FÉDÉRATION CONGOLAISE
DES PUERI CANTORES
FCPC

MAGAZINE REPORT

Kisangani, *one family* singing together

Apostolic, pastoral and institutional mission of the National President of the FCPC — 20 to 27 October 2026

263 Little Singers receive the alb: a new chapter for the Pueri Cantores of the Archdiocese.



H.E. Mgr Marcel UTEMBI TAPA
Metropolitan Archbishop of Kisangani



H.E. Mgr Léonard NDJADI NDJATE
Auxiliary Bishop of Kisangani



Prince Ermès CUBAKA BIGABWA
National President of the FCPC



Pueri Mundi – Pacem Dei Cantamus !

20 – 27 OCTOBER 2026
ARCHDIOCESE OF KISANGANI

EDITORIAL

Going out to meet them

Dear Little Singers, dear parents, dear Directors and friends of the Movement,

From 20 to 27 October 2026, I had the grace of carrying out a pastoral mission in the Archdiocese of Kisangani. I did not go there to found what already existed: the Pueri Cantores have been singing there since 2023, with the choir of the Petits François Missionnaires of Saint John Paul II parish, and other choirs have arisen since. I went to listen, to encourage and to walk with them.

These pages tell the story of that week: the welcome at Bangoka, the kindness of our Bishops, the attentive listening of the priests, the choir visits until nightfall, the training of the Directors and the diocesan celebration of 25 October.

Above all, they express a conviction we share. A Pueri Cantores choir is not first of all a musical ensemble: it is a school of Christian life, where children learn discipline, fraternity, service and prayer, as much as how to sing in tune.

Since then, several dioceses have expressed the wish to host a similar mission: an encouraging sign, and a call to pursue this work of closeness together.

To all those who made this mission possible — our Church authorities, diocesan leaders, Directors, parents and every Little Singer — I once again express my deep gratitude.

“ Training a Little Singer is not only training a voice: it is shaping a heart and a conscience. ”

Prince Ermès CUBAKA BIGABWA
National President
Congolese Federation of Pueri Cantores

Contents

03 The mission at a glance
04 Discover the Pueri Cantores
05 The Pueri Cantores in the DRC
06 Bangoka: a family welcome
09 Fraternal hospitality
10 Audience with the Archbishop
12 Speaking to the hearts of priests
13 With the diocesan leaders
14 Thirteen choirs, one family
17 One voice
18 Parents, the first educators
19 Training those who train
21 263 albs to serve God
25 In procession to the ISC
27 A family farewell evening
28 Thanking our pastors
30 What the mission achieved
32 Málaga 2027
33 So that the mission may continue
34 Dedication
35 Thank you
36 Kisangani in pictures

THE MISSION AT A GLANCE

Eight days serving a Church that sings

Strengthening communion with the Church authorities, meeting the Little Singers and their leaders, training the Directors and supporting the organisation of the Movement in the Archdiocese.

8
days of mission, 20 to 27 October 2026

13
choirs of Little Singers visited

5 hrs
minimum — training and mentoring of leaders

263
Little Singers received the alb

≈ 2,000
Pueri Cantores gathered on 25 October

TUESDAY 20 OCTOBER
Arrival at Bangoka airport. Welcome by the Choir Directors, the diocesan Committee and parents, first meeting with Mgr Léonard NDJADI NDJATE, then, at 8 p.m., presentation of the Movement to the parish priests and clergy at Saint Paul the Apostle Parish, Kibibi, led by Mgr NDJADI NDJATE.

WED. 21, THU. 22, SAT. 24, MON. 26
Meetings with priests holding responsibilities in the Archdiocese (Wednesday), then pastoral visits to the thirteen choirs, until Monday evening.

FRIDAY 23 OCTOBER
Audience with H.E. Mgr Marcel UTEMBI TAPA, who had returned the day before. Singing class bringing together all the Pueri Cantores at the Holy Spirit university parish, followed by a meeting with the parents' representatives of each choir.

SATURDAY 24 OCTOBER
Training of Directors, Deputy Directors and Choir Leaders at the cathedral parish.

SUNDAY 25 OCTOBER
Mass presided over by Mgr NDJADI NDJATE at Holy Spirit parish: 263 Little Singers receive the alb, followed by a procession to the grounds of the Institut Supérieur de Commerce (ISC).

MONDAY 26 OCTOBER
Final choir visits, then a farewell evening at the home of Papa Charles PALUKU with the Directors, the Godmother and the Diocesan Representative.

TUESDAY 27 OCTOBER
Farewell visits to the Auxiliary Bishop and then the Archbishop, and departure from Bangoka accompanied by the Directors.

Objectives

- Strengthen cooperation with the Church authorities.
- Present the spirituality and educational mission of the Pueri Cantores to the priests.
- Visit and encourage the choirs.
- Build the Directors' capacities.
- Raise parents' awareness of their role.
- Better coordinate choirs and diocesan structures.
- Identify needs and prospects.

DISCOVER THE MOVEMENT

PUERI CANTORES

A school of faith, song and universal fraternity

✝ Faith ♪ Sacred music ✎ Formation ☮ Peace

Who are the Pueri Cantores?

