



Ghana-Nigeria JPIC-ED Newsletter

Editorial

"God of peace and justice, you give us the capacity to change, to bring about a world that mirrors your wisdom; create in us a desire to act in solidarity so that the pillars of injustice crumble and those now crushed are set free. Amen". This prophetic prayer expresses our confidence in God's power and inspires us to break down the structures of sin. It demonstrates the vision of a prophetic Christian and, ultimately, a prophetic missionary society and church. Our hopes and prayer is that Ghana-Nigeria Province will always be identified with this prayer composed by Dr David Kaulemu.

In order for this God's wisdom to be realized, individuals need to be transformed and be examples to others. This call for personal conversion is demanded if we are to progress in bringing about social transformation.

For some time now, we have embarked on building collaboration with others in order to form a network. It is our humble wish and prayer that our connection with other collaborators may bring about a real transformation in our societies. Transformation is only valid if it is carried out for and with the people. Liberation is like child-birth, and a painful one.

We have also for some time

now emphatically embarked on cleaning our own house. We have talked about the plight of workers in our houses and those of other people we interact with. We have called for

You can never cross the ocean unless you have the courage to lose sight of the shore. (Christopher Columbus)

greater witness to the people around us. In view of preaching by example, the JPIC-ED Provincial Committee made a performance appraisal so that we may learn from our past and bring in new air for a vibrant Ghana-Nigeria JPIC-ED. These have not been easy tasks that can make us proudly say that we have finished, but rather, strategies to help us read the signs of the times.

As Pope John Paul II (Ecclesia in Africa) wrote, "The winds of change are blowing strongly in many parts of Africa, and



people are demanding even more insistently for the recognition and promotion of human rights and freedoms. In this regard, I note with satisfaction that the Church in Africa, faithful to its vocation, stands resolutely on the side of the oppressed and of the voiceless and marginalized peoples. I strongly encourage it to continue to bear witness". Conferes are in one way or another participating in JPIC-ED ministry. Many have, through their visible work, made this ministry their own and have identified themselves in this wind of change.

This year 2013, we commemorate the 125th Anniversary of

Cardinal Lavigerie's Anti-Slavery Campaign as a Ghana-Nigeria Province. This is a time for all peoples, irrespective of religious belief, to stand together and reflect deeply and stand up against any form of slavery.

"The Spirit of the Lord has been given to me, and God has anointed me and sent me to bring the good news to the poor; to proclaim liberty to captives, and to the blind, new sight; to set the downtrodden free, and to proclaim the Lord's year of favour" (Lk. 4:18). This is not only a call to reflect upon modern slavery but more importantly, to say no to it by actions and words. For all who believe in God and in the dignity of all people to remain silent and unmoved in the face of the tragedy of oppression, poverty and unjust suffering is a denial of the Gospel. Jesus gave guidelines regarding the roles of the Christian in the above passage, and this is the basis of Justice & Peace ministry. The Social Teachings of the Church are based on these biblical principles and reinforce the call to Christians to be part of this ministry. It is a way of life that is rooted in scripture for the transformation of society by committed Christians .

By Bro. Clenerius Chimpali

The tragedy of life is not that it ends so soon, but that we wait so long to begin it.

"The promotion of justice requires, before all else, our own continuing personal conversion---finding Jesus Christ in the brokenness of our world, living in solidarity with the poor and outcast, so that we can take up their cause under the standard of the Cross."



Bro. Clenerius With Traditional Authority in Tamale on 12th June 2013. Session Organized By Tamale SPC in collaboration with CECOTAPS. If you want Peace work

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THE 125TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ANTI-SLAVERY CAMPAIGN OF CARDINAL LAVIGERIE LAUNCHED IN TAMALE (Ghana), ON SATURDAY, 26TH JANUARY 2013.

The sons and daughters of Cardinal Charles Lavigerie all over the world are presently commemorating the 125th anniversary of Cardinal Lavigerie's Anti-Slavery Campaign. The Commemoration of this Campaign was officially opened at the Church of the Gesù in Rome on the 11th November, 2012.



