Kenya in view of the Pope’s visit in November 25 to 27

On 13-17th April 2015, all Catholic bishops in Kenya travelled to Rome for their Ad Limina visit and during that time, they invited the Holy Father to visit Kenya. In August 2015, the chairman of the Kenya Conference of Catholic Bishops (KCCB), Rev Philip Anyolo, could officially announce the coming of Pope Francis to Kenya. Bishop Anyolo, who is the bishop of Homabay, revealed that the Pope’s visit to Kenya from 25th to 27th November is a state and pastoral visit, hence the Church will collaborate with the Government of Kenya on logistics. As the bishops prepare and look forward to the papal visit, bishop Anyolo called for the support and prayers of all the faithful in Kenya.

Pope Francis, who is visiting Africa for the first time, will begin his journey in Nairobi, Kenya, then proceed to Uganda and the Central African Republic. As Kenyans prepare to receive the Holy Father into the country, Waumini News Today interviewed some of the faithful on what issues they would like him to address. Below are some of the appeals, wishes and encouragement to Pope Francis.

Felix: The family is under threat, kindly promote a strong family, quoting Catholic Men Association’s slogan “good family, good Church, good Church, good society.”

Pascal: Deliver a message of peace, encourage religious tolerance and mutual acceptance.

Roselyn: Pray for the families and the youth to be able to understand and practice the social teachings of the Catholic Church.

David: Remember the young families who are struggling to understand themselves amidst all sorts of pressure, some of them feel disconnected and neglected with no place in the Church movements.

Hellen: I am excited that you are coming to Africa and Kenya as the first place to visit; it is truly an honor that should not be taken for granted. I appreciate your willingness
to come over and ask for your blessing. Pray for us and bless our Country so that we may have lasting peace.

Linus: Address the ills in the Church and governments and help us understand “The Year of Mercy.” We request that you visit us more often and that the Beatification of the Servant of God Maurice Michael Cardinal Otunga be conducted in Kenya.

Florence: Receive greetings and much appreciation for accepting to visit Kenya. When you come, kindly address the issues of corruption, tribalism, terrorism and encourage our political leaders to preach peace and unity instead of divisive politics. Pray for the leaders to be peaceful and geared towards development of the Nation.

Anthony: Pray for vocations, consecrated men and women to remain true to their calling.

There are an estimated 7,5 million baptized Catholics in Kenya (33% of the population). Christians compose over 80% of the population (although it doesn't seem so). Within Kenya the hierarchy consists of 26 dioceses as follows:

- **Kisumu**
  - Bungoma
  - Eldoret
  - Homabay
  - Kakamega
  - Kisii
  - Kitale
  - Lodwar

- **Mombasa**
  - Garissa
  - Malindi

- **Nairobi**
  - Kericho
  - Kitui
  - Machakos
  - Nakuru
  - Ngong

- **Nyeri**
  - Embu
  - Maralal
  - Marsabit
  - Meru
  - Murang'a
  - Nyahururu

- **Apostolic Vicariate of Isiolo**
- **Kenya (Military Ordinariate)**

The quotes above show that Catholics in Kenya reiterate high expectation and hopes that Pope Francis’ visit to the country will be a unifying factor to a nation that has experienced terror attacks, corruption, negative ethnicity and divisive politics in the recent past. They wish that Catholic families will be strengthened.

In preparation of the Pope’s visit to Kenya, the Catholic youth have organized daily rosary prayers – a gift from the Kenyan youth to the Holy Father for his many intentions and also for peace in the world. According to Fr. Charles Odira, the National Coordinator of the Commission for Pastoral and Lay Apostolate, the exercise began on Thursday 15th October and will end on 15th November. “All the rosaries prayed by the youth from across the country will be aggregated and a plaque made which will be presented to Pope Francis during his meeting with the youth at Kasarani Sports Complex in Nairobi,” he said.
Among the scheduled activities of the Holy Father is a meeting with Kenyan youth from across the country and this will include youth who are members of other religious backgrounds not necessarily Catholics.

