



WORLD DAY OF MARIAN PRAYER IN CONNECTION WITH THE NATIONAL MARIAN SHRINE OF OUR LADY OF AFRICA, MOTHER OF ALL GRACES OCTOBER 13, 2024

Introduction

Located in Abidjan, the economic capital of Ivory Coast, a country in West Africa, and precisely at Cité Fairmont in the commune of Attécoubé, the Marian Shrine of Our Lady of Africa, Mother of All Graces is a place of prayer, spirituality and pilgrimage. This sacred site welcomes pilgrims (around 4,000 a week) of all faiths. They come not only to strengthen and deepen their faith in God through the Virgin Mary, but also to discover and visit this architectural work of art. Welcoming all these people is a real challenge for the brothers of the Marianist community responsible for the Sanctuary. We place particular emphasis on welcoming pilgrims as part of our Pastoral Care program. Throughout this document, we'll be giving a brief presentation of the Sanctuary's history, characteristics and spiritual message, as well as guidelines for prayer.



- **History**

At the dawn of Ivory Coast's independence in 1960, Bishop Bernard Yago, the first native Ivorian bishop, was secretly working on a project to build a church in honor of the Virgin Mary. As luck would have it, during one of his frequent visits to Cité Fairmont, in the Commune of Attécoubé, the Lorn family expressed to the Prelate their wish to see a Catholic church built in Cité Fairmont, a neighborhood that had no place of worship. This desire was clearly in line with Cardinal Bernard Yago's vision. So he asked the local residents to find a plot of land where a church could be built. The city's Christians set their sights on a site below the neighborhood, which had just been cleared and belonged to the Honorable Philippe-Grégoire Yace, then President of the Economic and Social Council. He agreed to donate his land for the construction of the church. The Catholic community of Cité Fairmont, which had hoped for its own church for Eucharistic celebrations, has now been granted a Sanctuary dedicated to the Virgin Mary, where everyone can deepen their devotion to the Heavenly Mother. In 1980, during his first visit to Ivory Coast, POPE JOHN PAUL II blessed the first stone. That first stone was laid on February 2, 1985. Two years later, on February 1, 1987, the Marian Shrine was inaugurated by Cardinal Bernard Yago.



- **Features**

Built on the Banco plateau in the Commune of Attécoubé, the Marian Sanctuary overlooks the entire northern part of the District of Abidjan. With its slender, bold look, it's like "a finger pointing to the sky." The closer you get, the more you feel "a blue mantle that welcomes and reassures." At night, from the freeway, we are guided by "a lighthouse that watches over and illuminates the darkness." This architectural masterpiece can accommodate large gatherings.

Its flagship activities include the Assumption Vigil on August 14/15, confessions, individual and family consecrations to Mary, pilgrimage groups, spiritual listening, presentation of babies and couples, adoration nights, Thousand Ave Nights, the great gathering of Marian movements, Masses for the sick.



- **The spiritual message**

The spiritual message was revealed to us by Cardinal Bernard Yago, who wanted "crowds to come and strengthen and deepen their faith in this high place. Such a place of human and spiritual encounter was sorely lacking in the Archdiocese, and even more so in our country. A land of encounters, Abidjan became a center of true devotion to the Blessed Virgin, a place of recollection for those seeking the meaning of their lives and for the afflicted in search of consolation and maternal affection..."

This Sanctuary is also intended to be a symbol, a holy place, a space of prayer where Mary, our model and guide, will surely lead us along the paths of holiness for the greater glory of God, our Father

Two of Mary's words are engraved at the entrance to our Sanctuary:

"I am the Handmaid of the Lord" Lk 1:38

"Do whatever he tells you" Jn 2:5

"I'd like to offer you these sentences," adds Cardinal Bernard Yago, "not like diamonds or pearls, but like seeds, living words that penetrate your hearts to germinate and bear much fruit, fruit of holiness, following in Mary's footsteps.

