



MISSIONARIES OF AFRICA

"I am a man, and nothing human is foreign to me."

JPIC / ED

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Editorial

Lenten Campaign: Reflection and Action

In some countries, for example Kenya, the National Catholic Justice and Peace Commission is entrusted with the work of choosing a theme for **reflection and action** of each year's Lenten season. In others, like Uganda, the National Ecumenical and Interreligious Commission, together with the Uganda Joint Christian Council, are entrusted with the organisation of the Way of the Cross on Good Friday.

The themes chosen are often related to the national socio-political realities. In addition, when, for example the theme for the Way of the Cross on Good Friday is chosen at international level, efforts are made to relate it to national concrete realities, which evoke 'the Passion of Christ'.

This is a good tradition which we can adopt in countries where it does not exist. In countries where it does exist, let us be in the forefront of the reflections and actions proposed by the local commissions.

I wish you a blessed Lenten season.

Nnyombi Richard

News from the Society

Preparations for the 125th Anniversary of Card. Lavignerie's Anti-Slavery Campaign. (1888-2013)

During the different JPIC-ED Coordinators' meetings held in the different Provinces, one of the points on the agenda was the above Anniversary. Our Sisters, the MSOLA, have been represented in these meetings specifically to discuss this point jointly in view of planning this event together.

During the Provincials' Meeting with the General Council due in February (2-7) the proposals coming from these meetings and from individual confreres will be studied so as to come up with a "timetable" with some concrete activities and dates to mark this commemoration. Meanwhile, proposals are still welcome, and surely each one's active participation at the local level will contribute to the positive results of this exercise.

*Next year, it will be 200 years since the birth of Dr. David Livingstone (19th March 1813). Since he played a major role in the fight against slavery in Africa, and in the spirit of ecumenism, we can try to inquire from our Protestant brothers and sisters in our respective areas to find out if there are celebrations organised to mark this anniversary in view of exploring the possibilities of having some joint activities. Moreover, if nothing is foreseen from their side, we can propose to them to have some joint activities focusing on the initiatives and activities of both Cardinal Lavignerie and Dr. Livingstone.

New forms of slavery: CNN Freedom Project <http://thecnnfreedomproject.blogs.cnn.com/> ; - <http://www.aljazeera.com/programmes/slaverya21stcenturyevil/>

Formation and Meetings

- +March 19 - 24: JPIC-ED Seminar, Southern Africa Province
- +March 2012: Ghana-Nigeria Province (Workshop)

Other News

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity ... *Ora et labora!*

We have just concluded the traditional Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. Now, before the next same exercise, we have a full year to take ecumenism in our living and working places, in the market place and in the '*ecumene of suffering humanity*' (Schillebeeckx Edward). That is where the big challenge awaits us: Together, to be witnesses to the values of the Kingdom of God preached and died for by Jesus. The talk of Rabbi Jonathan Sacks referred to at the end of this bulletin offers us some thoughts for reflection.

Interfaith-Christmas Celebration at Maryam Centre (Tamale-Ghana)

Bro. Clenerius Mutale M. Afr, coordinator of JPIC in Ghana-Nigeria Province, tells that he was privileged to attend an interfaith-Christmas celebration organised by the Maryam Centre for Interreligious Dialogue in Tamale, Ghana. The celebration was mainly for a group of students and their teachers from 8 schools around Tamale. The Archbishop and his Vicar General and a number of Imams were present. Maryam Centre is run by the Archdiocese of Tamale and one of its priorities is to educate young people in schools to peaceful co-existence with people of different faiths and cultures. Teachers are instrumental in this education and so the Centre closely collaborate with them to implement its programmes.

Africa Independence Golden Jubilees

Many African countries gained their independence in the 1960s and therefore since 2010, many started celebrating their Golden Jubilees. This year, four of them are due: Algeria (5th July), Burundi (1st July), Rwanda (1st July) and Uganda (9th October). On the occasion of these Jubilees, evaluations are made to see the achievements and challenges in view of planning for a better future. Religious leaders also take time to evaluate their communities' contributions and lack of it in the life of their respective countries during these last fifty years. In a number of these countries, the Missionaries of Africa were the founders of the Catholic Church, and in one or the other country, they contributed to the forging of the new states at the time of their independence. We should therefore join in this evaluation exercise, thanking God for the successes and discerning our future contribution so that the next 'Diamond Jubilees' be really 'diamond' not only in years, but also, and especially, in the improvement of the lives of the poor and marginalised citizens of these countries.

January declared U.S. anti-trafficking month

U.S. President Barack Obama declared January 2012 as National Slavery and Human Trafficking Prevention Month. In the Presidential Proclamation, he pledged: .."We rededicate ourselves to forging robust international partnerships that strengthen global anti-trafficking efforts, and to confronting traffickers here at home."

