



Cardinal Maurice Otunga

Photos by Dave Witbeck

### Cardinal Visits U.S.

Continued from Page 1

Wall Street area "where they have 11 or 12 Masses each day and all of them well-attended."

He also was impressed by St. Patrick's Cathedral and at St. Charles Borromeo in Harlem.

Cardinal Otunga, a youthful-looking 50, stressed that at this stage of growth in Kenya help is still needed to keep par with the rapid development of the country itself.

"I am very optimistic about the growth of the Church in East Africa," he said. "We are making conversions not only in the hundreds but in the thousands — last year we had 21,000 baptisms in the Nairobi diocese alone (There are 3 million Catholics in Kenya). Vocations are also on the increase which is a sign of extra life and growth."

He added that in his contact with bishops from throughout

Africa he has found such growth generally consistent. With it has come an increased need for missionary help — "which means encouraging vocations in missionary orders."

Financial help is another need — "especially scholarships at American universities for African lay students" who would profit by studying in America.

Cardinal Otunga also mentioned a project which seemed to be of special and personal concern to him.

"We have a new problem in Nairobi," he said. "With increased development there are more working women coming into the city for jobs. They have no place to live and are getting into all sorts of problems. I am trying to put up a hostel where we can help them and I would be very grateful for any help. It'll take quite a bit — something in the region of \$300,000," he said.



Photo by Susan McKinney

Cardinal Maurice Otunga, left, says Mass at the diocesan Missions Office on East Avenue. Center is Father Joseph Reinhart, diocesan director of missions, and at right is Father Peter Kairo, a Kenyan studying at St. John Fisher.

Special collections for Kenyan causes have been granted by the diocese at St. Salome's, St. Agnes in Avon and Our Lady of the Lake in King Ferry.

The cardinal kept busy during his stay in Rochester. Shortly after his noon arrival Ash Wednesday he greeted noon Mass-goers at the Missions Office on East Avenue, paid a visit to Mayor Thomas Ryan of Rochester, and said Mass at St. Mary's Hospital. Thursday he visited St. John Fisher College, had a press conference, said Mass at the Missions Office, taped local radio and television shows and was on his way by afternoon.

The cardinal injected a note of praise for "not only Rochester but for all Americans" they have been great in missionary spirit. This witness of faith in the U.S. is a great help to us. The fact that the U.S. with its advanced technology still believes in God and still loves religion is a great witness for our young church in Africa.

Cardinal Otunga is the son of a chief of the Bukusu tribe and was baptized at age 12, ordained a priest at 27, consecrated a bishop at 33 and became a cardinal last year.

His mother was baptized in 1958 and his father, now deceased, in 1963.

The cardinal, asked about his slim and athletic physique, owned up to being a soccer

player during his high school days. Such conditioning will pay off on his hectic schedule which will now take him to Indianapolis, Detroit, Chicago, St. Louis, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Boston, and Washington, D.C.

## THE OPEN WINDOW

**Q:** Forty years ago a priest refused to bury my Catholic grandmother in a Catholic cemetery because she was not a practicing Catholic, but today Catholics are being buried in un consecrated ground in non-Catholic cemeteries. What brought about the change? [Because of that priest the entire family broke away from the church.]

**A:** Another family I know of broke away from the Church because a callous priest implied that they were limiting the size of their family unlawfully. How times have changed.

Indeed times have changed. In this case, I think, for the good. The concept of the body of a Christian being a temple of the Holy Spirit made it seem appropriate that it be buried in holy ground. Hence the consecration of cemeteries. As a corollary of this belief, those who were not in possession of the Holy Spirit because of alienation from Christ and/or heresy (as Protestants were thought to be guilty of) would be excluded from this holy ground.

Theoretically then, that priest was justified in preventing your grandmother from being buried in consecrated ground. The problem was that such an action called for a judgment on the part of the priest which he was not qualified to make — that your grandmother was alienated from Christ. However, if one wanted to be very legalistic about the thing, all the external signs would indicate that she was

Personally, I do not know the precise reasons for the change, but am delighted with the change itself. Obviously, it would make no difference whatsoever in regard to the person's real standing with God, but it could wreak havoc with the survivors, as it did in your case. Your family probably saw your grandmother as a wonderful woman, certainly not destined for hell, and your family reacted to the judgment which had been made about her. Of course, there could have been better ways of handling the situation than leaving the Church.

The second instance you mention could be quite different. If the priest was simply guessing about the actions of that husband and wife, he would obviously be making a very rash judgment. If he had been told by them that they were using contraception, then according to his lights at that time, he could point out to them that they were acting unlawfully. Only recently has the somewhat greater role of conscience been introduced to this decision. In this case too, it would seem that leaving the Church would not be the proper response.

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