It is in this context that the Ghana-Nigeria Province set apart the 26th January 2013, to make it a special day to launch this Commemoration of the Anti-Slavery Campaign of Cardinal Lavigerie, in Tamale at the Centre for Inter-religious Dialogue. The day's programme was fully charged with a variety of activities. There were contributions by speakers drawn from different walks of life and different religions. The programme aimed at presenting clearly the past history of slavery, but also at creating awareness that concrete forms of slavery do exist in our world today, and to underscore the Christian and Islamic moral views on the evil of modern Slavery today. All this is with specific reference to Ghana. Lastly, the event aimed at promoting the active participation of over sixty students from various secondary schools through their group work and presentation on the topic of the day.

The Ghana-Nigeria Provincial Superior of the Missionaries of Africa, Fr. Dominic Apee, introduced the Anti-Slavery Campaign of Cardinal Lavigerie, and the context in which we are commemorating this event. In his explanation of the Trans-Atlantic and Trans-Saharan trades in human beings, he underlined how Cardinal Lavigerie invested time and energy in combating especially the

Trans-Saharan trade which affected mainly the African continent, and the African people. In his time, Cardinal Lavigerie used the media, conferences, talks, lobbying etc. to make sure that slavery came to a stop. The question we may still ask ourselves is: Is slavery finished in Africa today?

From this question, the second speaker, Fr. Mathew Yitireh, the Vicar General of Tamale Archdiocese in his turn, explained to the audience the various tangible forms of slavery in Ghana today. We can understand these forms through four main headlines.

One of these forms of slavery today he explained in detail is **Poverty**. To him, poverty is the main source of slavery in Ghana today. It denies people access to potable water, food education and adequate health facilities. It is the cause of perilous migration across the Atlantic and the Sahara to Europe, Asia and America in search of greener pastures.

The second form is human **trafficking**: the main victims are women and children who are trafficked for labour and sex.

The third form is **Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)**. This is mainly a traditional practice. It has dire consequences such as complications during childbirth.

'I am a man, and nothing human is foreign to me. I am a man, an injustice revolts my heart. I am a man, and oppression offends my nature. I am a man and what I would like people to do is to restore to me, freedom, honour and the sacred bonds of family....' (Chiesa del Gesu, 23 December 1888)

And lastly, the **'Witch camps'**, as a form of slavery. Witch camps have existed in Ghana for over a hundred years and still today we have over one thousand women and children in the witch camps.

The question which still lingers in our minds today is: What can we do to stop these forms of Slavery in Ghana today?

It was with this question that the third speaker, Sr. Margaret Kibola (MSOLA) gave her input in the afternoon session. A drama was acted by the MSOLA and some students with the objective to highlight the reality of child labour in Ghana. The speaker insisted that we all are made in the image of God and so we are all equal before God. However, the different situations in which we live give the impression that we have to live in different worlds, and that to talk about equality is nothing but building castles in the air. She ended her talk with a spiral questionnaire: what can we do? What can you do? What can I do?

Then, the fourth speaker, Madam Hajia Hajara Telly, a Muslim, clearly highlighted the Islam perspective of Slavery. It was crystal clear from her presentation that, in Islam, slavery is a violation of human rights, and according to Islam, slaves could only be got through war, and nobody has a right to enslave. She suggested that continuous education of parents, youths and children on the various forms of modern slavery could be a way forward to combat this vice.

The various students from different schools who turned up for these talks participated actively in the group work and then presented the summary of their discussions to the entire group. It was delightful to listen to them and more so, you would really feel that they had grasped the talks very well and that the material delivered had become part of them. This gives hope for a positive change in the society.

This launching of Commemoration of the Anti-Slavery Campaign by the Ghana-Nigeria Province came to an end on a positive note. There is hope that awareness has been created and will be created in the course of this commemorative year in the various regions of Ghana and Nigeria. We hope that we shall all join hands to fight this common enemy – Slavery- in whatever forms they appear, so that we may have real freedom as children of God, born to love and to be free.