* Approximately 800,000 to 900,000 victims annually trafficked across international borders worldwide. An estimated 27 million people are held in slavery worldwide. See

<http://biusvspa.blogspot.com/2011/03/statistics-on-human-trafficking.html>

International and Religious Days

- +Feb. 4: World Cancer Day [WHO]
- +Feb. 4: Milad un Nabi (Birthday of the Prophet Muhammad) (for Shia Muslims it is on 9th Feb.)
- +Feb. 20: World Day of the Sick ([See Pope's message](#)); Our Lady of Lourdes
- +Feb. 20: World Day of Social Justice
- +Feb. 21: Mother language
- +Feb. 22: Ash Wednesday - Lent

+March 8: Women's Day; *Purim* (Jewish); *Holi* (Hindu)
+March 14: Sikh New Year
+March 18: Mothers Day
+March 21: International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination
+March 21: Baha'i New Year
+March 22: World Water Day
+March 23: Hindi New Year
+March 24: International Day for the Right to the Truth concerning Gross Human Rights Violations and for the Dignity of Victims; World Tuberculosis Day
+March 25: International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade

Documents - Books

African Religion in the Dialogue Debate: From Intolerance to Coexistence, by Rev. Dr. Magesa Laurenti: "In this book, Rev. Dr. Magesa sets out to posit ground and reasons for dialogue between African Religion, Christianity and Islam. The Central argument of the book can be summarized as follows: there are no meta-narratives that are universally acceptable as defining the experiences of all humanity. Christianity, Islam and African Religion are particular narratives. Therefore, when African Religion, Christianity and Islam as particular narratives meet in interfaith dialogue they should meet as equal narratives. For Magesa, this realization should be the beginning of a fruitful interreligious dialogue. Thus, Magesa's radical stand embodies in itself serious nuances of pluralism and a call for acceptance of unique cultural diversity. Thus, from Magesa we receive yet another new intellectually and pastorally engaging book. (Review in [AfricaFiles](#))

Some Quotes

From Africae Munus:

"On the social plane, human consciences are challenged by the grave injustices existing in our world as a whole and within Africa in particular. The plundering of the goods of the earth by a minority to the detriment of entire peoples is unacceptable, because it is immoral. Justice obliges us to "render to each his due". It is an issue, then, of rendering justice to whole peoples. Africa is capable of providing every individual and every nation of the continent with the basic conditions which will enable them to share in development. Africans will thus be able to place their God-given talents and riches at the service of their land and their brothers and sisters." (par. 24)

"In order to make a solid and proper contribution to African society, it is indispensable that students be taught the Church's social doctrine. This will help the Church in Africa serenely to prepare a pastoral plan which speaks to the heart of Africans and enables them to be reconciled to themselves by following Christ. Once again, it is up to bishops to support a ***pastoral outreach to the life of the intellect and reason*** so as to foster a habit of rational dialogue and ***critical analysis within society and in the Church***. As I said in Yaoundé: "Perhaps this century will permit, by God's grace, the rebirth on your continent, albeit surely in a new and different form, of the prestigious School of Alexandria. Why should we not hope that it could furnish today's Africans and the universal Church with great theologians and spiritual masters who could contribute to the sanctification of the inhabitants of this continent and of the whole Church?"(par. 137)

Rabbi Jonathan Sacks

(From his talk delivered at the Pontifical Gregorian University on 12th December 2011. [See full text](#). NB: Jonathan is the Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregation of Britain and the Commonwealth. His book: "The Dignity of Difference. How to Avoid the Clash of Civilisations", published in 2002, about globalisation, is worth reading.)

- "For half a century Jews and Christians have focused on the way of dialogue that I call *face-to-face*. The time has come to move on to a new phase, the way of partnership that I call *side-by-side*."

- "When *Homo economicus* displaces *Homo sapiens*, market fundamentalism rules."

- "A world in which material values are everything and spiritual values nothing is neither a stable state nor a good society. The time has come for us to recover the Judeo-Christian ethic of human dignity in the image of God. When Europe recovers its soul, it will recover its wealth-creating energies. But first it must remember: humanity was not created to serve markets. Markets were created to serve humankind."

Cardinal Lavigérie

"My sons, go and teach them this doctrine. Tell them that this Jesus on the cross, died on it so that he could bring to the world all the freedoms: the freedom of the souls from the yoke of evil, the freedom of peoples from the yoke of tyranny, the freedom of consciences from the yoke of persecutors, the freedom of the body from the yoke of slavery!" (Cardinal Lavigerie to his missionaries of the 2nd caravan to East Africa 20 June 1879)

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