The Pueri Cantores, or Little Singers, are an international movement of Catholic children's and youth choirs, committed to serving the liturgy, to human and spiritual formation and to the promotion of sacred music.

Born of the tradition of children's choir schools, the movement grew out of the experience of the Petits Chanteurs à la Croix de Bois, founded in France in 1907, and then the work of Mgr Fernand Maillet. The International Federation took shape gradually from the 1940s onwards, before receiving various ecclesiastical recognitions, including the definitive approval of its statutes by the Holy See on 31 January 2002.

The movement brings together boys' choirs, girls' choirs and mixed ensembles. It welcomes children into a journey that combines musical learning, prayer, discipline, service, fraternity and responsibility.

What is their mission?

Through sacred song, the Pueri Cantores learn to serve God and the Church, to develop their talents and to grow in Christian values. The movement pursues three aims:

01 To promote sacred music and liturgical singing.

02 To contribute to the spiritual, human, intellectual and musical formation of children and their leaders.

03 To foster fraternity among young people throughout the world, in a spirit of peace and solidarity.



Little Singers in their albs, 25 October 2026, Kisangani.

A movement open to the world

The International Federation of Pueri Cantores fosters exchanges between choirs, training meetings and international congresses, where thousands of young people gather to sing, pray and build friendships. The movement is placed under the patronage of **Saint Dominic Savio**.

"All the children of the world will sing the peace of God."

Mgr Fernand Maillet · www.puericantores.org

In the Democratic Republic of the Congo

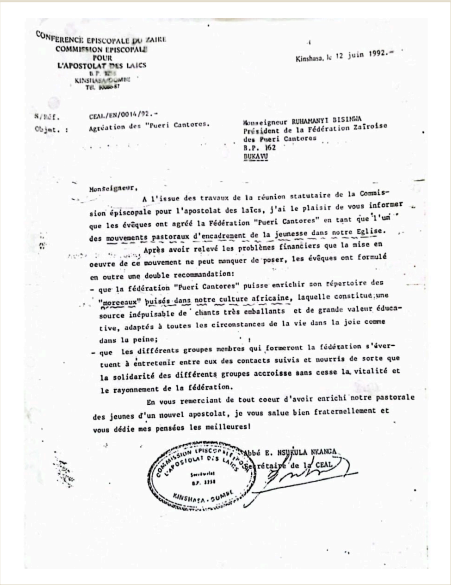
The Congolese Federation of Pueri Cantores (FCPC) supports choirs in the dioceses, encourages their training and organisation, and contributes to the Christian education of nearly 45,000 young Little Singers across the country. Its mission is not limited to teaching children to sing well: it seeks to form young people able to live their faith, serve their communities and become peacemakers.

1992: an ecclesiastical recognition carrying a mission

On 12 June 1992, the Episcopal Commission for the Apostolate of the Laity of the Episcopal Conference of Zaire confirmed, in an official letter addressed to Mgr RUHAMANYI BISIMWA, then President of the Zairean Federation of Pueri Cantores, that the bishops had approved the Federation as one of the pastoral movements for the guidance of young people in the Church.

Beyond this recognition, the bishops invited the movement to enrich its repertoire with songs drawn from African culture, "an inexhaustible source of rousing songs of great educational value", and to maintain regular contact between its groups, so that their solidarity would increase the vitality and influence of the Federation.

More than three decades later, these guidelines remain deeply relevant. Through training, visits and bringing communities closer together, the Kisangani mission is part of this same vision of a united Federation, rooted in the Church and open to the cultural richness of our country.



CONFERENCE EPISCOPALE DU ZAIRE
COMMISSION EPISCOPALE POUR L'APOSTOLAT DES LAICS

Kinshasa, le 12 juin 1992.-

N/Réf. CEAL/EN/0014/92.-
Objet. : Agréation des "Pueri Cantores".

Monseigneur RUHAMANYI BISIMWA
Président de la Fédération ZaÏroise des Pueri Cantores
B.P. 162
BUKAVU

Monseigneur,

A l'issue des travaux de la réunion statutaire de la Commission épiscopale pour l'apostolat des laÏcs, j'ai le plaisir de vous informer que les évêques ont agréé la Fédération "Pueri Cantores" en tant que l'un des mouvements pastoraux d'encadrement de la jeunesse dans notre Eglise.

Après avoir relevé les problèmes financiers que la mise en oeuvre de ce mouvement ne peut manquer de poser, les évêques ont formulé en outre une double recommandation:

- que la fédération "Pueri Cantores" puisse enrichir son répertoire des "morceaux" puisés dans notre culture africaine, laquelle constitue une source inépuisable de chants très emballants et de grande valeur éducative, adaptés à toutes les circonstances de la vie dans la joie comme dans la peine;
- que les différents groupes membres qui formeront la fédération s'évertuent à entretenir entre eux des contacts suivis et nourris de sorte que la solidarité des différents groupes accroisse sans cesse la vitalité et le rayonnement de la fédération.

En vous remerciant de tout coeur d'avoir enrichi notre pastorale des jeunes d'un nouvel apostolat, je vous salue bien fraternellement et vous dédie mes pensées les meilleures!

