



## JOHN PAUL II JUSTICE AND PEACE CENTRE

P.O. Box 31853 Kampala-Uganda.

Tel: 0414- 267372

Email: [jp2justice@sat.signis.net](mailto:jp2justice@sat.signis.net)

Email: [jp2justice.director@sat.signis.net](mailto:jp2justice.director@sat.signis.net)

Website : [www.jp2jpc.org](http://www.jp2jpc.org)

# FAITH DOING JUSTICE

## Newsletter No.10. Jan.-March 2010

Dear friends and collaborators,

We are approaching Easter and the Staff of John Paul II Justice and Peace Centre wishes all readers a BLESSED EASTER.

During the past three months we have encountered several challenges which impinge on JPIC in Uganda.

Uganda , despite being a very resourceful nation, is rated among the world's poorest nations. "Our leadership is upside down in its thinking...and they have forgotten completely about our Constitution" (Observer. Dec. 25-31<sup>st</sup>. 2009). Violence occurs daily in the streets of Kampala. The Makerere demonstrations which turned violent and the Kasubi tombs burning with subsequent violence (17<sup>th</sup> March 2010) are just some examples and symptoms of deep frustration especially among the unemployed youth. (80%). Domestic violence is increasing with 5000 women being murdered by family yearly ( New Vision. 10<sup>th</sup> March '10). Corruption is eroding all development efforts in the country. Land grabbing continues in Africa totaling up to 9 million hectares of land being taken by individuals , government or foreign investors. (See AEFJN on Food Sovereignty in Lobbying activities 2009).

The burning of Kasubi tombs has seriously upset many people. "The Parliament of Uganda condemns Kasubi fire and shooting of civilians". (New Vision, March 18<sup>th</sup> '10) Inquiries into the causes of the fire are being carried out both by Government and the Kingdom of Buganda. Kasubi tombs were recognized by UNESCO and placed on the

Heritage list in 2001. The Buganda Katikiro J.B. Walusimbi said: “ with deep sorrow the Kingdom informs the people of Buganda, Uganda and the rest of the world that people of ill motives set ablaze the Museum housing the royal tombs”,(Monitor: 18<sup>th</sup> March). There is an urgent need to overcome violence with constructive dialogue, injustices with respect of human rights. We must promote employment and the common good. We must fight corruption with leaders of sound values and integrity.

## **I. THE MESSAGE OF THE 2<sup>nd</sup> AFRICAN SYNOD**

### **1. THIS AFRICAN SYNOD RENEWS OUR HOPE,**

“The Blessings of God are still abundant...and when conditions are appropriate, people of Africa have reached the heights of human endeavors and competence”. (no.6 of Message), “Our destiny is still in our hands”. (n.40)

### **2. THE AFRICAN SYNOD DEEPENS OUR FAITH.**

Only with God, can we care for our neighbour and the common good. It is surprising that some predominantly Christian countries like Uganda are faring so poorly in ensuring a more just distribution of resources, in overcoming corruption, injustices and violence. Could it be that our faith is still too external and devotional without affecting our daily behaviour ? This African Synod invites us to go beyond “simple catechism” to put issues of reconciliation, justice and peace high up on the Church’s agenda, and calls us to be models of good governance, transparency and justice”. (p.17 of Message).

### **3. THE AFRICAN SYNOD CALLS FOR AN ONGOING FORMATION IN THE SOCIAL TEACHING OF THE CHURCH (CST)**

“We need to put in place an ongoing formation program in CST for all the faithful, especially those in high positions of authority” (Message p.17,19,21). This is one of the reasons why JPIIJC is starting these programs on Ethics-Civic education for Professional groups, like: MPs, Politicians, Police, Journalists, University students, Teachers etc In our experience of two years we have realized that there is an urgent need for and great interest in more serious ethics-civic training at all levels of society.

### **4. THE AFRICAN SYNOD CALLS FOR RESPONSIBLE LEADERSHIP AND GOOD GOVERNANCE**

“This poverty and misery, war and conflict, violence and chaos are very rarely caused by natural disasters. They are largely due to human decisions and activities by people who have no regard for the common good and this often brought a tragic complicity and criminal conspiracy of local leaders and foreign interests” (Message p.11)

“Politics and economy need ethics in order to function correctly, not just any ethics will do, but an ethics which is people-centered”(Caritas. in V. n.45)

“Those in public office are to promote the common good and God’s Kingdom of justice, love and grace, in line with this Teaching of the Church”. (Message, p.20).

