***Message***

***By***

***H.E. Yoweri Kaguta Museveni***

**PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF UGANDA**

***At the***

***UGANDA MARTYS’ DAY***

***3rd June, 2020.***

Fellow Christians,

On this day of 3rd June, 2020, I wish to join all Christians in Uganda to commemorate the spiritual significance of the martyrdom of the faithful who chose to face death rather than recant their faith.

The Uganda Martyrs have been celebrated over the years for their heroic display of courage by refusing to denounce their faith even in the face of violent persecution and death. Despite being just new converts, they proved to be steadfast and firm in the teachings and practice of Christianity.

The Uganda Martyrs are like the seeds which fell on good ground as Jesus Christ taught in the Parable of the Sower in Matthew, Chapter 13, Verse 23. It says:

*“The seed that fell on good soil represents those who truly hear and understand God’s word and produce a harvest of thirty, sixty, or even a hundred times as much as had been planted.”*

The example of their fortitude and endurance has helped to plant the Kingdom of God in the hearts of men and women across the globe. This is why, every year, thousands of pilgrims trek to Namugongo from every corner of Uganda and outside our borders to emulate the Uganda Martyrs’ spirit of sacrifice and total surrender to God.

The story of the Uganda Martyrs also clearly illustrates what the Lord Jesus Christ said about the mustard seed, in the Book of Matthew Chapter 13 Verses 31 to 32 *“A man takes a mustard seed and sows it in his field. It is the smallest of all seeds, but when it grows up, it is the biggest of all plants. It becomes a tree, so that birds come and make their nests in its branches."*

This parable captures the eternal role the Uganda Martyrs played in the spread of Christianity in Uganda, Africa and the rest of the world.

Through the Uganda Martyrs we realize that, the bold decisions that have changed societies have usually been championed by visionary people with great resolve and focused missions. The story of the National Resistance Movement in liberating Uganda from wrong politics and economic stagnation has plausible similarities to the actions of the Martyrs.

Uganda Martyrs left a lasting legacy of standing strong in faith towards God. They are revered for their faith and their courage in Christ. It is because of this legacy that people pray through the martyrs for God’s blessings.

The Christian faith as a whole brought new understanding to our society. The new concept was that even when we die, it is not the end of the story – that there will be life afterwards – resurrection. That was one very valuable revelation to our lives.

The Government of Uganda will continue supporting the work of the Church. Our resolve to eradicate poverty, illiteracy, disease, hunger, general backwardness and to maintain peace and security will never waver.

The religious practice of gathering in Namugongo for special prayers will not take place this year because of the deadly Corona virus disease which has spread to the entire globe. This virus has the potential of spreading like a bush fire once it finds large groups of people near each other. We must continue to deny it this opportunity by praying from our homes as we have been doing over the last two months. Fortunately, one of the attributes of God is that He is omnipresent. This means that His presence is everywhere. In the Book of Psalms, Chapter 139, Verses 7-8, we read the following words:

*“Where can I go from your spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? If I go to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there.”*

This means that God can hear our prayers from anywhere and His blessings upon our lives are boundless. Therefore, let us continue worshiping from our homes.

We continue to lift our nation in prayer and ask for God’s protection of all Ugandans against the Coronavirus disease.

I thank you all.