(Summarised by Fr. Patrick Obai Emukule)

PRAYER TO END HUMAN TRAFFICKING

O God, our words cannot express what our minds can barely comprehend and our hearts feel when we hear of men, women and children deceived, transported to unknown places, forced into prostitution or other forms of labour for the financial gain of traffickers – their slaveholders.

Our hearts are saddened and our spirits angry that their dignity and rights are transgressed through threats, deception and force. We cry out against this degrading practice of trafficking and pray for it to end. Protect all victims, especially our young and vulnerable.

Let your tender love and care surround all present victims of trafficking. Deliver them, O God, from their perpetrators' hands.

Give us the courage and wisdom to stand in solidarity with them, that together we will find ways to the freedom that is your gift to all of us. Amen

ZONE 3 REPORT TO THE INTER-CONGREGATIONAL JPIC COORDINATORS NETWORK, GHANA, 2013

*By Malachy Nwanalobi OLERU, M.Afr.
(Zonal Coordinator)*

The Zone 3, otherwise known as the Northern Zone comprising the 4 Dioceses of Tamale ecclesiastical province, namely Tamale Archdiocese, Damongo, Navrongo-Bolgatanga and Yendi dioceses, was able to meet once to plan for this meeting and prepare this report. This is still a struggle due to challenges we already know and have shared. It is possible that our fears emanating from these challenges often paralyze us. We have decided no more to look at the huge nature

of the challenges and choose rather to take them bit by bit, on a small scale. Since the most active members of our zone are in Yendi Diocese, we are going to start from there and gradually coordinate other Dioceses of our zone. We have asked the question: what can we do to motivate Congregations here?

Action Plan for 2013.

-Establish a list of all the Congregations in the Zone

-JPIC pastoral visits by the Coordinator

-Call a meeting immediately after the national meeting to share national minutes on JPIC-Ghana

-Sr Maria to speak with the Spiritan fathers recently arrived in Yendi

-Fr Malachy to visit and speak with the Anawim sisters (sisters of the poorest of the poor) also arrived

Yendi recently, the SVD, Presentation brothers, etc. We appreciate the interest in this work as shown by the CSSp sisters, SMI, M.Afr.

The Franciscan sisters are yet to match their enthusiasm towards this work with action. Their official engagement and lack of personnel continue to pose a difficulty to Sr Clotilda.

The SVD JPIC coordinator in Yendi, Fr Vincent Wong, recently showed interest but could not attend our last meeting because of official engagement in parish work.

Sr Marcellina, SMI was prevented to come because of illness. The Sisters of the Holy Childhood in Bolgatanga have now appointed a JPIC coordinator for their congregation. She is in the

person of Sr Angela. I was informed of this by the Superior of the community, Sr Eunice. But Sr Angela could not attend this national meeting because of her congregational engagement in Koforidua. Contact with Wa remains difficult. We are yet to have somebody from Damongo. We hope to reconnect with Congregations in Tamale besides the M.Afr.

From the look of things, we see a ray of hope as Congregations show interest by appointing congregational JPIC personnel in our zone: Sr Angela, SHC; Srs Marcellina and Jacenta SMI; Sr Maria, CSSp; Fr

"I offer you peace. I offer you love. I offer you friendship. I see your beauty. I hear your need. I feel your feelings. My wisdom flows from the Highest Source. I salute that Source in you. Let us work together for unity and love". Mahatma Gan-

Vincent, SVD, Br Clenerius (Provincial Coordinator) and Frs John Bosco, Patrick, Malachy, M.Afr. It seems that the efforts of the national executives in reaching out to Congregational Superiors through letters of thanks, minutes, etc, are bearing the desired fruits. The zone remains grateful to the national executives and individual members for this new development.