Abbé E. NSUKULA NKANGA
Secrétaire de la CEAL

Facsimile of letter CEAL/EN/0014/92 of 12 June 1992, signed by Abbé E. NSUKULA NKANGA, Secretary of the CEAL.

≈ 45,000

young Little Singers in the FCPC (Federation estimate, nationwide)

Milestones

28–30 DECEMBER 1989 · BUKAVU
At the first African congress, the Congolese Federation is officially affiliated to the International Federation of Pueri Cantores.

12 JUNE 1992
Approval by the bishops as a pastoral movement for the guidance of young people (ref. CEAL/EN/0014/92).

2006
The FCPC statutes, amended by the CEAL, are adopted by the Standing Committee of Bishops (session of 27 February to 4 March).

JANUARY 2024 · UVIRA
Statutes revised by the General Assembly of Directors.

The National President

National President of the Congolese Federation of Pueri Cantores, Prince Ermès CUBAKA BIGABWA also contributes to cooperation and development of the movement at African and international level. Within the FIPC, he is *Advisor for Special Mission – African Federations*, member of the *Work Group Africa* and member of the International Communication Commission. His commitment aims to strengthen links between federations, encourage the training of leaders, promote exchanges between choirs and foster greater participation of African Little Singers in the international life of the movement.



TUESDAY 20 OCTOBER · BANGOKA AIRPORT

Bangoka: a family welcome

As he stepped off the plane, the National President of the FCPC was welcomed by a large and joyful delegation: Choir Directors, members of the diocesan parents' Committee and Little Singers, who came with songs, flowers and flags.

A guard of honour, a word of welcome read by a Little Singer, a bouquet offered on behalf of the whole Pueri Cantores family of Kisangani: from the very first minutes, the tone of the mission was set.

The delegation then accompanied the President to the episcopal authority for a first official meeting.

This welcome was a strong sign of communion, hospitality and commitment by the local leaders to the Movement.

Above: Choir Directors and members of the delegation form a guard of honour at the airport exit.



Welcome to Kisangani. A word of welcome and a bouquet offered by a Little Singer, in the presence of Mr Jérôme UNGURU SHABANI, Diocesan Representative, and Sister Professor Brigitte ANIBILONI, Godmother of the Pueri Cantores of Kisangani.



Flowers of welcome.



Alongside Sister Professor Brigitte ANIBILONI.



There from the moment of arrival. The Choir Directors of the Archdiocese of Kisangani.

Faces, names, a shared mission



Talking with the young Directors and leaders.



First words with the welcoming delegation.



Members of the diocesan parents' Committee and Choir Directors.



In the airport hall, with the delegation.

Fraternal hospitality



H.E. Mgr Léonard NDJADI NDJATE and the National President of the FCPC.

Straight from the airport, Mgr Léonard NDJADI NDJATE opened his home to the National President. He watched over him throughout the mission.

Every day, the Auxiliary Bishop shared meals with his guest and personally made sure someone came to collect him from the Procure, where he was staying. Through his presence and advice, he supported the preparation and smooth running of every stage of the visit.

The Congolese Federation of Pueri Cantores expresses its deep gratitude for this attentive fatherly care, which made the mission an experience of Church lived as a family.



First meeting at the home of Mgr NDJADI NDJATE, surrounded by the welcoming delegation.



Walking alongside the Auxiliary Bishop.



A gesture of blessing.



AUDIENCE

A pastor's blessing on the mission of the Little Singers.

H.E. Mgr Marcel UTEMBI TAPA, Metropolitan Archbishop of Kisangani, blesses the National President of the FCPC.

Audience with the Archbishop

Away from the city when the National President arrived, His Excellency Mgr Marcel UTEMBI TAPA, Metropolitan Archbishop of Kisangani, added him to his schedule as soon as he returned on Thursday and received him on Friday 23 October. The President expressed his sincere thanks for the pastoral and institutional support given to the Movement in the Archdiocese.

The discussions underlined how essential the support of the Church hierarchy is for the rooting, organisation and outreach of the Pueri Cantores. On Tuesday 27 October, the day of his departure, the President was received again by the Auxiliary Bishop and then by the Archbishop for farewell visits.



With H.E. Mgr Marcel UTEMBI TAPA.



Around the Archbishop, the National President and members of the delegation.



Mgr UTEMBI TAPA during the audience.

TUESDAY 20 OCTOBER · 8 P.M. · SAINT PAUL THE APOSTLE PARISH, KIBIBI

Speaking to the hearts of priests

On the evening of his arrival, at 8 p.m., at Saint Paul the Apostle Parish in Kibibi, the National President addressed the parish priests and clergy of the Archdiocese, at the invitation of the Archbishop and the Auxiliary Bishop. The meeting was led by H.E. Mgr Léonard NDJADI NDJATE.

His message could be summed up in one sentence: welcoming the Pueri Cantores into a parish is not simply creating a children's choir; it is opening a school of Christian life in the service of the pastoral care of children and young people.

Forming the voice

Singing in tune, listening to others, understanding the sacred texts: singing at Mass is not giving a show, it is praying.

Forming the heart

Through prayer and fraternity, learning to love, forgive, share and serve.

