

Day 2. Jan 9.

9am Eucharistic Celebration.

Chief celebrant: Archbishop Buti Thlagale, OMI. (Johannesburg)

Co-celebrant: Fr. Liam Mc.Dermott, OFM

After Mass, Archbishop Buti kindly consented to give an unscheduled sharing, on his reading of the African context, since there had been no translation during the celebration.

- The majority of African countries have been independent for around 50 years, during which time they seem to have been simply marking time
- There is a widespread crisis of leadership; corruption is rife
- A system of patronage, giving precedence to ethnic loyalties.
- The people are aware of the corruption, and simply tolerate it. If they are in the "right" ethnic group or political party, they may benefit from it, so do little to protest against or change the system.
- The governments are the biggest employers; there is widespread abuse of state institutes: people go into government service expecting to get rich overnight.
- Every foreign company establishing itself in the country, or investing in local business, pays 10% to the Political parties (e.g. the ANC now has millions in its account, whereas before coming to power, it had a deficit).

What contribution could Religious make in this situation?

- More investment in girls; they have a raw deal in Africa – the family does not always consider it worth educating a girl, because she will marry and therefore bring no benefit to the family. If there is a 50/50 allocation of funds between girls and boys, society can change.
- Third level education: Religious could teach in these institutions. At present university education are liberal institutions, with no explicit focus on moral issues. Even in the Catholic ones, the moral values do not permeate, because we take them for granted: we have shied away from being known as dogmatic, moralistic, proselytising, and the graduates leave wanting to enrich themselves.
- Nowhere on the school curriculum can one find courses that inculcate moral and civic values – how can the young learn that politicians should serve the people
- Education of women to take up leadership, also in the Church, in areas such as liturgy, Canon law, theology, scripture. Until women come on board, there will be little change. At present, they are not exploiting that opportunity.
- With regard to education and the health system: Religious can negotiate with the governments on the basis of all the work they have done over the years to benefit society, to gain funding in order to carry out some projects.
- Religious should be models of how people can live together.
- *Over the years, we have chosen to leave institutions in order to be closer to the people* Unless the aim of this is very clear, the religious risk disappearing in the wider society. They need to give a clear visible sign; their lives should contrast with those of ordinary people. In this way they will attract others.

- Religious congregations do not collaborate with one another to any great extent. Each congregation has its own vision, but they cannot survive if they work in isolation. The leadership is often concerned only with the internal affairs of the Congregation. Why can they not make statements regarding issues that concern the field where their men or women are working? Instead, they allow themselves to be muzzled. With so much injustice, someone has to speak out. The Religious would have an impact if the Major Superiors spoke with one voice. Who deprived them of their voice?
- There could be a common program in the Church in which all – hierarchy, religious congregations, laity are involved. How can we hope to have an impact when we have no common agenda? We never meet to ask "Can we do it better?" As Church we will never be as big as government, but we can be effective if we prepare our people well.
- We can learn how to network with the political leadership (without accepting favours or compromising our own position in any way), and also with civil society and NGOs.
- The fact that there is a crisis in leadership says that there is something wrong with our education system, and also something wrong in our families - there is a real need for strong families – families rooted in the Gospel.