

Thousands mourn Father Bill



A woman receives holy communion from Fr. Anthony during the requiem mass for Father Bill on Friday

By Chris Ocowun

THOUSANDS of mourners with tears rolling down their cheeks on Friday thronged Kaunda Grounds in Gulu Municipality for the requiem mass of Rev. Fr Joseph Bill.

The internationally renowned preacher and miracle worker died of a heart attack on Friday morning at St. Mary's Hospital Lacor in Gulu.

To many mourners, Bill's death in their midst, signified the return of total peace in war-torn Acholi. Just before he died, Bill preached love, faith and reconciliation to the Acholi people. Through Bill, God healed many sick and paralysed people during his retreats and popular missions in Africa, Europe and America.

"Father. Bill loved Uganda so much that he wished to be buried here and now God has fulfilled that wish; he has died in Uganda and Gulu for that matter," said Fr. Anthony Saji, who arrived in Uganda with Fr. Bill on March 9 for the Gulu crusade. Father Bill's body is now at Entebbe where he will be buried on Wednesday.

Testimonies from people claiming to have been healed through Fr. Bill

"I spent a week with Fr. Bill in Nairobi in 1999, where we virtually shared a room. I don't know why he liked me so much, maybe because I was a Ugandan. His prayer life and sacrifice was touching, we would pray from morning to evening before breaking off for supper.

He would then stay awake the whole night praying for and counselling people. From 3:00am up to morning he would pray for the next day's vision.

You would not notice any sign of fatigue on his face and yet he was well into his 70s. After praying with him, I virtually walked into a new job, after three years of walking the streets and writing 101 job applications."

Robert Ssemwogerere High Court

"Eight years ago, my sister Agnes was suffering from HIV/AIDS and was on the verge of death. I told Fr. Bill about it and he advised me to recite a simple prayer, 'I praise you Jesus, Thank you Jesus.' Whenever I would recite it, her condition would improve. My sister got well and is now living happily.

Ruth Kavuma Immigration Officer

"My son Christian Tendo was dumb. He was also possessed by a demon which used to make him do strange things. I took him to various speech therapists but they all failed. When I heard about Fr. Bill, I took him to his retreat in Nairobi. The boy got well but when we returned home, the problem resurfaced. When Fr. Bill came to Uganda in 1997, I told him what happened. He said the problem was that I had not given testimony about the miracle.

So, I did and now the boy is well. He is currently at Nswanjere Junior

Seminary.”

Edith Yoti

I attended Fr. Bill’s retreat at Namugongo in 1998. My husband had just passed way. Fr. Bill’s preaching gave me hope and I left the retreat a happy person. Soon after, I was called to pick my late husband’s money from National Social Security Fund (NSSF), which I have used for my family upkeep and paying fees for my five children.

Margaret Kizza of Mitala-Maria Parish

“I got to know Fr. Bill the first time he came to Uganda in 1998 for a mission at Pope Paul Memorial Centre in Ndeebe. My leg had been paralysed; I could no longer walk or wear shoes. Doctors had done their best, but failed. I had lost hope and was planning to get a wheelchair. Fr. Bill prayed for me and I was healed completely. Now I walk normally and even put on high heels.”

Justine Nakyanzi Mengo-Kisenyi Parish

“I attended his 1998 crusade and I was touched. I was HIV-positive, with a lot of anger, hatred, envy and pain. Fr. Bill preached forgiveness to me. I took his message seriously and it changed me into a better person. I have since been cured of HIV/AIDS.

Jane Mugisha, Kitintale Luzira

I always had problems. I had no food, no shelter and no work. But Fr. Bill taught me how to pray in my own words, and it has transformed my life.

Flavia Nabakiibi of Kibuye-Makindye Parish

I had a goitre and had an operation at Lacor Hospital in Gulu, in 1991. For nine years, I could not eat. I would take only juice. In 1998, I attended Fr. Bill’s retreat in Lira, where I was miraculously healed. I am now well and happy.

Max Lily, housewife

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