

Merry Christmas and happy 2010!

News and Events



Members of the public march along the streets of Machakos town during the celebrations to mark World AIDS day, 2009. According to UNAIDS report AIDS related deaths have declined. PHOTO: Hassan Marube



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- World AIDS day 2009: Lessons from families affected and infected
- African synod confirms Jesuit mission of faith and justice

Faith based organisations accountability workshop

Jesuit Hakimani Centre and TROCAIRE will hold an accountability conference in January 2010. This will be a follow up encounter based on recommendations reached in March 2008. Participants observed that Faith-Based Organisations (FBOs) play an important role in delivering a wide array of social services to needy communities while attending to the spiritual and psychological needs of those they help. It was observed that there is growing need across the political and cultural spectrum for services provided by FBOs. Equally, it was argued that FBO undoubtedly could do even greater good, than secular and government based organisations and agencies. Realising that potential, however, means that FBOs leaders must grapple with a number of critical questions – foremost among them accountability. Participants noted, accountability in most FBOs, was not only low, but in some instances quite discomfoting to certain leaderships. Although many FBOs do not currently have accountability “systems” per se, most of them none the less have multiple ongoing efforts focusing on achieving measurable results for projects they undertake.

Basic Needs basket

Jesuit Hakimani Centre plans to expand its research scope to cover middle and upper class (formal) settlements. For the last five years Hakimani has been researching in 16 informal settlements. The expanded research scope will inform policy makers. According to Hakimani Director Fr. Ignatius Ikunza, SJ, the roll out of the new research will begin in January 2010. The centre is currently analysing the 2009 cost of living and will release the results in January 2010.

Bridging the disparities

On 25th November Jesuit Hakimani Centre in collaboration with Action Beyond Limit a German based organisation facilitated a training workshop on how to bridge social disparities for slum-based social development organisations at St Teresa Catholic Church in Eastleigh, Nairobi. The initiative is part of Action Beyond Limit education programme aimed at reducing social disparities. Later Hakimani kicked off the 16 days of activism

APPEALS

- In the next issue of Hakimani e-Newsletter: January 2010, we will focus on: peaceful society and good stewardship of the environment.
- Please make your submissions by every last Thursday of the Month.

Creative Evangelisation



Unity in diversity:
Youth from Kisii Catholic diocese render a dramatized choral verse during the 2009 Catholic National Senior youth music and drama festival held in Nakuru diocese on November 21. The host Nakuru diocese were the overall winner of the competition followed by Nairobi

archdiocese and the Military ordinariate in second and third positions respectively. Hakimani's special awards on the themes of social Justice went to Nairobi archdiocese while that of Catholic Social Teaching to Kisii diocese. Hakimani donated trophies for the competition.

Photo: Zacharia Chiliswa

campaign with the themes on gender violence, human rights (focusing on surrogate women) and HIV/AIDS.

From 23rd – 28th November Hakimani conducted a training workshop at Koru parish in the Archdiocese of Kisumu for skills and knowledge sharing on peacebuilding and reconciliation process leading to peaceful re-integration and co-existence training; then in Muhoroni parish from 29th Nov – 4th Dec.

Upcoming Events

On 7th December Jesuit Hakimani Centre in collaboration with Kenya Episcopal Conference Catholic Justice and Peace Commission will host members of parliament to a forum in which they will explore possibilities for:

- Pastoral care for legislators
- Catholic Social Teachings forum
- Establishing a Catholic Parliamentarians' association
- Positive media coverage
- Involvement in catholic Lenten campaign

World AIDS day 2009: Learning from families affected and infected

Augustine Ekeno, S.J.

Every year we hear and read messages sent out by various organisations involved in the ministry of HIV/AIDS. Organisations stage their achievements as well as their challenges in the field of HIV/AIDS prevention, care, and control. World AIDS Day is an opportune time to take account of where we stand as a people as far as HIV/AIDS is concerned.

