

Archbishop Gabriel Ganaka
First Anniversary of His Birth into Eternal Life
November 11, 2000

A MESSAGE FROM MISSIONARY SERVANTS OF HOLY LOVE CONCERNING THE PASSING OF A DEAR FRIEND

It is with sorrow we mourn the passing of His Grace, Most Rev. (Dr.) Gabriel Gonsum Ganaka. The people in Nigeria of all religious affiliations and stature, and of all political roots rose up nearly 100,000 strong to attend his funeral November 26, 1999. His stature as a religious leader, patriot, scholar, pastor, and shepherd were acclaimed. He was born May 24, 1937 in Pankshin, Plateau State Nigeria. After extensive Catholic education, he was ordained at the Cathedral of Our Lady of Fatima, Jos, Nigeria on July 4, 1965.

Known as a charismatic figure who was enthusiastically devoted to his priestly vocation and also to Our Lady, he used his keen intellectual ability to advance quickly to a Doctorate in Theology in 1970 at the Pontifical Urban University in Rome. Upon his return to Nigeria his many talents were put to excellent use through a succession of positions that allowed him to serve the sheep in the Nigerian Catholic flock. These included advancing leadership positions within the National Catholic Secretariat and the Social Welfare Department. His spiritual influence will linger on through his works and prayers in these endeavors.

Although he was not yet 40 years old, Pope Paul VI appointed him Bishop of Jos in 1975. He was a member

of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples and of the Canon Law Review Commission for Pope Paul VI. As well, Pope John Paul II appointed him to the Pontifical Council for Inter-religious Dialogue. He was making an impact on his beloved Catholic Church and its flock and was recognized as a pillar among bishops.

And within his own continent of Africa he served in the positions of vice-president and president of both the Catholic Bishops Conference of Nigeria and the Symposium of Episcopal Conference of Africa and Madagascar (*SECAM*). He was known by all for his pastoral approach to caring for those in his diocese, going to any lengths to minister to his flock and its shepherds in every way possible. His great piety spilled over into the promotion of many devotions, especially that of Divine Mercy throughout the diocese. Stories are told of his contacting members of his flock whom he was concerned about after having read their tragic stories in the newspaper. He would call them and invite them to prayer and counseling with him – always ready to minister to their souls.

Evangelization was a key issue and he introduced many innovations in education, social outreach, and spiritual renewal resulting in the doubling of the Catholic population during his first 19 years of service before he became an Archbishop. When the Charismatic Movement came to Nigeria it began to stray from the norms of the Church and he considered stern action to preserve the faith of his flock.

At the urging of one of his evangelical priests, he supported a time of interaction, prayer, discernment and dialogue which blossomed into a vibrant and orthodox Charismatic Movement. He became known as the Charismatic leader in his diocese as well as all of Nigeria.

Under his care, the priestly vocations in his archdiocese soared! He listened intently to the needs of his priests and went to great lengths to minister to their spiritual progress with events such as vocational retreats, an abundance of spiritual counseling, prayer and literature, and attending to their physical and mental health needs as well. He carried with him, always ready to share with others, beautiful meditations for priests in strengthening their vocations, being himself the first ready to support them in prayer. These priests knew they were loved and looked to him for inspiration.

He served as a leader and representative to many important international pastoral events such as the World Day of Prayer for Peace and the Millenium of Christianity. He traveled to more than 25 countries and spoke several languages. Here he impacted the Church at large with his innovative evangelization. This was always characterized by his humble pastoral approach to the individual and his needs, but was punctuated by his insightful intellectual analysis. The Lumen 2000 organization, with organizations in some 18 countries, were well-aware of His Grace's charismatic leadership and assisted him in many of his innovations to

spiritual shepherding. It was difficult to meet him and not be touched by his deep love of Our Lord and Our Lady, his ongoing determination to journey towards the Divine Will, and the gentle, unassuming approach with which he shared his spirituality. Tucked within his pockets were well-worn pamphlets on Divine Mercy and the way of Divine Love, always brought out for prayer and meditation when he had a private moment.

In 1997 he became acutely ill and was flown to the United States for medical treatment. All of Nigeria was praying intently for their beloved pastor's recovery. Even school children clung to the prayer card with his picture and invocation for his health. One of his flock came to Maranatha Spring and Shrine seeking the intercession of Our Lady on his behalf. She subsequently opened the doors for his interest in making a pilgrimage himself. It was here he was introduced to Holy Love Ministries and the all-important messages of Holy and Divine Love. His Foreword graces the pages of the book Holy and Divine Love: The Remedy and The Triumph. He gained much spiritual and physical strength from his involvement, and determined to study and evangelize the United Hearts revelation in particular by establishing the Confraternity of the United Hearts, with the international headquarters in Nigeria. He had written the Constitution for this organization before his untimely death November 11, 1999.

It is with great joy we share with you this prayer for

Archbishop Ganaka's canonization. It was introduced Friday March 31st, and by Sunday April 2nd a miraculous return to the sacraments after 62 years was experienced by one of our members' stepfather. We urge you to use this prayer for His Grace's intercession, particularly for the Lost Sheep and unconverted in your family, and for the strengthening of the Catholic Church from within.

Missionary Servants of Holy Love