“We all on family and civil activities are to protect the family with people centered legislations... families are asking for just and dignified life. They have a right to live in dignity”(Message p.20)

## 5. GENDER.

“The Synod message and Propositions call for a greater integration of women into the Church structures and decisions making processes, which point to the injustices done to women every day”( Message p.21)

## 6.ENVIRONMENT

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“If you want to cultivate peace, care for the environment”. (Pope Message of 1.1.2010)

“Multinationals have to stop their criminal devastation of the environment in their greedy exploitation of natural resources” (Message p.23).

## II. EVENTS

### 1. PRESENTATION OF PETITION TO PARLIAMENT OF UGANDA.

JPIIJPC prepared a Petition to Parliament, through Hon. Henri Banyenzaki MP, to integrate Ethics-Civic Education into the National Education Curriculum of Uganda. This Petition was submitted to Parliament through and officially by the Inter Religious Council of Uganda (IRCU). All the Heads of the seven main Religions in Uganda signed the Petition. The Parliament was to discuss the Petition on the 17<sup>th</sup> March at 2pm, but the burning of Kasubi tombs and violence lead the Parliament to postpone their Agenda for the day. We hope it will be read and discussed in the coming days.

If this Petition is accepted it will make Ethics-Civic education an integral part of all the young peoples’ education in Uganda. Considering the prevailing situation, this holistic education will cater for the integral development of the person.

### 2. ARRIVAL OF KAI VON UNGEM-STENBERG TO JPIIJPC STAFF

We are very happy to welcome Kai, a lawyer by profession, to our Center’s Staff.. Kai arrived on the 7<sup>th</sup> Feb.2010 and is already taking part in some of our ethics-civic education programs and research activities.

### III. ACTIVITIES

#### 1. ETHICS-CIVIC EDUCATION FOR

- **TEACHERS:** During Jan.-March 2010, we have continued the workshops for teachers in Gulu and Arua dioceses. The participation and interest of teachers in this civic education is outstanding. They all see the urgent need of rebuilding a just, developed and peaceful society.
- **PARISH COUNCIL LEADERS AND CATECHISTS:** A second CST education program is targeting the above community leaders as they are influential agents of transformation at the grass roots level. We held two workshops in the following dioceses: Lira, Nebbi, Arua and Gulu.
- **PROFESSIONAL GROUPS:** Together with the Hanns Seidel Foundation (HSF) JPIIIPC is involved in planning and facilitating regular civic education workshops for different professional groups: MPs, Politicians, Journalists, Police, University students etc. We already held one workshop with Police national leaders and the experience was appreciated by them.
- **UNIVERSITY STUDENTS:** We also carry out monthly open lectures at several universities: Kisubi-UMU, KIU, Ggaba national seminary and Mukono on the following themes: *Responsibility of youth in peace building and conflict resolution, African Synod messages to us, Religion for development and peace.*

#### 2. RESEARCH ON FOOD INSECURITY

Research findings on food insecurity in four districts of Uganda ( Arua and Soroti regions) are being compiled and edited and the printing should be ready shortly after Easter. A follow up of 2009 Kampala Basic Needs Basket ( KBNB) will also be carried out during the next two-three months.

#### 3. LENT RADIO PROGRAMS

We continued with our “Social Gospel” programs every Sunday of Lent, from 8,30 pm to 9,30 pm at Radio Maria, which has a national coverage.

#### 4. EDITING THE TRADITIONAL WISDOM MATERIAL GATHERED IN FIVE WORKSHOPS WITH THE MAIN ETHNIC GROUPS REPRESENTATIVES

JPIIIPC organised five workshops with cultural representatives of the main ethnic groups in Uganda during the last six months.

Though we still have some gaps to fill in, the available material is being edited in view of integrating some cultural values into the civic education text book as well as editing a

separate resource-reference book on Traditional Wisdom and Values in different ethnic groups. We find this is a quite innovative inclusion to a civic education manual.

