point, he was appointed bishop of the new apostolic vicariate of Wamba. He was a dynamic, generous and enterprising pastor. The vicariate experienced a period of prosperity. He paid particular attention to the Sisters, among whom was the virgin and martyr, Maria Clementina Anuarite Nengapeta. After a long ordeal of torture, humiliation and harassment, he was murdered in Wamba on November 26, 1964. He wrote: “We have not given of ourselves until we have given of ourselves without reserve and without limit. A total self-gift to God”.

Prayer:

We thank you merciful Father
for calling your apostle and pastor
Bishop Joseph Wittebols
to the service of your Kingdom among the poor and needy,
preaching your Gospel of Love.

In the total self-gift of life
he fulfilled his consecration to the Heart of Jesus.
By professing *Ecce Venio* and *Ecce Ancilla*,
he offered himself for the people entrusted to him.

We ask you Father
that the Church may be an instrument of reconciliation and peace,
and that the seed scattered with the testimony of your servant,
may stir up new signs of the civilization of Love.

Because of his example and intercession,
give us what today we ask of you with faith ...
and may we too be always rooted in you
and be strong witnesses of your name. Amen.