**Situation of the people in Kenya, the Catholic Church and its challenges**

The ACN delegation visited the dioceses Mombasa, Malindi, Lodwar, Kitui, Isiolo, Kisumu, Homa Bay and Nairobi. During our trip we got to know, that the biggest challenges for the Kenyan Catholic Church are the growing Muslim fundamentalist influence on the society – especially on the coast and in the Northern part of the country – and the fight against poverty and missing infrastructures such as good streets, access to electricity and clean water.

**Mombasa**

Mombasa is the second-largest city in Kenya, with an estimated population of 1.3 million inhabitants. Located on the east coast of Kenya, Mombasa's situation on the Indian Ocean made it a historical trading center. Before Mombasa became the capital of the British East Africa Protectorate in the 19th century there have been many fights between the Portuguese and Sultans.

Mombasa has a cosmopolitan population, with the Swahili people and Mijikenda predominant. Other communities include the Akamba and Taita Bantus as well as a significant population of Luo and Luhya peoples from Western Kenya. The major religions practiced in the city are Islam, Christianity and Hinduism.

Since January 2015 Martin K. Musonde (born in 1952) is Archbishop of Mombasa. He confirms the “strategic place” of Mombasa, also for religious leaders. The Bishop tells us, that local business people hold connections to pirates. Somalian rebels recruited new soldiers out of the Mosques.

The first conflict between Muslims and Christians started 1889. Since then there are tensions between Muslims and Christians and peace is not obvious. Catholics in Mombasa compose a minority of 11%. The Islamic leaders try to catch young people in the way that they pay the formation but they ask them to become Muslim.

Christians are still shocked from the last massacre in 2007, when Muslim extremists killed about 60 Christians in a village, after going from house to house and asking them: “Are you Christian?”

The more important is the interreligious dialogue. The diocese implemented a program for young people, Muslims and Christians, who visit mosques and churches and communicate together about their faith. The bishop wishes to send his clergy and some lay people to Islam courses as well “to understand the Islam and to strengthen the interreligious dialogue”, he points out. A big challenge in the diocese is also the great distance between several parishes. It takes 13 hours by car to reach the farthest parish!

The diocese is looking forward to the Pope’s visit in November (The youth have organized an interfaith peace caravan from Mombasa to Nairobi, where representatives from various denominations and religious backgrounds will travel together in a bus under the theme:
Together we can Work for Peace to come to meet with the Pope in Nairobi. 3000 people from different religions are expected to attend.

**Small Stories:**

"I entered the seminary to become a priest and left it to become a brother", says Brother John from the Brothers of St. Joseph in the Archdiocese of Mombasa in Kenya. Thanks to the scholarship of ACN he could follow his studies and help today with the administration of projects in the Archdiocese, where Catholics live in a Muslim environment.

The last massacre from extremist Muslims against Christians was in 2007. Since then there are still strong tensions between both religions. The Catholic Church implemented peace building programs. "It's a challenge to secure peace but there is hope", Brother John tells the delegation of ACN that visited Mombasa.

Archbishop Martin K. Musonde of Mombasa in Kenya wants to strengthen the Christian faith in his diocese. "There are places, where a priest comes only three times a year", he points out. Around 500 catechists serve the church, where there is no regular priest. Catholics in Mombasa compose a minority of 11%. The Islamic leaders try to catch young people in the way that they pay the formation but they ask them to become Muslim.

The ACN delegation travelling through Kenya has visited a primary school in the Archdiocese of Mombasa where 1,200 children study. This school "shows that interreligious education is possible. Half of the children are Muslim, the other half Christian. The children play and study together in peace."
Malindi

Malindi is situated 120 kilometres northeast of Mombasa. The majority of the population (around 207,000 people) is Muslim.

Probably Malindi has existed as a Swahili settlement since the 13th century and has traditionally been a port city for foreign powers. The Portuguese explorer Vasco da Gama met Malindi authorities in 1498 to sign a trade agreement and hire a guide for the voyage to India, when he erected a coral pillar. The pillar stands to this day.