#### IV. NETWORKING

1. **BUJUMBURA** international gathering, organized by Duke University, on the role of politicians in peace building, took place the 12 to 17 January 2010. JPIIJC participates annually in these regional gatherings concerned especially with peace building in the Great Lakes Region.
2. **COLLABORATION WITH MANOS UNIDAS** in their national Campaign “To overcome hunger (poverty) care for the earth” of 2010. Fr. Lazaro was invited for three weeks collaboration in February 2010 to present the reality of this region particularly in the media..
3. **TROCAIRE PLANNING MEETING: 24-26 FEB. 2010 in SOROTI:** Two members of JPIIJC Staff participated in this annual evaluation and planning meeting between Trocaire and some partners working more at the level of economic justice and civic education.
4. **MEETING AND COLLABORATION with Hanns Seidel Foundation (HSF) :** On the 5<sup>th</sup> March 2010, Dr. Wolf Krug, representing HSF in Kenya and Uganda, came with Dr. Francis Bisasso to meet the Staff of JPIIJC and see ways of working together in civic education of Politicians and other professional groups in Uganda. This is a new and relevant partnership. We are planning for a monthly workshop for different professional groups.
5. **PEACE WEEK IN NEBBI:** 10-16 Jan. 2010: We participated in the annual week for peace in Northern Uganda. This gathering brings together all religious, cultural and many political leaders of the 4 dioceses in the North: Nebbi, Arua, Gulu and Lira., and people from other parts of Uganda.
6. OXFAM organized a meeting at the Imperial Royal Hotel in Kampala on the 24<sup>th</sup> March 2010 to launch the Campaign on “**Gender and Human Rights**” with the participation of JPIIJC and many JP groups.
7. **Uganda Land Owners Association** “Together we stand” has planned the 1<sup>st</sup> National Conference on Land Ownership in Uganda “on 26<sup>th</sup> March 2010 at Kampala Serena Hotel and JPIIJC was invited to attend.
8. **MEETING OF AGEH WITH PARTNERS:** 26-27 Feb.2010. This meeting was planned by the Association for Development Cooperation (AGEH) in

order to draft a National Strategy of collaboration between AGEH and the Uganda local Partners.

## 9. MEETING WITH THE IRCU AUTHORITIES

On the occasion of presenting the Petition to Uganda Parliament, JPIIIPC met all the Heads of the main religions in Uganda. During the process we discovered that IRCU is very much involved in ethics-civic education as well , for the up coming Elections and beyond. Therefore we are foreseeing some joint meetings: the first one being on 24<sup>th</sup> March 2010 to:

- outline the main areas of common interest and prepare a MOU.
- choose some activities of civic education to be carried out together

## V. UPCOMING EVENTS

1. THE HEARING OF PARLIAMNET regarding our Petition for integrating civic education into the national education Curriculum was postponed and should take place in the next coming days.
2. CIVIC EDUCATION WORKSHOPS are planned for April in Moroto, Kasana Lwero, Lugazi, Nebbi, Hoima and Kampala.
3. THE PUBLICATION of the first civic education comprehensive Text Book for teachers of secondary schools with a teachers guide is to be done in April 2010.
4. FROM 11<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> of April 2010, a civic education training workshop has been planned for 35 University Graduates in Hoima, together with Hans Seidel Foundation.. From May onwards, we shall continue with MPs, Police, Journalists and others.
5. NAMUGONGO Spiritual Formation Centre has asked JPIIIPC to facilitate one full week on JPIC issues, from 25<sup>th</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup> April 2010.
6. A SECOND 2010 RESEARCH expanding the previous KBNB of 2009 will also be carried out in the coming two-three months, analyzing more deeply the phenomenon of rural-urban migration.

## VI. ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. Uganda Christian University of Mukono is organizing an International Conference on “Religion, Peace and Development” with the theme:” RELIGION FOR PEACE AND DEVELOPMENT”.

VENUE: Uganda Christian University, Mukono

DATES: 24<sup>th</sup>-25<sup>th</sup> May 2010

SPEAKERS: Among the speakers is Fr. Lazaro Bustince from JPIIJPC

2. **NEW STRATEGIC PLAN: 2010-2012 of JPIIJPC** is being drafted and should be operational by June 2010.
3. **THE PUBLICATION** of the first civic education comprehensive “Text Book for teachers” of secondary schools with a teachers guide is being completed by May 2010.

**THE STAFF OF JPIIJPC WISHES ALL PARTNERS AND FRIENDS  
A VERY JOYFUL AND BLESSED EASTER 2010 !**