Forming the conscience

Discipline, punctuality, respect and commitment, to set an example at church, at home and at school.

An appeal to parish priests

To parishes that do not yet have a choir, the President asked a simple question: why not offer children this opportunity? A few motivated children, committed parents and serious pastoral support can be enough. With the Diocesan Organisation of Kisangani, the FCPC will be able to mobilise experienced leaders to help create and train new choirs.

He also recalled the bishops' recognition: on 12 June 1992, the Episcopal Commission for the Apostolate of the Laity announced the approval of the Federation as a pastoral movement for the guidance of young people.

A first fruit

The President asked the parish priests for permission for all the Little Singers of their parishes to join the great celebration of 25 October.

The address aroused keen interest: several priests asked for the text, which was then passed to Abbé Victor MBATU, Director of the Pastoral Centre, for circulation.

> *“ One of the finest works a priest can leave in his parish is not only a building, but also the children he has helped to form in the faith. ”*

With the diocesan leaders

The day after his Tuesday evening meeting with the parish priests and priests, the National President, accompanied by Mr Jérôme UNGURU SHABANI, Diocesan Representative, visited several priests holding responsibilities in the Archdiocese: Abbé Victor MBATU, Director of the Diocesan Centre for Pastoral Care, Catechesis and Liturgy (CDPCL); Abbé Fernand OLELA, Secretary to the Auxiliary Bishop and Director of the Pontifical Mission Societies (OPM); Abbé Gaston KPALIVULU, Procurator; and Pastor César BAHATI, in charge of the pastoral care of sacred music. He also met Abbé Joseph, Parish Priest of Saint John Paul II, and Father Bienvenu KAKULE KAVIRI before his departure for Lubumbashi. All of them offered their encouragement.



With Father Bienvenu KAKULE KAVIRI (left), Diocesan Chaplain, before his departure for Lubumbashi, and Mr Jérôme UNGURU SHABANI (right).



With Abbé Victor MBATU (centre), Director of the CDPCL, and Mr Jérôme UNGURU SHABANI (left).



With Abbé Fernand OLELA, Secretary to the Auxiliary Bishop and Director of the OPM.



Working session in the office of Abbé Victor MBATU, in the presence of Mr Jérôme UNGURU SHABANI. It was to him that the address to the priests was entrusted for circulation.



With Abbé Joseph, Parish Priest of Saint John Paul II, which hosts the Petits François Missionnaires choir, the first choir affiliated to the FCPC in 2023.



With Pastor César BAHATI (in the checked shirt), in charge of the pastoral care of sacred music, and Mr Jérôme UNGURU SHABANI.



With Abbé Gaston KPALIVULU, Procurator of the Archdiocese (left), and Mr Jérôme UNGURU SHABANI (right).

Photos: O.D.P.C. Kisangani communication unit.



The Mater Dei choir of Saint Camillus parish, banner unfurled, around the National President.

PASTORAL VISITS

Thirteen choirs, one family

On Wednesday, Thursday, Saturday and until Monday evening, the National President went to meet thirteen choirs of Little Singers in the Archdiocese. In each parish, he met the children, Directors, leaders and, in some places, parish officials.

Everywhere, the same message: make the choir a true school of Christian life. He reminded the Directors that their mission is not limited to preparing musical performances: it carries an educational and moral responsibility.

These visits brought the national Federation closer to local communities and gave a better understanding of the realities of parish life.

The thirteen choirs visited

01 Saint Paul
Saint Paul the Apostle Parish

02 Mater Dei
Saint Camillus Parish

03 Miséricorde Divine
Holy Family Parish

04 Notre-Dame du Congo
Saint Hubert Quasi-Parish

05 Sacré-Cœur de Jésus
Bakanja Parish

06 Petits François Missionnaires
Saint John Paul II Parish

07 Triomphal
Cathedral Parish

08 Laudate Deum
Holy Spirit Parish

09 Saint Dominique Savio
Saint Joseph the Worker Parish

10 Des Archanges
Saint Martin de Porres Quasi-Parish

11 Des Augustins de l'Assomption
Blessed Anuarite Parish

12 Saint Barthélemy
Saint Bartholomew Quasi-Parish

13 Des Anges
Christ the King Parish



A word for everyone, starting with the youngest.



A welcome song led by their Director.



Family photo in the shade of a tree, with the choir's leaders.

To the Little Singers

- Discipline and respect for leaders.
- Seriousness in rehearsals and celebrations.
- Respect for parents, teachers and religious authorities.
- The importance of success at school.
- Fraternity among Little Singers.
- Humility and a sense of service.
- Christian witness in daily life.

“ Let your behaviour sing even before your mouth begins to sing. ”



Family photo with a choir, the Godmother and the leaders.

EVENING VISITS

When night falls, the singing goes on

The days were not long enough. Several visits continued after sunset: the choirs waited, and the Little Singers sang for their visitor by the light of mobile phones.



By the light of mobile phones, the Little Singers sing for their visitor.



Evening smiles, with the leaders.



Listening, encouraging, answering questions.

FRIDAY 23 OCTOBER · HOLY SPIRIT UNIVERSITY PARISH

One voice



At the podium. The National President leads the singing class bringing together all the Pueri Cantores of Kisangani.

