

August 30, 2023

Dear Collaborators in the Archdiocese of Montreal,

It is with great pleasure that I am able to advise you that I have appointed Father Jean Marie Bilwala Kabesa, I.M.C. (Istituto missioni Consolata) to the position of Episcopal Vicar for the French-speaking communities of the four western sector deaneries in our Diocese: Centre-Ville; Sud-Ouest; Saint-Laurent/Bordeaux-Cartierville; and the West Island. He will begin his new duties on September 1.

In the course of the past weeks, Msgr. Marc Rivest, c.s.s., who was filling this role, has been obliged to vacate the position in order to be more available for his own parish. He has my warmest thanks for the time he has dedicated to that role, as well as for the collaborative efforts that he will continue to devote to other services.

Fr. Jean-Marie Bilwala Kabesa was born February 11, 1974, in Kinshasa in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. He entered the community of the Consolata Missionaries in 1993 and took his religious vows in 1999 in Maputo, Mozambique, before being ordained a priest on July 20, 2003, in Kinshasa. Fr. Jean-Marie was always posted outside of the Congo and Kinshasa. He served in Ethiopia (2003-2010) as pastor in the parish of Wonji, a city in semi-arid central Ethiopia, as humanitarian projects coordinator in partnership with Catholic Relief Services (C.R.S.) and worked in close collaboration with local farmers, overseeing the drilling of water wells, securing financing for kindergartens and high schools, and supporting education for orphans and disadvantaged children. From 2007-2009, he was advisor to the Provincial Superior.

In Canada/Quebec, Fr. Jean-Marie was General Manager of the missionary animation centre for the Consolata Missionaries' "Hall Notre-Dame" (2013-2020) under the direction of the Father General and his advisors, as well as being in charge of humanitarian projects, director of the Réveil Missionnaire ("Missionary awakening") magazine and pastoral director at Augustin Roscelli School (2014-2020). From 2016 to 2018, Fr. Jean-Marie was a member of the North American Catholic philanthropic organization National Catholic Development Conferences (NCDC) in Washington, D.C. From 2016 to 2019, he was diocesan director of

Pontifical Mission Societies (OPM) for the Archdiocese of Montreal. He was a volunteer spiritual intervenor from 2019 to March 2020 at the Notre-Dame-de-la-Merci CHSLD.

Fr. Jean-Marie currently contributes as guest host on Maria-Montréal Italian-language Catholic radio and is a member of the Board of Directors of Pontifical Mission Societies (OPM) for French-speaking Canada (2018 to present), as well as being administrator for the parish of Saint-Jean-Bosco (2020 to present), where he will continue to serve.

In addition to BAs in philosophy and theology (Pontifical Urbaniana University), Fr. JeanMarie holds an MA in communications and journalism (Daystar University, Kenya-USA), an MA in health and spirituality (Université de Montréal), certification in intercultural formation (Saint Paul University, Ottawa); certificates in religious, economic and freedom studies (Acton University, Grand Rapids, Michigan-USA). He speaks French, English, Italian, Portuguese, Lingala (DRC), Kikongo (DRC), Swahili, Amharic (Ethiopia) and can get by in Spanish.

May God bless you all, and may He fill you with his Light and keep you in his Peace.



+ Christian Lépine
Archbishop of Montreal