The 5th National Meeting of the Inter-congregational JPIC Coordinators Network, Ghana Nsawam 2013

The Ghana-Nigeria JPIC-ED committee continues to network with other religious Congregations in Ghana, under the banner of 'The Inter-congregational JPIC Coordinators Network, Ghana'. For the past five years, the Provincial JPIC-ED committee has participated in this national effort of the Religious Congregations. This 5th Annual JPIC – Ghana Coordinators Network meeting was held in the SVD Pastoral Centre in Nsawam. Malachy Oleru and Emmanuel Adeboa were there for the Missionaries of Africa. There



were this year, 22 male and female congregational representatives. The highlights

of this year's networking include:

A shared reflection on the Anti-slavery Campaign of Charles Cardinal Lavigerie and the Missionaries of Africa. This reflection was led by Emmanuel Adeboa. The highlights of this reflection include

Historical background on slavery, the anti-slavery Campaign of Lavigerie, Missionaries of Africa in the footsteps of the Founder and some remarks on Modern slave trade

After the talk, three questions were discussed in three groups and presented to the assembly. The questions are.

List the forms of modern day slavery and what is the Church's stand on modern day slavery?

To what extent did the trans-Sahara trade on Africans affect both the human and economic conditions in Africa?

How do we use the Media as JPIC members, to educate the public about the modern Forms of slavery in our areas of Mission?

Results of group work:

Definition: slavery is defined as the reduction of human beings as mere commodities bought and sold for profits through the element of force. The areas of forced modern slavery are found in the mining sector, domestic servants, forced prostitution, child soldiers/prostitution/pornography, human traf-

ficking, witchcraft accusation. The list is not exhaustive.

Church's stand: The Church has issued open condemnation on some of these societal evils. In Yendi diocese, the Bishop and priests have taken interest in the camps for persons accused of witchcraft. Religious congregations have built Centres to cater for affected persons such as the Centre of Hope; Centre for drug addicts, Street children. Brief, the Church is involved in taking care of the marginalized in society. The Church's social teachings emphasize the respect for the dignity of the human person created in the image and likeness of God. We differentiate between 'witch camps' which reinforces indignity and the exploitation of the accused, mostly women e.g. Gambaga; and camps for persons accused of witchcraft which are humanitarian and charity work by the Church to cater for the basic needs of accused and marginalized, e.g. Gnani and Gushiegu camps in Yendi Diocese.

Action plan: We have to be competent to see injustice in society and courageous to act; networking with other groups inside/outside the Church through collaborations; making sure we do not in-

"Most of the important things in the world have been accomplished by people who have kept on trying when there seemed to be no hope at all." (Dale Carnegie).

vest in, or buy from companies that are involved in these activities of modern day slavery e.g. the Barclays Bank was established with profits from slavery! One wonders why the Church in Africa falls short of total boycott of Barclays Bank.

Economic and demographic effects: Population decrease through death, deprivation of able-bodied men and women; loss of identity and human dignity; brain drain and labour drain; African mentality grossly affected by slavery-beggarly mentality of dependency and inferiority complex. All these have nefarious implications on the economy of Africa.

However, there are efforts of some African groups outside Africa to keep their identity eg, Palenke people in Colombia, Kilombos in Brazil. Whatever happened to Nkrumah's Panafrikanism and African Personality; Nyerere's Ujamaa; Mobutu's Au-

"We know through painful experience that freedom is never voluntarily given by the oppressor; it must be demanded by the oppressed."

thenticity, etc?

Slavery is a reduction of human rights. What to do: organize courses on slavery. Consider the marginalized; include the media in vocation drive; write on parish bulletin on this topic to educate and inform; encourage those who have written on this issue; Catholic Digest on GTV? Radio; Use facebook; national body can create a facebook page for this purpose; include the issues in congregational Newsletters; teach African history in religious formation houses, especially related to slavery; change our language, e.g. say 'slave bandit', instead of 'slave master'; 'colonial rogues' instead of 'colonial masters' etc. Language fashions our mentality; we tell the story we are told to tell. To reinvent our language of expression, to tell our story in our own 'language' is a mark of mental liberation.