Before the Portuguese established in 1499 a trading post in Malindi that served as a resting stop on the way to India, the Arabs have been the ruling class with many Africans as well as Indian traders living in the town. The main source of prosperity was export of ivory, rhino horns as well as agricultural products such as coconuts, oranges, millet and rice. When the Portuguese moved their main base to Mombasa in 1593, the town gradually declined until it almost disappeared by the end of 17th century. Malindi was re-founded by Sultan Majid of Zanzibar in 1861 and until the end of 19th century served as a slave trade center. In 1890 Malindi came under the British administration, which abolished slavery. This human act led to a significant decline in agricultural production as it is depended heavily on slave labor. Outside agriculture there were only few industries in Malindi at the beginning of 20th century, among them are making mats and bags, crushing sesame seeds for oil and producing a Swahili drink called tembo.

Malindi experienced a trade boom between the end of the World War I and 1925, when a famine occurred. Europeans started to return to Malindi in 1930s buying land from Arabs. After the World War II Malindi began developing into the modern day resort. Nowadays tourism is the major industry.

The Bishop of Malindi, Mons. Emanuel Barbara OFM (appointed in July 2011) says: "We live in a tension between fundamentalism and development". Only 5% of the population in Malindi is Catholic. The majority follows traditional beliefs and sees itself forced to convert to Islam by Muslim fundamentalists. A good formation of families, priests and the construction of churches in the many outstations are most important. "A church
helps a lot. If there is a physical church, the people feel and see, that they belong to a community", the Bishop points out and adds: "We are here to evangelize. We are here to announce the Good News."

Picture: ACN-20151022-30868.jpg

Thanks VIDEO with Mons. Emanuel Barbara IN IPIC in English, German and Maltese

Lodwar

On October, 8th we visited Lodwar, the largest town in northwestern Kenya with a population of 48,316. According to the Insider's guide to Kenya, Lodwar's history began around 1933 when a trader named Shah Mohamed, arrived on the banks of the Turkwell River. The roads were inaccessible so he brought donkeys. He eventually built a permanent trading center in Lodwar including a gas station. The district commissioner's office was built, followed by a small medical clinic and a government prison. During the 1960s than missionaries built schools in and around the town.

The town had developed a reputation as an isolated outpost removed from the rest of Kenya, but in recent years, Lodwar has expanded and gained commercial and economic prominence. It is housing local and governmental facilities, including Turkana’s biggest health facility and the main referral hospital.

Lodwar covers a very poor and dry region without fixed roads. Lodwar has a hot desert climate with very high temperatures and very little rainfall throughout the year. Though it is at the epicentre of the world's largest underground aquifers, its residents experience intermittent water shortages leading to deaths of their cattle. The people here are predominantly nomadic. Everyone is waiting for rain. The last rain was in April this year. Aid is urgently needed. "We face many problems here due to the natural draught and the electricity cuts", tells Dominic Kimengich, the Bishop from the huge diocese. Only about 35 percent of all citizens in Lowdar have access to electricity in their homes.

It takes hours to get to the farthest outstations. We visited

- the Catholic school run by the Sisters of Mary, who are supported by ACN
- the convent of the Augustine Sisters, who were helped by ACN with a host baking machine
- the Radio Akicha station, which was supported by us

The Bishop hopes, that we will also help with the formation of future priests and construction work at the pastoral center.
Small Stories:

One of the successfully implemented projects of ACN is the setting up of the catholic Radio Akicha in the Northwestern diocese of Lodwar, where many people live in small villages, miles away and isolated from each other. Thanks to the new radio, which broadcast their own programs including prayers, interviews and news, the people in the area are connected to the local and universal Catholic Church.

(1) Children in the Catholic school run by Sisters of Mary ACN-20151022-30763.jpg ACN supports the Sisters with renovation help of their convent (with 24,000 Euro). One of their many activities is to teach at the Catholic primary school.
(2) Pastoral center of the diocese ACN-20151022-30866.jpg
(3) Bishop Kimengich meets an Augustine Sister ACN-20151022-30760.jpg
(4) Typical village and young people in Lodwar ACN-20151022-30770.jpg

Small Stories:

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(3) Bishop Kimengich meets an Augustine Sister ACN-20151022-30760.jpg
(4) Typical village and young people in Lodwar ACN-20151022-30770.jpg
A warm thank you to ACN's friends and benefactors comes from the Cloistered Augustinian Recollect Sisters in the very poor and huge diocese of Lodwar in Northern Kenya. The five sisters – all of whom come from Mexico – have served the Catholic Church in Lodwar for several years now. "Thank you so much dear benefactors of ACN for the new host backing machine", they say with a big smile on their face. Besides preparing hosts, they sew and stitch for their self-maintenance.

