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Cardinal Dieudonné Nzapalainga: Je Suis Venu Vous Apporter la Paix

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Making an African Sense of Western Gender Discourses. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997. Ifi Amadiume, *Male Daughters, Female Husbands: Gender and Sex in an African Society*. London & New Jersey: Zed, 1987. Nkiru Nzegwu, *Family Matters: Feminist Concepts in African Philosophy of Culture*. Suny Series, Feminist Philosophy. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2006.

- 3 O'Brien notes that "apostle" was used frequently in the 9th century *Life of Magdalene*, by Rabanus Maurus. (p. 48n10).
4. O'Brien notes correctly that Vatican II will set aside Aquinas' theology to teach that the episcopacy is the fullness of the priesthood.
5. *Inter Insigniores*, #2: https://www.vatican.va/roman_curial_congregations/dfaith/documents/rc_conf_aith_doc_19761015_inter-insigniores_en.html [accessed August 13, 2020]

CARDINAL DIEUDONNÉ
NZAPALAINGA

***JE SUIS VENU VOUS
APPORTER LA PAIX.***

FRANCE: MEDIASPAUL, 2020. 156PP. (PBK).
ISBN 9782712215507. \$20.

Je suis venu vous apporter la Paix, ["I have come that you may have Peace"] was written by Spiritan Cardinal Dieudonné Nzapalainga, Archbishop of Bangui, capital of the Central African Republic (CAR).

Born in a disadvantaged district of Bangassou, in the south of the CAR, Dieudonné Nzapalainga wanted to become a priest to follow the example of Father Léon, a Dutch Spiritan missionary very close to the poor. Having become a Spiritan in his turn, he spent several years in France before returning to the Central African Republic as District Superior. Appointed apostolic administrator in 2009 and then archbishop of Bangui in 2012, he became the voice of peace in the civil war that broke out in 2013.

He was created cardinal in 2016, at just 49 years old, after Pope Francis' remarkable visit to Bangui in November 2015. During that visit Pope Francis anticipated the opening of the Holy Door at St. Peter's Basilica in Rome and thus inaugurating the Extraordinary Jubilee Year of

Mercy (December 8, 2015 to November 20, 2016) with the opening of the Holy Door of Bangui cathedral. The pope explained this prophetic action, "*The Holy Year begins earlier in this land that has suffered for many years as a result of war, hatred, misunderstanding and a lack of peace.*"

Personally committed to the peace process in his country, Nzapalainga participated alongside the president of the Islamic Council and the president of the Evangelical Alliance in Bangui, in the foundation of the interfaith Platform for Peace in Central Africa. This book gives a rare and original testimony to the Christian challenge to go beyond the usual divisions that separate people and foment suspicion, and to overcome the distrust that often overflows into violence. Shortly after his appointment as Archbishop of Bangui, Nzapalainga had to face the civil war that was ravaging the country and its capital. The conflict, initial-ly political, gradually became labelled and identified as a religious conflict between Christians and Muslims. To stem this wave of violence that nothing seems to be able to stop, he continues to travel all over the country to call for appeasement with an imam and a pastor. "The three saints of Bangui" as *Le Monde* would call them, have succeeded in averting massacres and committing communities to the path of reconciliation. They get involved as mediators

resolve conflicts, free hostages, and bring about a process of peace and reconciliation. This they continue to do often at the risk of their lives. Cardinal Nzapalainga found himself several times with a weapon aimed at his head. He attributes his many escapes from injury to the force of his words.

The cardinal's courage makes him today one of the most listened to men in Central Africa. Why did he dare to stand up against the warlords? Why are his calls for reconciliation heeded? How do you actually become a peacemaker? Nzapalainga addresses these questions and talks about his career and his experience with Laurence Desjoyaux, journalist at *La Vie* (a weekly French Roman Catholic magazine) who accompanied him on one of his tours in the interior of the country. She witnessed firsthand that his reputation and courage enabled him to bring together opposing militia leaders and make concrete progress for peace.

Desjoyaux is an accomplished reporter with expertise in jihadist movements. She has travelled and reported extensively on Central Africa and the Middle East. She has also collaborated with the head of the Chaldean Catholic Church in Iraq, Louis Raphael Sako, created cardinal by Pope Francis in 2018. Sako's book, *Nous oubliez pas!* "Do not forget us" (2015) tells the story of the atrocities committed in Iraq against Christians since the establishment of the Islamic State. Desjoyaux accompanied and reported on Pope Francis' historic visit to Iraq in March 2021.

In *Je suis venu vous apporter la Paix* she enables Cardinal Nzapalainga to put the spotlight on the continuing anarchic violence besetting his beloved CAR with its ever deepening divisions and hostilities. A debt of gratitude is owed to journalists such as Desjoyaux for giving global access to the story of such intelligent and brave

Christian advocates for peace and reconciliation.

Like his brother cardinal, Nzapalainga calls for help to put an end to a dramatic situation and for an international mobilization of all peoples and all religions in the cause of peace.

Both church leaders are contemporary Christian witnesses to great strength of soul and courage in the face of adversity that can inspire their contemporaries.

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MARIA CIMPERMANN, RSCJ
RELIGIOUS LIFE FOR
OUR WORLD: CREATING
COMMUNITIES OF HOPE.

MARYKNOLL, N.Y.: ORBIS BOOKS, 2020. 248
PP. (PBK). ISBN 9781626983809. \$28

Maria Cimperman, RSCJ, is director of the Center for the Study of Consecrated Life at Catholic Theological Union (CTU) in Chicago, USA. She writes both as a theologian, and as an experienced religious of over twenty-five years. While recognizing her own particular North American context, Cimperman points out that she "lives in an international community, and is part of an international congregation" (xviii). She acknowledges engagement with religious on four continents, – giving particular mention to Korea, Philippines, and Australia, – that informs her thinking and writing on religious life today. The blurb on the back cover claims that "this book brings together God's call, the world's needs, and charisms in consecrated life in a way that dynamically engages the vows, prayer, community, and ministry for