2009 AIDS epidemic update report

In his message Fr. Fratern Masawe, S.J., the Moderator of Jesuits Superiors of Africa and Madagascar (JESAM) invites all the Jesuits to learn to face AIDS as a family. He says that facing AIDS as family requires everybody within and outside the Society of Jesus, and the Church to react to those around just in the same manner in which Jesus attended to the needs of those who were suffering and disadvantaged during his time. We need to realise the cosmic and shared humanity that we all have as one-family united by He who is the author of life. Rise from our own socially constructed enclaves that directly or indirectly condemn, reject, and cast out "as good as dead" our own brothers and sisters whose human dignity has been consumed by AIDS.

United as a people who are part of this family, he adds will consolidate the efforts towards fighting HIV/AIDS, which could make a significant difference in preventing and controlling the epidemic - a difference affirmed by the 2009 AIDS Epidemic update report launched on 24th November 2009.

The report by the United Nations Program on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) and the World Health Organisation (WHO) shows how various efforts invested in epidemic prevention programmes are making a substantive difference. According to the report new HIV infections have been reduced by 17 percent over the last eight years, with most progress seen in the Sub-Saharan Africa. The report states that since 2001 the number of new HIV infections in sub-Saharan Africa

has slowly declined. In 2008 the number of new infections were approximately 25 percent lower than in 1995 when the epidemic was at its peak in the region. The report also shows that the number of people living with HIV in sub-Saharan Africa slightly increased in 2008; partly due to increased longevity stemming from improved access to HIV treatment. Adult (15–49) HIV prevalence declined from 5.8 percent in 2001 to 5.2 percent in 2008.

Sub-Saharan Africa remains the region most heavily affected by HIV. In 2008, sub-Saharan Africa accounted for 67% of HIV infections worldwide, 68% of new HIV infections among adults and 91% of new HIV infections among children. The region also accounted for 72% of the world's AIDS-related deaths in 2008. The epidemic continues to have an enormous impact on households, communities, businesses, public services and national economies in the region.

Questions and Lessons

With the light at the tunnel as far as the new infections are concerned what is our role as human family today in the fight against HIV/AIDS? What are you doing to prevent and control HIV/AIDS spread? What are you doing to the affected or infected in your area? What are you intending to do as a contribution to the fight against HIV/AIDS?

With about 22.4 million people living with HIV in Sub-Saharan Africa, and an estimated 1.4 million AIDS-related cases occurring, what lesson can we learn as an African family infected and affected? In my view, a holistic approach needs to be employed in our efforts to fight HIV/AIDS. But this approach should take into account the following moral, social, economic, and spiritual aspects.

1. *Ethics of compassion/love/care*: The approach should be inspired by an ethic of compassion brewed in the understanding that we are dealing with a disease that denies human beings their rights, freedom, dignity, happiness and the capacity to be agents of change. Such approach will build hope and determination among the infected and affected as opposed to an inhuman approach that promotes discrimination, stigmatisation and rejection. The Church, the State, and other non-governmental organisations need to understand that practical hope, mutual solidarity, accompaniment and compassionate care are the enduring challenges and imperatives that the HIV/AIDS crisis continues to present to society.
2. *Solidarity emerging from the fact that we are living in a global world*: Solidarity means being aware that “my life affect your life, and yours affects mine, and similarly, our lives affect their lives, and theirs affect ours.” (Opongo, and Orobator, 2007). Thus to be in solidarity at this time of AIDS is to be part of each other’s life. It means to assist those who are already infected and those affected to meet their basic needs. It also implies prevention of the spread of HIV/AIDS. The Jesuits of Africa and Madagascar discovered this reality in 2002 or even before that and hence the establishment of African Jesuits AIDS Network (AJAN). AJAN’s mission is to help Jesuits in Sub-Saharan Africa – their works and communities, individually and with their colleagues – to respond to HIV/AIDS in an effective, coordinated and evangelical manner, culturally sensitive and spiritually grounded. Its mission is to link Jesuits together with colleagues in mutual encouragement and support.
3. *Integral Development and justice*: To understand HIV/AIDS one should also try understand the context. As it is here in Africa, and elsewhere, many political leaders and church leaders acknowledge the connection between HIV/AIDS, and societal existing forms of injustices related to the inter-related socio-economic, and political problems facing Africa. Fr. Masawe in his World AIDS Day message affirms this claim when he says: “Thousands of people [Africa], for example, are infected because of poverty, hunger, war and forced displacement, domestic violence and the sex trade.” This implies, therefore, the war against HIV/AIDS would bear much fruit if we stress and apply a holistic approach that does not treat HIV/AIDS as merely a medical-pharmaceutical problem but as a consequence also of other unjust structural problems within the whole national and international structure. In other words, more reduction and prevention of HIV can only be witnessed even next year around this time if HIV/AIDS is not treated as an isolated disease but one that emerges from unjust structures that characterize our nations.
4. *Paradigm Shift in matters concerning Sexuality*: There is no doubt that a paradigm shift needs to be taken in terms of how sexuality is exercised and perceived today. I think time has come when people need to change their mentality and realise how unreflected action today in one’s life can lead to death and suffering. This is the time to emphasise on sexuality that values life more than glorification of pleasure. It is time that the youth who are often attracted to discovering their sexuality, married couples, and singles, should ask themselves the following questions:
 - (a) Do I exercise my sexuality selfishly without respecting everybody equally?
 - (b) Does my sexuality promote human dignity that we share as a human family?
 - (c) Do I through my sexuality serve the needs of all? Or can my understanding and exercising of sexuality be universalized?
 - (d) Finally does my way of exercising my sexuality conform to God’s vision or dream for me and the entire world?
5. *Critical Education*: To live in today’s world with all kinds of information or confusion requires one to have a critical capacity to judge what is morally good and what is morally bad. Leaving the world to teach, the youth in particular, is not an option. Marcel Uwineza affirms this observation in an excerpt from his poem, entitled, *Confusion*. He laments rhetorically the confusion that the young are subjected into by today’s world in terms of making wise and well reflected decision pertaining even to their own sexuality:

.....*My father sends me to my mother,*
My mother to the housemaid
She gives me books to read
The books do not have it all,
Mother, I am confused!
She turns on television
You see, that is interesting, that is where you should go!
Television, many programs
Which one to follow?
Which one to go to?
Confusion

Where do I go?
To whom shall I go?
Who to trust?
My uncle wants sexual advances
I turn to my grandfather who
Looks for his own sexual healing
Confused, he rapes me
Should I tell my mother or my father?
Television or reading that is where I go...

Confusion...

Notes

Thus my claim that a good moral formation is necessary today to provide good moral formation and information – a formation that would enable the youth to:

- (a) Perceive HIV/AIDS as a reality that is threatening humanity in this century.
- (b) See the bigger picture of HIV/AIDS and its destructive nature if it is not addressed collectively and individually.
- (c) Realise the kind of attitude required in the present circumstance characterized by AIDS.
- (d) Reevaluate their source of morality and then consider their attitude to human relationships and their sexuality within this context.
- (e) Reflect the consequences of actions devoid from respect for human life.
- (f) Ask themselves what future they may need to embrace.

A world free from HIV/AIDS is possible. Ours is first of all to hope for such a world, and then try to be that which we desire. Since we all desire a world free from HIV/AIDS, we must then work hard to prevent ourselves from any circumstance within our limitations that can expose us to HIV/AIDS. We must embrace the lessons listed above in the preceding discussion openly and truthfully if we want to create a true family where we all co-exist peacefully, and humanely.

1. United Nations Program on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), and World Health Organization (WHO). *2009 AIDS Epidemic Update*. http://data.unaids.org/pub/Report/2009/2009_epidemic_update_en.pdf. Accessed: 25th November 2009.
2. Opongo Elias Omondi, and Orobator E. Agbonkhanmeghe. *Faith Doing Justice: A Manual for Social Analysis, Catholic Social Teaching and Social Justice*. Nairobi: Paulines Publications, 2007.
3. Masawe, Fratern. *World AIDS Day: Learning to Face AIDS as a Family*. AJANEWS 86.
4. *African Women, HIV/AIDS and Faith Communities*. Eds. Isabel Apawo Phiri, Beverley Haddad, and Madipoane Masenya. Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications, 2003.
5. *Women, Religion and HIV/AIDS in Africa: Responding to Ethical and Theological Challenges*. Eds. T. M Hinga, A. N. Kubai, P. Mwaura, and H. Ayanga. Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications, 2008.
6. A World Council of Churches Study Document. *Facing AIDS: The Challenge, the Churches' Response*. Geneva: WCC Publications, 2002.
7. Bennet Michael. *Faith and Social Justice*. Nairobi: Paulines Publications, 2006.
8. Uwineza Marcel. *Confusion*. A poem he dedicates to all kids left confused by this rapidly changing world. The Poem has been sent for publication in Hekima Review.