Kitui

Kitui is situated 180 kilometers east of Nairobi and has a population of around 155,000. The landscape here is much more fruitful compared to other regions. The city has become a natural meeting point for politicians and businessmen.

A large majority of the residents belong to the Kamba, a Bantu people. The majority lives from cattle. Donkeys are used to carry the water (see picture). The fewest have a car or other means of transportation. Streets outside the city are not fixed. Picture: ACN-20151023-30944.jpg
Here we accompanied Bishop Muheria to a beautiful outstation on a hill and attended a mass in another outstation named Zombe. The bishop loves children. “They are so simple and they bring so much joy”, he says. The picture is taken on a hill with a beautiful view, an outstation of the diocese Kitui, where the Bishop wants to implement a place of pilgrimage. His main concern is to strengthen the families and the faith in life of young people. The diocese has constructed a small parish church run by a priest and a deacon already. The children come every Sunday to Catechism class, which is held by lay catechists. The ACN delegation took part in the annual family day of the diocese, visited a school for deaf and blind children and a rehabilitation center for street children.

Picture: ACN-20151023-30936.jpg

**Small Stories:**

The Bishop from Kitui, Mons. Anthony Muheria (appointed 28 June 2008), is a real fundraising expert. "I asked people to give me a chicken. Every family gave me a chicken and we sold them and so we raised 20,000 Euros." The children came with an egg to mass. Another way is a small donation of one Cent via mobile. "This is a way of fundraising, that doesn't hurt. It is not painful", the bishop says. The ACN delegation attended a fundraising event for all 24 parishes of the diocese, where the parishioners brought what they have raised during the last year. The money is used for the maintenance of parishes and the diocese, also for the preparations of the Pope’s visit. The parishes with the biggest donation (determined by the number of Catholics) could win a motorcycle. Bishop Muheria: "The people have not much money to give but they are generous." Catholics are the majority (22 %) among the Christian churches in Kitui.

(1) Mons. Anthony Muheria ACN-20151023-30972.jpg
(2) Collection during the celebration of Mass at the family day in Kitui ACN-20151023-30940.jpg
The diocese of Kitui, Central Kenya, runs a school for deaf and blind children. All teachers practice the sign language for their classes and the children do very well. Handicaps are still a taboo in Kenya and parents of handicapped children often miss a good care and support. As the school is a boarding school and more children attend classes, there is a need of dormitories.

"The aim is to stabilize their life and help them by schooling", says Sister Veronica (Order Sisters of our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd). She speaks about her "protégés", 20 girls and 30 boys between 10 and 20 years, who play, study and sleep in the center. "Not all of them lived in the street but they come from difficult circumstances. Most of their parents are separated. Many of the children consume drugs or sniff glue, even the younger ones", the Sister explains. She and her staff take care for the school education and the spiritual development of the children. "We pray with them", Sr. Veronica tells. It's the best way to give them a future.
**Isiolo**

Isiolo is a town in the Upper Eastern sub-region, and lies 285 kilometres north of Nairobi. The town grew around the local military camps, much of the population being descended from former Somali soldiers who had fought in World War I as well as other Cushitic-speaking pastoral communities and the Ameru community. The town has an estimated population of 80,000 people, most of them living in the rural outbacks of the District.

Isiolo is set to become a major part of Kenya's economic development plan Vision 2030. The plan calls for Isiolo to become a tourist center that will include casinos, hotels, upscale retail outlets, a modern airport and transport facilities. The Isiolo town is becoming a centre of interest because of its newly acquired status as a resort city cashing in on the popular Samburu and Shaba game reserves, which have become preferred destinations after the famed Maasai Mara.

The town of Isiolo is small but cosmopolitan. With a scenic beauty of hills surrounding the town and including an eclectic mix of peoples and cultures. The town is majorly Muslim populated and has a several mosques. The Jamia mosque is the largest of all and also a remarkable landmark. The Catholic church's twin bell towers are also among the remarkable landmarks of Isiolo town.