"That is the purpose of this Marian Shrine where we come to pray. "



PRAYER TO NOTRE DAME D'AFRIQUE

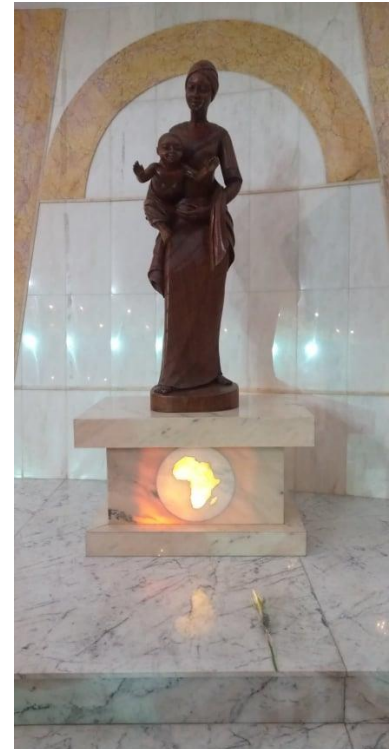
**O Our Lady of Africa Mother of All Graces,
Look with kindness upon
Your children in Africa and around the world,
Listen to their prayers.**

**The Lord has filled you with His love.
He made you His Mother.
He gave himself to you,
And you give him to the little ones, to the poor,
To all those who suffer and wait for salvation.**

**O Our Lady of Africa, Mother of All Graces,
Give us your Son.
May He bless our families, our villages and our countries,
And make us witnesses to His love and peace.**

**Our Lady of Africa, Mother of All Graces,
Pray for us**

AMEN



Prayer intentions :

Let us pray for our spiritual Family and for the Church to continue to support a synodal lifestyle in all areas. May the Risen One himself anticipate our mission and give us the grace to live united around Mary, for the greater glory of his name.

Our Lady of Africa, Mother of All Graces, Pray for us

Let us pray for Pope Francis and all the ecclesiastical leaders God has given us. May our prayers give them strength and help them to discern and accompany the Church as it listens to the Holy Spirit. May they be shepherds in the image of Christ, showing the way to God's people

Our Lady of Africa, Mother of All Graces, Pray for us

We pray to you, Lord, for peace in the world and for the protection of the human community and other living beings in our "common home". Protect, welcome, accompany and bless the poorest. Assist refugees, the sick and victims of war. Through the intercession of Our Lady of Africa, Mother of All Graces, keep us united in your Holy Name and make us peacemakers.

Our Lady of Africa, Mother of All Graces, Pray for us

Let us pray to God our Father to inspire vocations to the Marianist Family.

Our Lady of Africa, Mother of All Graces, Pray for us



Let us pray for all relatives who mourn the loss of a loved one, and for all our Marianist brothers and sisters who have passed away. Through the intercession of Our Lady of Africa, Mother of All Grace, may they all find eternal rest in God.

Our Lady of Africa, Mother of All Graces, Pray for us

Marianist family in Ivory Coast :

"The Marianist Family, which grew out of the works of Blessed Chaminade in Bordeaux, is now widespread in many countries around the world. With its original organization, it is an opportunity for the Church in Africa. In Côte d'Ivoire, it meets the expectations of the Christian people.

It groups together male religious (SM), sisters (FMI), married and single persons, men and women, young people and adults (MLC), and a secular institute (AM). All live by the same spirituality, and make a covenant with Mary for the evangelization of the world.

The Marianist Family Council in Ivory Coast (COFMACI) brings together the leaders of the four branches of the Marianist Family present in Côte d'Ivoire. The COFMACI is essentially a body for coordinating and promoting Marianist activities with a view to strengthening collaboration between the various branches."



For further information:

About the National Marian Shrine: Website : www.sanctuairemarialnational.org / Facebook : National Marian Shrine - official / YouTube : National Marian Shrine of Abidjan.

On the Marianist Family of Ivory Coast:

Secretary of the Côte d'Ivoire Marianist Family Council: email: serheki77@gmail.com

Facebook : Marianist Lay Communities of Ivory Coast / Marianistes Côte d'Ivoire/