Two days before the diocesan celebration, all the Pueri Cantores of the Archdiocese gathered at the Holy Spirit university parish for a large singing class. The National President led it himself: placing the voices, vocal discipline, attention to dynamics and preparation of Sunday's music.

From the youngest to the oldest, the pews were full. This moment of musical communion made everyone feel part of one family, called to sing with one voice for the glory of God.



The gesture that gives the cue.



A word for each one, among the pews.



The youngest, in the front row.

FRIDAY 23 OCTOBER · MEETING WITH PARENTS

Parents, the first educators



The National President with the parents' representatives of the choirs of the Archdiocese.

After the singing class, the National President brought together the parents' representatives of each choir. Forming a child is a responsibility shared by the family, the parish and the choir leaders.

The emphasis was on regular cooperation, transparent communication and attentive support: discipline, participation in activities, school follow-up and material and moral support for the Movement.

To parents

"Thank you for your trust and your sacrifices. But your mission does not end with bringing children to rehearsals. Encourage them, follow their formation and help them put into practice the values they learn."

Family, parish and choir must work together to form the child.



Working session with the parents' representatives.



The Directors and Choir Leaders of the Archdiocese, gathered around the National President in front of the cathedral parish.

SATURDAY 24 OCTOBER · CATHEDRAL PARISH

Training those who train

"What kind of Choir Director do we want to be for the children that God, the Church and their parents entrust to us?"

With this question, the National President opened a structured three-hour session with the Directors, Deputy Directors and Choir Leaders at the cathedral parish. The session was based on the *Vade-mecum for the Director – Choir Leader* : the Director as musician, educator, organiser, attentive companion of the children and servant of the liturgy.

He placed particular emphasis on the protection and dignity of every child: "A child must be able to enter a Pueri Cantores choir with confidence, grow there in joy and leave it humanly and spiritually enriched."

At the podium

The training was also practical: the President worked with participants on how to conduct a choir, vocal discipline and respect for dynamics during performance.



Attentive participants, notebooks in hand.



To conduct is to show. The National President works on conducting gestures and dynamics with the Directors.

A Identity and responsibility

The Director as Christian educator, leader and role model for the children, beyond musical skills.

B Conducting and interpretation

How to conduct the choir, vocal discipline, dynamics during performance.

C Church hierarchy

Working in communion with parish priests and chaplains, recognising diocesan and national structures.

D Ethics and protection

Conduct, example, boundaries; no skill or seniority gives an adult the right to humiliate, manipulate or exploit a child.

E Governance and management

Clear organisation, job descriptions, transparent management of resources.

F The place of children

Educational committees of Little Singers, under adult supervision.

“ Our authority must be an authority that educates, reassures, accompanies and protects. ”

Each participant was invited to leave with at least three concrete decisions to improve the life of their choir.

Beyond the session of 24 October, meetings with Directors and choir leaders throughout the mission included teaching, practical advice and guidance on spirituality, governance, discipline, ethics, child protection and musical direction: at least five cumulative hours of training and mentoring, according to the National President's estimate.

SUNDAY 25 OCTOBER · HOLY SPIRIT PARISH

263 albs to serve God

The mission was crowned by a great Eucharistic celebration at Holy Spirit parish, presided over by H.E. Mgr Léonard NDJADI NDJATE, representing H.E. Mgr Marcel UTEMBI TAPA, who was detained that day by the jubilee of the cathedral parish.

Nearly 2,000 Pueri Cantores from the choirs of the Archdiocese took part in the gathering. Among them, 263 children received their albs and committed themselves to serving God through sacred song: “a promise made to God, to the Church and to their families”.

This day marked the official launch of a new stage in the organisation and consolidation of the Movement, present in the Archdiocese since 2023. Not to start over an existing work, the President explained, but to “recognise the efforts of the pioneers, consolidate what has been achieved and open a new chapter”.

263

Little Singers received the alb on 25 October 2026

≈ 2,000

Pueri Cantores gathered for the diocesan celebration

Tribute to the builders

- **Father Bienvenu KAKULE KAVIRI**, Diocesan Chaplain, recently sent on mission to Lubumbashi, for his dedication and perseverance.
- **Mr Jérôme UNGURU SHABANI**, Diocesan Representative, one of the main builders of this momentum.
- **Sister Professor Brigitte ANIBILONI**, Godmother, who took over from Father Bienvenu and prepared an exceptional welcome.

To the Little Singers

“Your alb is not a costume. It is the sign of your commitment to live as children of God.”

- At church, be recollected.
- At home, respect your parents.
- At school, be hard-working and honest.
- Everywhere, be peacemakers.



A moment of prayer: the Little Singers during the celebration.

