

A martyr Church in the heart of Africa

Witnesses of the love of God

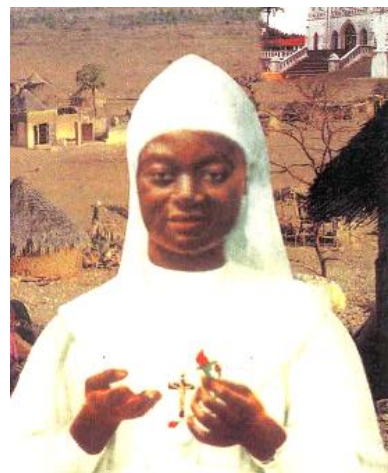


BLESSED MARIA CLEMENTINA ANUARITE NENGAPETA

“I consecrated myself to Jesus alone”

Biography:

Blessed Maria Clementina Anuarite Nengapeta was born on December 29, 1939 in Wamba (Congo) into a pagan family. Baptized, with her mother and her two sisters, she entered the Congregation of the Holy Family, founded by Archbishop Verfaillie, SCJ. She made first profession in 1959. She was a transparent, serene and joyful nun, doing everything with great care and love. Her ideals were obedience, humility and prayer; it was her desire “to please only Jesus”. In 1964, during the Simba revolution, she was picked up. Wanting to remain true to her vow of chastity, she resisted the improper advances of Captain Olombe, and was killed on December 1st. Before she fell to the ground, she forgave her killer. At the time, she was 25 years old. On August 15, 1985, she was beatified in Kinshasa by John Paul II.



Prayer:

Most Holy Trinity, in communion with the whole Church,
I thank you for the abundant graces you have given
to Blessed Sister Mary Clementine Anuarite Nengapeta,
model of obedience and fidelity to the vow of chastity
to the point of sacrificing her young life.

By following her example,
grant me the grace to listen constantly to the Word of God
and in generous service to others.

May you deem, O Lord,
to glorify in the Church
your faithful Servant as Virgin and Martyr.

Through her intercession,
grant me the grace I now ask...

Mary, Queen of Martyrs,
recommended with maternal affections
my supplications to your Son Jesus. Amen.

FATHER BERNARDO LONGO

“The Sacred Heart gives me so much inner peace”

Biography:



Born in Pieve di Curtarolo (Italy), in 1907, he entered the Priests of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and was ordained a priest in 1936. Two years later he is in Upper Congo, in a region that he defined as the “homeland of the Walesse, pygmies and elephants”. Starting in 1950, he worked in Nduye, which became his mission, his love, his martyrdom. A missionary with a generous and dynamic heart, poor among the poor, he engaged in many evangelizing initiatives and in the human and spiritual development of the people. In the difficult time of the Congolese revolution, he stayed among his flock. Surrounded by the armed and threatening Simba, he said: “We accept death as an act of love, for the salvation of these people and the pygmies”.

Struck by a spear in the chest, he died at the gates of Mambasa on November 3, 1964.

Prayer:

We bless you,
Lord Jesus, good shepherd,
because you have given to the Church
the servant of God, Father Bernardo Longo,
priest of your Heart.
You called him to proclaim
the Gospel to the poor
and to give witness to it with the sacrifice of his life.
Look at our poverty and, by his prayer,
Give us the grace of what we ask of you ...
Let us participate in the feelings of your Heart
and give us your Spirit so that our life may become
a living sacrifice to God the Father for his glory and joy. Amen.

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.