African synod confirms Jesuit mission of faith and justice

Peter Henriot, S.J.

In 1972, during the well-known and widely appreciated 32nd General Congregation (GC) of the Society of Jesus, we Jesuits were committed to fulfill the mission of “the service of the faith and the promotion of justice.” The mission was reconfirmed in the 33rd, 34th and 35th General Congregations. There was often a clarification of its bold meaning but never a retreat from its radical orientation.

I had the opportunity to be a delegate at GC 33, which came at a time of considerable controversy following the intervention of Pope John Paul II regarding the ordinary governance of the Society. Many had speculated that the Pope’s known criticism of some social activism on the part of the Church (e.g., his antipathy to liberation theology) might have an influence of the Society’s commitment to the faith and justice mission. That was not to be the case, and GC 33 explicitly re-affirmed the mission. Today, the Society stands together under that banner of “faith and justice,” several times re-affirmed by our new Father General, Adolfo Nicolas.

Synod outcome

The reason I mention this at the beginning of this article about something significant from the recently concluded Second African Synod is that if one clear thing could be said about the Synod it would be that it stated *a strong confirmation of a faith and justice mission*. Without using the exact words, the Synod final message and set of propositions repeatedly emphasised that the Church’s proper mission is the promotion of justice, a justice founded on God’s word. For example, the Bishops commit themselves “to being architects of just structures in our societies, in the light of the Justice which comes from God” (*Propositions* #14).

It is very understandable that this Second African Synod (officially, “The Second Special Assembly of Bishops for Africa”) would take this stance when considering the message of the First African Synod in April 1994 and the follow-up Letter of John Paul II, *The Church in Africa* (1995). The Synod then had as its theme “Evangelisation” and had explored five appropriate themes: proclamation, inculturation, dialogue, justice and peace, and communication. Justice and Peace became the topic most often spoken to by the Bishops, mindful that they sat in Rome at the outbreak of the Rwandan genocide and the eve of Nelson Mandela’s inauguration.

Synod context

Much has happened on the Continent in the intervening 15 years, as wars and conflicts raged in the Horn of Africa and in Western Africa. When Pope John Paul II announced the Second African Synod in 2004, therefore, it was no shock that “reconciliation, justice and peace” would become the chosen topic. As the guidelines for discussion (*Lineamenta*) clearly stated:

In Africa’s current historical, social, political, cultural and religious circumstances, the Church-Family of God draws her energy from Christ, the ever-living Word of God; so that she can overcome weariness and thoughts of surrender and free herself from all forms of oppression. In fact, Christ invites her to bear the yoke of his love and find refreshment in him for a new life, and to receive the enthusiasm and light to dispel the many dark clouds which hang over the peoples of Africa in these times. (*Lineamenta* #4)

I doubt if I am alone in expressing my pleasant surprise to read very strong discussion of justice in the Agenda (*Instrumentum Laboris*).

Three dimensions of justice were spoken of: socio-political, socio-economic and socio-cultural (*Instrumentum Laboris* #s 56, 57, 58). Here is only one example of the analysis and the call:

In some places, natural resources are confiscated and depleted by special-interest groups. Bad management, the diverting of public funds and the exodus of capital to foreign banks—already denounced by the Church in Africa at the last synod -- are forms of injustice which are done with impunity. The Church must speak out against these unjust practices, raising her voice for the voiceless. (#57)

When the 200-plus Bishops from all over Africa gathered in Rome at the start of October, it was clear that the message of justice would not be muted. Joined by a few dozen Bishop-delegates from Roman curial offices and other continents, and by experts and representatives of church organisations, the African delegates addressed the topics with an openness that enabled the final *Message* to provide “fresh inspiration and encouragement for the tasks and challenges that lie ahead” (#1).