Since 1995, the town has been the seat of the Vicariate Apostolic of Isiolo. This Vicariate is until today still traumatized with the murder of Bishop Luigi Locati on July 14, 2005. "Isiolo is very cosmopolitan", informs the current bishop, Mons. Anthony Ireri Mukobo. "There are Turkana and Sambura among businessmen, who come from other parts in Kenya. The lifestyle is nomadic. Isiolo is growing." The majority is Muslim (60%). Among the Christian churches Catholics (20%) are the majority. "The relationship with Muslims is not easy", says a priest, who is working in an outstation. "We were not allowed to build a church, because the Muslims were against it." Father Steve Muchunku, another priest in the diocese, points out that Christian lay formation is needed – especially of children and young people.

We visited St. Peter Cehchelesi Mission, where Fr. Muchunku is parish priest. The church was successfully constructed thanks to the benefactors of ACN and will be inaugurated in one month.

We also visited the Minor Seminary and listened to the stories of two school boys there, who both come from very poor family backgrounds. Their parents are illiterate and the boys are thankful for receiving a secondary education since the rector told us: “For many parents the cattle is more important than their children.”
Small Stories:

The Holy Trinity Sisters in Isiolo, Northern Kenya, are a young and local congregation, founded by an Italian Consolata Missionary. Up to now there are 13 Sisters, who visit the families of the local tribes Turkana, Samburu and Burana and teach them the gospel. They go on foot, because they don’t have a car. "Sometimes we can't stay long time at the families, because we need to come back before it gets dark", one Sister told us. ACN already helped them with formation courses. The Sisters now ask us for construction help. For their self-subsistence they rear cows and do farming and handicraft but this is not sufficient for their income. They need support.

Kisumu

The City of Kisumu is believed to be one of the oldest settlements in Kenya. Historical records indicate that Kisumu has been dominated by diverse communities at different times long before the white man arrived. The people from Nandi, Kalenjin, Abagusii, Maasai, Luo and Abaluhya community converged at the tip of Lake Victoria and called the place "sumo" which literally means "a place of barter trade".

Today Kisumu is a port city with a population of 409,928. The port was founded in 1901 as the main inland terminal of the Uganda Railway and named Port Florence.

By the 1930s and 40s, the city had become a leading East African center for commerce, administrative and military installations. In the early sixties very little development took place with an acute shortage of dwelling houses, shops and offices. The situation was later made worse by the influx of locals into the town following the declaration of independence in 1963. However, the city spurred with the reformation of the community in 1996 and with its designation as a "city." Currently, Kisumu is one of the fastest growing cities in Kenya. It is thriving with rich sugar and rice irrigation industries, whose contribution to the national economy is immense due to its natural resources and as the epicenter for business in East Africa.

Catholic Church: Archbishop Zacchaeus Okoth (appointed 27 Feb 1978)

In Kisumu and Homa Bay Tony Zender and David Jones visited the novitiate of Franciscans, an orphanage and the upcoming Youcat Center.
(1) KENYA/KISUMU 15/76: Vehicle for pastoral work, St John Paul Obambo Church

(2) KENYA/NATIONAL 11/394: Reconstruction of the burnt Mbaga convent in favour of the Franciscan Sisters of St Joseph, Siaya - Kisumu Diocese (co-financing): The sisters inside the ruins of the burnt convent

Nairobi:

With a population of about 3.36 million, Nairobi is the second-largest city by population in the African Great Lakes region after Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.

Nairobi is one of the most prominent cities in Africa, both politically and financially. Home to thousands of Kenyan businesses and over 100 major international companies and organisations, including the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the main coordinating and headquarters for the UN in Africa and Middle East, the United Nations Office at Nairobi (UNON), Nairobi is an established hub for business and culture.

The city was named after a water hole known in Maasai as Enkare Nairobi, meaning "place of cool waters". It was completely rebuilt in the early 1900s after an outbreak of plague and the burning of the original town. The location of the Nairobi railway camp was chosen due to its central position between Mombasa and Kampala. In 1905, Nairobi replaced Mombasa as capital of the British protectorate, and the city grew around administration and tourism, initially in the form of big game hunting. As the British occupiers started to explore the region, they started using Nairobi as their first port of call. This prompted the colonial government to build several spectacular grand hotels in the city. The main occupants were British game hunters. During Kenya's colonial period, the city became a centre for the colony's coffee, tea and sisal industry.