“ Your reception of the alb does not end today. It begins today! ”

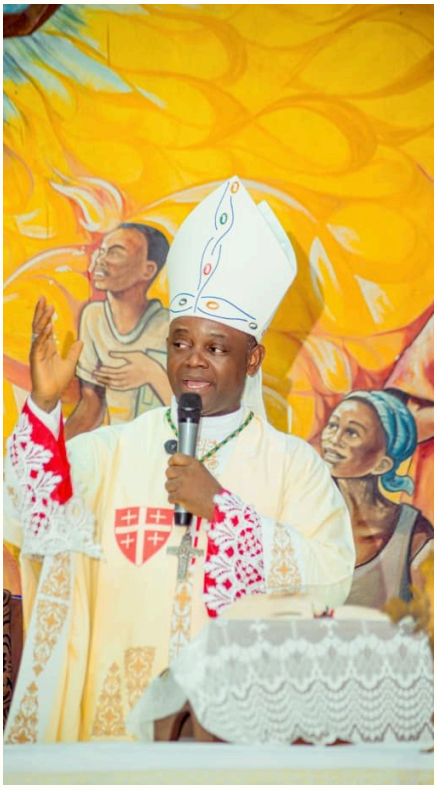
SUNDAY 25 OCTOBER · HOLY SPIRIT PARISH

A Church singing with one voice

Nearly 2,000 Pueri Cantores filled the Holy Spirit church and its surroundings. Led by the choirs' banners, the entrance procession brought H.E. Mgr Léonard NDJADI NDJATE and the concelebrating priests to the altar, to the singing of the Little Singers conducted by their own Directors.



The entrance procession: the concelebrating priests, followed by Mgr NDJADI NDJATE, among the Little Singers.



Homily by H.E. Mgr Léonard NDJADI NDJATE.



A packed church: nearly 2,000 Pueri Cantores gathered.



The concelebrating priests.



A young Director leads the assembly's singing.

SUNDAY 25 OCTOBER · THE RITE OF RECEIVING THE ALB

Clothed in white



Before the rite. Alb, red cord and wooden cross in hand, the children listen to the commitment they are about to make.



Mgr Léonard NDJADI NDJATE blesses the albs before they are put on.



The National President hands the alb to a Little Singer.



Sister Professor Brigitte ANIBILONI, Godmother, places the cross around a child's neck.



The raised crosses receive the Bishop's blessing.

SUNDAY 25 OCTOBER · HOLY SPIRIT PARISH

A cross, a light, a commitment



The wooden cross, sign of belonging to the Movement, proudly held high.



A lit candle: the light of Christ entrusted to each Little Singer.



263 new Little Singers, candles lit, in the Holy Spirit church.



A new family. The newly robed Little Singers around the National President.

SUNDAY 25 OCTOBER · AFTER MASS

In procession to the ISC

After Mass, the new Little Singers set off in procession, banners unfurled and brass band in front, to the grounds of the Institut Supérieur de Commerce (ISC). In the streets of Kisangani, the white alb and red cord bore joyful and visible witness to the children's faith.



Songs, banners and a brass band: the procession sets off.



A white tide on the road to the ISC.



The joy of the Little Singers on the move.



The youngest, proud of their new albs.



Arrival at the ISC grounds, to the sound of the brass band.

SUNDAY 25 OCTOBER · ISC GROUNDS

Choir by choir, one family



A shared meal on the ISC lawn, with the Little Singers and their leaders.



The Mater Dei choir of Saint Camillus parish.



The Notre-Dame du Congo choir of Saint Hubert quasi-parish.



Choir photo in the shade of the ISC trees.



The return, in the late afternoon light.

Sister Professor Brigitte ANIBILONI, Godmother, accompanies the choirs in most of the photos.

MONDAY 26 OCTOBER · EVE OF DEPARTURE

A family farewell evening

On the eve of his departure, a farewell evening was held at the home of Papa Charles PALUKU, a parent from the Cathedral parish. All the Choir Directors were there, with the Sister Godmother and the Diocesan Representative. Several choirs had prepared surprise gifts for the National President, as others had done during the visits. The diocesan Committee also presented him with a goat, to share with his family after a week of apostolic mission away from home.



The Choir Directors of Kisangani gathered around the National President, the Godmother and the Diocesan Representative.



The diocesan Committee presents a goat to the National President, for his family.



A sculpture of the famous Wagenia fisheries, symbol of Kisangani, offered by a choir.



Fabrics in the colours of Kisangani, as a souvenir of the mission.



With Joachim and Marianna PALUKU, twins of the family of Papa Charles PALUKU: Marianna offered him flowers on his arrival, Joachim during his stay.



A painted portrait, offered as a sign of gratitude during the celebration.

The National President warmly thanks all the choirs that offered him a gift during his visit.

TUESDAY 27 OCTOBER · DAY OF DEPARTURE

Thanking our pastors

Before flying home, the National President, accompanied by the Sister Godmother, the Diocesan Representative and a group of Directors, visited the Church authorities to thank them for the success of his stay and for their commitment to the outreach of the Pueri Cantores Movement: first the Auxiliary Bishop, then the Archbishop, H.E. Mgr Marcel UTEMBI TAPA. Both visits ended with a prayer and a blessing.



H.E. Mgr Léonard NDJADI NDJATE blesses the National President, the Sister Godmother and Mr Jérôme UNGURU SHABANI before departure.



A last exchange with the Auxiliary Bishop.



The delegation around Mgr NDJADI NDJATE.