Inspiration and encouragement

As part of the advisory team called to Rome to assist the AMECEA Bishops, I felt inspired and encouraged as I watched the delegates grapple with social justice issues ranging from war to poverty, women to refugees, family to youth, foreign aid to micro-finance schemes, HIV and AIDS to climate change, etc. The language used at time was quite blunt, but purposely chosen to be sure the message was not diluted. One sentence from the *Message* that has subsequently been often quoted applied to persons in public leadership roles who are Catholics:

Many Catholics in high office have fallen woefully short in their performance in office. The Synod calls on such people to repent, or quit the public arena and stop causing havoc to the people and giving the Catholic Church a bad name (#23).

When one Bishop objected that such language was not “diplomatic,” he was told by the Chair that so be it, the time has come for such “undiplomatic” expressions!

Realism was introduced into the Synod Hall in Rome by interventions from Bishops and others who spoke from their practical experience of situations of injustice in their local areas. I was touched by the comments of Bishops from Kenya who told of the trauma of post-election violence, and I was moved by a Religious Sister from Rwanda who narrated her experience of reconciliation with a man who had murdered several in her family.

Pope Benedict XVI sat through at least 50% of the general sessions, and he took time to personally greet as many of the participants as possible. His homilies at the opening and closing liturgies in St. Peter’s Basilica were, in my opinion, crafted to provide the spiritual support so necessary for the implementation of the tasks of reconciliation, justice and peace.

But it was in the remarks the Pope made to the delegates at the close of the Synod that I heard again the echo of our own Jesuit General Congregations 32 to 35. He spoke strongly of the need to keep faith and justice together, by avoiding the two temptations to either over-politicise the theme of reconciliation, justice and peace or to over-spiritualise it. The first temptation would be to ignore the spiritual

dimension of the task; the second temptation would be to become overly spiritual and abstract, not really addressing the task.

Jesuit responses

So what contribution can we Jesuits make to the implementation of the Second African Synod? Surely social centres such as Jesuit Hakimani Centre and Jesuit Centre for Theological Reflection must take up the agenda of the Synod and in cooperation with the Bishops Conferences apply it practically in our own local contexts. Scholasticates such as Arrupe and Hekima college must form our young Jesuits in the church social teaching that brings together faith and justice.

In our various other apostolates in Africa, I believe we can serve in a variety of ways. Our parishes should promote reflection and action on the Synod documents, those now released and the up-coming *Letter* of the Pope, through homilies and guidance to the small Christian communities. Our schools should be models of forming youth with the values of the church social teaching, especially with its practical application to local situations.

Our retreat houses and spirituality centres should make a special effort to assist leaders in public life – government officials and politicians, business people and other professionals – to be assisted pastorally to live out their Catholic faith in the social sphere in which they have responsibilities. Our communication ministries should make the message of the Synod widely available through a variety of services.

But overall, it seems to me, we can go forward in whatever we do with an encouraging experience of the ratification and legitimation of our Jesuit mission of the service of faith and the promotion of justice. *Here in Africa in the foreseeable future, if we are servants of the Church, then we are men of faith and justice in commitment to the implementation of the Synod.*

APPEALS

Hakimani Publications

In the next issue of Hakimani e-Newsletter: January 2010, we will focus on: peaceful society and good stewardship of the environment. What is the way forward after the climate conference in Copenhagen? What are the possibilities of regional intergovernmental cooperation on the issue of environmental management?

Deadline for E-Newsletter submissions, every last Thursday of the Month.

- Interested in contributing a reflection on a social justice issue in your locale in Eastern Africa?
- Are you organising or have attended an event seeking to promote social justice in the region?
- Are you involved in a campaign for transformation of unjust social structures?

Email us: editor@jesuithakimani.org



New Book

Jesuit Hakimani Centre has just published a new book titled *Lest We Forget: Insights into Kenya's Post Election Violence*. This book is a contribution to the ongoing struggle in Kenya to deal with past evils and forge a new shared future.

Copies are available at Catholic Bookshop and Hakimani Centre. **Price Kshs. 200/=**

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Jesuit Hakimani Centre is the social justice, research and advocacy centre of the Eastern Africa Province of the Society of Jesus. The province comprises of Ethiopia, Kenya, Sudan, Uganda and Tanzania.

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