



PONTIFICIA
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Ufficio Stampa e Comunicazione

*International Colloquium
in celebration of 10th year of “Evangelii Gaudium” and 3rd year of “Fratelli Tutti”*

“Mwalimu” JULIUS NYERERE A «Politician with Soul» and «A Servant of God»

21 November 2023, 3:00 – 6:30 p.m.

Aula Magna of the Pontifical Gregorian University
Piazza della Pilotta 4 – Rome

When Pope Francis speaks of politics as a vocation and calls for more politicians with soul, who could qualify? One answer could be **Julius Kamarage Nyerere, the father-founder of Tanzania**, also known by the Swahili name of “*Mwalimu*”, which means “teacher”, because of the profession he had before entering politics. **The Catholic Church is currently reviewing Nyerere’s life in consideration of beatification.** On **21 November 2023**, the Faculty of Social Sciences of the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome is holding an international colloquium on **the revered philosopher-king in Africa, but relatively unknown to many in Europe.**

The forum will feature the lectures of **Dr. Ng’wanza Kamata**, co-author of the three-volume biography of Julius Nyerere published in Dar es Salaam; **Dr. Ethan R. Sanders**, Professor of History, Politics and Political Economy, Regis College; and **Fr. Festo Mkenda, SJ**, Academic Director of Roman Archives of the Society of Jesus. **Nyerere’s son, Charles Makongoro Nyerere**, is coming especially to attend the event in honor of “*Mwalimu*”. Tanzanian Ambassador to Italy, H.E. Mahmoud Thabit Kombo, is gracing the event, as well the Jesuit Justice and Ecology Network – Africa (JENA) and the Fondazione “Fratelli Tutti”.

THE SERVANT OF GOD “MWALIMU” JULIUS NYERERE

“*Mwalimu*” **Julius Kamarage Nyerere**, the first president of Tanzania (in office 1961-85), is a flesh-and-blood exemplar of what Pope Francis describes as «a politician with soul» (*Evangelii Gaudium* 273). Born in Tanganyika to a Zanaki king, Prince Nyerere was also known by the Swahili name of “*Mwalimu*”, which means “teacher”, because of the profession he had before entering politics.

Nyerere fought for human-centered development, democratized education and health care, and maintained a deep respect for human rights and peace in a dangerous and unstable part of the world. A committed Catholic, he regularly meditated on the Scriptures, attended daily mass, and even translated liturgical texts into popular Swahili, while actively engaged in interreligious cooperation and vigorously struggling for a more socially relevant Church.

Critics raise issues on some of his miscalculations, but admit that he led a life of integrity and simplicity, shunning the selfishness that marred much of local and global politics. Nyerere's practical wisdom and prophetic witness offers a liberating critique and creativity not only to African church and society, but also way beyond.

In 2005 Bishop Justin Samba of the Diocese of Musoma and the Tanzania Episcopal Conference (TEC) requested the Holy See to declare Nyerere a saint. In the same year, Pope Benedict XVI declared Julius Kambarage Nyerere a 'Servant of God'.

ABOUT THE CAUSE OF BEATIFICATION

<https://secam.org/the-cause-of-beatification-and-canonisation-of-the-servant-of-god-julius-kambarage-nyerere-lay-faithful-father-of-a-family-and-statesman/>

ACCREDITATION PROCEDURE

Journalists and media operators who wish to participate must apply, no less than 24 hours before the event, through the Holy See Press Office online accreditation System available at press.vatican.va/accreditamenti.

For interviews and technical information on the event, please contact: press@unigre.it

"I beg the Lord to grant us more politicians who are genuinely disturbed by the state of society, the people, the lives of the poor! It is vital that government leaders and financial leaders take heed and broaden their horizons, working to ensure that all citizens have dignified work, education and healthcare."

Evangelii Gaudium (2013, n. 205)

"For many people today, politics is a distasteful word, often due to the mistakes, corruption and inefficiency of some politicians. Yet can our world function without politics? Once more, I appeal for a renewed appreciation of politics as 'a lofty vocation and one of the highest forms of charity, inasmuch as it seeks the common good.'"

Fratelli Tutti (2020, nn. 176, 180)