H.E. Mgr Marcel UTEMBI TAPA, Metropolitan Archbishop, prays for the National President and the delegation.



The delegation around Mgr Marcel UTEMBI TAPA at the Archbishop's House.

TUESDAY 27 OCTOBER · BANGOKA AIRPORT

To the very last step

As on the first day, the Pueri Cantores family of Kisangani was there to the end. A group of Choir Directors accompanied the National President to Bangoka International Airport, where the mission had begun a week earlier.



In front of Bangoka International Airport, with the Directors who came to see the National President off.



With Sister Scholastica, who accompanies the choirs and serves at the Procure, and Mr René GOFFINET, Choir Director and communications officer.



With Mr René GOFFINET, a Pueri Cantores parent and Mr Jérôme UNGURU SHABANI.

What the mission achieved

01 **Stronger relations with the Church** with the Archbishop, the Auxiliary Bishop and pastoral leaders.

02 **Clergy made aware** of the vision and spirituality of the Pueri Cantores, with the address circulated to parish priests and curates.

03 **Thirteen choirs supported** directly, with messages of formation and encouragement.

04 **263 Little Singers** committed through the reception of the alb, among nearly 2,000 Pueri Cantores gathered, at the official launch of a new stage of the diocesan dynamic.

05 **Choir leaders trained and mentored** : at least five cumulative hours of training and mentoring, including a structured three-hour session on 24 October, on conducting and dynamics, leadership, ethics, child protection, governance and management.

06 **Parents involved** : meeting with the parents' representatives of each choir.

07 **Areas for reform identified** : governance, leaders' skills, child protection, organisational autonomy.

These achievements are a working basis; they do not mean that all the reforms envisaged have already been adopted or implemented.

Five lessons

01 The support of the Church hierarchy is essential for the Movement to take lasting root in parishes.

02 Directors play a decisive role in the quality of children's formation; their support must be ongoing.

03 Parental involvement and cooperation with parish priests are essential factors of stability.

04 More musical activities must go hand in hand with structured governance, transparent management and clear child-protection rules.

05 The Movement's growth must rest on the quality of leadership as much as on the number of choirs.

LOOKING AHEAD

Ten recommendations

01 Draw up or update a diocesan action plan, with priorities and a timetable.

02 Clarify the responsibilities of the diocesan Committee and of each choir.

03 Set up a regular training programme for Directors.

04 Strengthen cooperation with parish priests, chaplains and parents.

05 Formalise child-protection procedures in line with Church and legal requirements.

06 Encourage educational committees of Little Singers.

07 Promote transparent management and self-financing.

08 Update diocesan statistics: choirs, numbers, Directors, chaplains, parishes.

09 Define a follow-up mechanism between diocesan coordination and the national Federation.

10 Assess progress after an initial implementation period.

CONCLUSION

"This day is not an end point. It is the beginning of a new responsibility."

Our ambition is to see better-organised choirs, better-trained Directors and better-supported children grow in Kisangani, able to become, in a country that longs so much for peace, witnesses of fraternity, unity and hope.

Málaga 2027: a concrete prospect for the Little Singers of Kisangani



Little Singers and leaders of Kisangani during a choir visit.

The meetings with the Little Singers of Kisangani revealed a strong aspiration: to take a greater part in the international life of the movement.

The National President encouraged them to consider taking part in future gatherings, notably the international congress in Málaga, Spain, in 2027, and the international congress in Rome from December 2028 to January 2029. These dates invite interested choirs to plan their musical, spiritual, administrative and financial preparation early, together with the national Federation and the organisers.

He also presented the vision of Elisabeth von Waldstein, President of the International Federation of Pueri Cantores, and the efforts of the *Work Group Africa* to strengthen exchanges between federations and encourage greater participation of African Little Singers in international gatherings.

This openness is an encouraging prospect for the choirs of Kisangani, called to take their place step by step in a worldwide dynamic of communion and fraternity.

Málaga 2027 in practice

- **International congress:** 14 to 18 July 2027, in Málaga (Spain).
- **Registration announced:** from 1 November 2026 to 31 January 2027.
- **Rome:** international congress announced from December 2028 to January 2029.
- **Official information:** www.puericantores.org
- Any participation is prepared with the national Federation; no registration has yet been made.

So that the mission may continue

Continuing the mission in the dioceses

The Kisangani experience has aroused encouraging interest in several other dioceses of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Local leaders have expressed the wish to receive, in turn, local missions combining choir visits, training for directors, meetings with parents, dialogue with Church authorities and organisational support.

These expectations match the mission that the statutes entrust to the National Bureau: following up choirs through regular visits and proposing paths of human, spiritual, moral and musical formation. The National Bureau therefore wishes to gradually develop a programme of diocesan missions, to be built with the Church authorities and diocesan structures.

A dynamic of solidarity

Each mission is an opportunity to train, listen, encourage and build. But multiplying them requires resources for travel, training, organisation and support that currently exceed the ordinary means of the National Bureau.

The Congolese Federation of Pueri Cantores wishes to encourage solidarity and partnership with Church institutions, organisations, businesses, foundations, former Little Singers and all people of goodwill, so as to make these missions accessible to more dioceses, in a spirit of transparency, responsibility and service.