The continuous expansion of the city began to anger the Maasai, as the city was devouring their land to the south. It also angered the Kikuyu people, who wanted the land to be returned to them. After the end of World War II, this friction developed into the Mau Mau rebellion. Jomo Kenyatta, Kenya's future president was jailed for his involvement even though there was no evidence linking him to the rebellion. Pressure exerted from the locals onto the British resulted in Kenyan independence in 1963, with Nairobi as the capital of the new republic.

Tony Zender and David Jones visited the Seminary and the Bishops Conference here and spoke with the people. In Homabay ACN will support the student Chaplain's house at Rongo Universit: KENYA / HOMA BAY 15/00057, ID: 1505077.

Finished projects of ACN (selection):
(1) INTERNATIONAL 11/857 Cofinancing the construction of a hostel block for students at the formation house of the Society of African Missions (SMA) in Nairobi, Kenya: Working on the roof

(2) KENYA/NAIROBI 14/465 Refurbishment of the noviciate for the Sisters of Immaculate Heart of Mary

(3) KENYA/NAIROBI 13/451 Completion of the first floor of the new hostel of St Francis Spiritual Centre for the Little Sisters of St Francis, Nairobi

(4) KENYA/NAIROBI 15/477 Formation for 23 Novices – Evangelizing Sisters of Mary - 2015

Overview of approved and current projects

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<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Location/Region</th>
<th>Project Description</th>
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<td>KENYA/ELDORDET</td>
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<td>1306459</td>
<td>KENYA / NAIROBI 13/00458</td>
<td>Completion of the Noviciate of the Franciscan Missionaries of Hope in Nairobi</td>
<td>23,400.00</td>
<td>12.11.2014</td>
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<td>1407761</td>
<td>KENYA / NAIROBI 14/00476</td>
<td>Vehicle for Comboni Sisters Mission Animation in Nairobi</td>
<td>10,000.00</td>
<td>12.06.2015</td>
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<td>1501377</td>
<td>KENYA / NAIROBI 15/00477</td>
<td>Formation for 23 Novices - Evangelizing Sisters of Mary - 2015</td>
<td>1,500.00</td>
<td>24.06.2015</td>
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<td>1262496</td>
<td>KENYA / NATIONAL 10/00160</td>
<td>Printing of the Child's Bible &quot;God speaks to his children&quot; in Pokot First edition: 10,000 copies</td>
<td>9,900.00</td>
<td>21.11.2014</td>
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<td>1401174</td>
<td>KENYA / NATIONAL 14/00483</td>
<td>Supporting the prevention of abortion and gender equity in the context of sanctity of life in Kenya - Programme of the KCCB - for 2 years</td>
<td>48,000.00</td>
<td>11.11.2014</td>
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<td>1405291</td>
<td>KENYA / NATIONAL 14/00502</td>
<td>Formation - 5 brothers of the Sons of St Anne - Bachelor of Theology at Catholic University of Eastern Africa, Kenya 2014 - 2017</td>
<td>30,000.00</td>
<td>08.11.2014</td>
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<td>1406054</td>
<td>KENYA / NATIONAL 14/00505</td>
<td>Family for Love Seminars and formation of the laity</td>
<td>12,000.00</td>
<td>02.07.2015</td>
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<td>1407760</td>
<td>KENYA / NATIONAL 14/00512</td>
<td>Office equipment for the National Family Life office of the Kenya Conference of Catholic Bishops</td>
<td>4,250.00</td>
<td>20.02.2015</td>
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<td>1504086</td>
<td>KENYA / NATIONAL 15/00523</td>
<td>Annual retreat for the Brothers of St Charles Lwanga 2015</td>
<td>3,000.00</td>
<td>27.07.2015</td>
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<td>1306264</td>
<td>KENYA / NYERI 13/00115</td>
<td>Transport for pastoral work and catechists training programme, St Augustine's Catechist Training Centre</td>
<td>8,200.00</td>
<td>03.03.2015</td>
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<td>1405101</td>
<td>KENYA / NYERI 14/00119</td>
<td>Renewals and Retreat for the Brothers of St Joseph - 2014</td>
<td>8,500.00</td>
<td>23.02.2015</td>
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