The choir leaders of Kisangani in front of the cathedral, at the end of the training of 24 October.

Supporting the formation of a Little Singer is investing in a generation called to grow in faith, discipline, fraternity and peace.

"Training a Little Singer is not only training a voice: it is shaping a heart and a conscience."

DEDICATION

To those who help faith, music and hope to grow

I dedicate this magazine report to the great family of the Pueri Cantores, to all the children who serve God through sacred song, and to all those who accompany them with love, patience and devotion.

I express my deep gratitude to the Catholic Church, to His Eminence Cardinal Fridolin AMBONGO BESUNGU, Metropolitan Archbishop of Kinshasa, to the National Episcopal Conference of the Congo (CENCO), to our archbishops and bishops, and to the chaplains, priests, men and women religious who support our pastoral and educational mission.

My gratitude goes to the members of the FCPC National Bureau, the diocesan representatives, the choir directors and leaders, the parents, the youth leaders and all those who contribute, often discreetly, to the formation of our children. I also extend my fraternal thanks to Elisabeth von Waldstein, President of the International Federation of Pueri Cantores, to the members of its governing bodies, to the *Work Group Africa* and to the International Communication Commission.

I dedicate these pages most especially to all the Little Singers of the DRC and of the world, whose voices carry each day a message of faith, beauty and fraternity.

IN MEMORY

But I would also like these pages to keep alive the memory of those whose voices have been silenced.

To our young Little Singers who have lost their lives, to the children who are victims of the wars and violence afflicting the East of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, to bereaved families and to all those whose childhood has been wounded by conflict, I extend a deep and fraternal thought. We do not want their memory to fade into silence.

Their absence reminds us that our mission goes beyond learning music: it commits us to defend the dignity of the child, to cultivate fraternity and to work for a future of peace.

We must remember. We must sing. We must act for peace.

"To those whose voices have fallen silent, we promise to keep singing for peace."

May the voices of our Little Singers remain voices of consolation for grieving families and voices of hope for our country. For I remain deeply convinced that: "*Training a Little Singer is not only training a voice: it is shaping a heart and a conscience.*"

Pueri Mundi, Pacem Dei Cantamus !

Prince Ermès CUBAKA BIGABWA
National President of the Congolese
Federation of Pueri Cantores

Thank you

The Congolese Federation of Pueri Cantores expresses its deep gratitude to all those who made this mission possible.

- **H.E. Mgr Marcel UTEMBI TAPA**, Metropolitan Archbishop of Kisangani
- **H.E. Mgr Léonard NDJADI NDJATE**, Auxiliary Bishop of Kisangani
- **Father Bienvenu KAKULE KAVIRI**, Diocesan Chaplain of the Pueri Cantores, now on mission in Lubumbashi
- **Mr Jérôme UNGURU SHABANI**, Diocesan Representative of the Pueri Cantores
- **Sister Professor Brigitte ANIBILONI**, Godmother of the Pueri Cantores of Kisangani
- Abbé Victor MBATU (CDPCL), Abbé Fernand OLELA (OPM), Abbé Gaston KPALIVULU, Procurator, Abbé Joseph, Parish Priest of Saint John Paul II, and Pastor César BAHATI, in charge of the pastoral care of sacred music
- The parish priests and curates of the City pastoral zone, in particular Father Tryphon ISANGO, S.J., and Father Leonidas, who accompany the Choir of the Angels of Christ the King parish
- The Choir Directors and their leaders
- Sister Scholastica, of the Procure, and Mr René GOFFINET, communications officer
- The diocesan parents' Committee and all the families, in particular the family of Papa Charles PALUKU, host of the farewell evening
- The O.D.P.C. Kisangani communication unit
- The choirs that offered gifts to the National President
- And every Little Singer of Kisangani



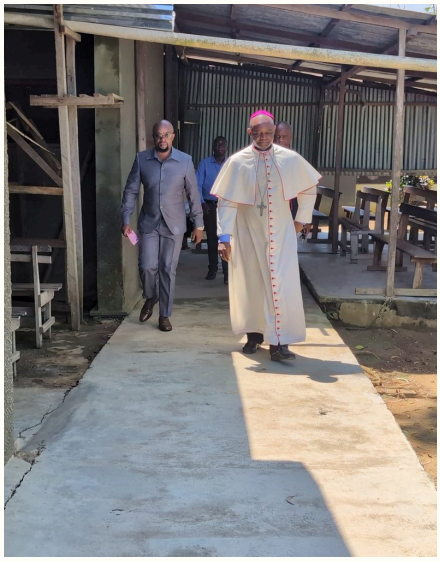
Photo credits: O.D.P.C. Kisangani communication unit and mission archives.

Kisangani in pictures













Bottom left: the National President with Father Tryphon ISANGO, S.J. (in the cap), and Father Leonidas, who accompany the Choir of the Angels of Christ the King parish.

“ Training a Little Singer is not only training a voice: it is shaping a heart and a conscience. ”

Pueri Mundi – Pacem Dei Cantamus !

FÉDÉRATION CONGOLAISE
DES PUERI CANTORES
FCPC

www.puericantores.cd · contact@puericantores.cd
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