Do we have antislavery laws? There are laws in our constitutions but some of these laws use euphemism instead of calling a spade a spade. Euphemisms water down interpretations of the slavery experience. Communities that experienced slavery are still performing rituals to pacify those who "disappeared". Can the Church in Africa have a date to commemorate those who "disappeared" under slavery? Can the Church in Africa create a liturgy aimed at healing the slavery experience?

Further reflections: It is possible that many missionaries and religious congregations have little knowledge of this aspect of African history. The same may be true of many Africans too.



A sister from India sees Indians of African origin but hardly knew how they came to India. The question is: Is it not possible to teach 'African History' in seminaries and houses of formation? Most priests and religious born, living and working in Africa have little or no knowledge of both the trans-Atlantic and trans-Saharan trade in African men, women, and children! There is a pedagogical saying that, 'To teach John Latin, it is not enough to know Latin; a good knowledge of John is necessary'. We cannot evangelize the African people without a good knowledge of the African people and their experiences.

We deepened our memory of this ugly part of the African experience by watch-



ing the second episode of the film 'Roots' from the book of the same title by Alex Haley.

Other activities included visits to the orthopaedic Centre and the Nsawam Medium Prison.

LIBERATING WOMEN IN CHEREPONI, YENDI DIOCESE, NORTHERN GHANA, AS CHEREPONI WOMEN'S VOCATIONAL CENTRE MARKS ITS 3RD GRADUATION

Malachy Nwanalobi OLERU, M.Afr.

They come out smart, dressed in their graduation slits! Their freshly made hairdos of different styles, colours and materials give them a stamp of authority. You are not looking at a cloister of rural, oppressed and dependent women. On the contrary! The confidence and self-pride they exude confirm the aura of achievement, and perhaps, autonomy. These women have just graduated from the St Jude's Women Vocational Centre, Chereponi. They are ready to step into the public sphere. Their faces seem to say, "Ghana, here we come!"

Skill acquisition, creativity and active socio-economic participation of women of Chereponi, are some of the measurable objectives the Vocational Centre is set to attain. Founded some years back by the Conference of Major Superiors of religious Congregations working in Ghana, the Centre has since

been passed on to the Catholic Diocese of Yendi under the Local Ordinary, Most Rev. Vincent Sowah Boi-Nai, SVD.

It has been a common practice for young girls who drop out of school or have no school experience at all, to migrate to the big cities of the South to make a living. They end



up as beasts of burden, often used and 'abused' in different forms of modern slavery. The foundational idea was to establish a Centre that would prepare these girls for life, offer them a means of livelihood in their natural home areas and subsequently reduce the attractions of modern cities that have nothing but slavery to offer them. Furthermore, it was believed that such a Centre would serve as a buffer zone for some of the girls who desire to return home.

Rev. Sr Marcellina Nuurah, SMI, the Coordinator of the Centre, has worked hard over the years to rehabilitate and revamp the Centre with the support of donor agencies such as Misereor. She has added new structures, enlarged the course outline and has plans to include literacy education and computer training in the next school years. This is a quantum progress from a Vocational Centre originally designed for rural, illiterate women and girls of Chereponi, Northern Ghana.

The St Brigid's Catholic Church, Chereponi, is one of the 8 parishes in the 13 year old



Diocese of Yendi. The Diocese is situated in the north-eastern flank of Ghana, bordering the Republic of Togo. In itself, the Diocese is completely rural with little or no maintained road network and modern amenities. The population is agrarian, mixed with small-scale traders. There is a very high illiteracy rate.

Indubitably, the centre is achieving its aim: the graduands made their graduation outfits, fabricated their hairdos, and manufactured other carry-home items they produce at the Centre. To cap it all, and to ensure the sustainability of their acquired skills, they all walk home from the Centre, each with a sewing machine! Much has been said and written on the subject of women empowerment. Bishop Boi-Nai, SVD, has no fish to give to these women. He is trying hard to teach them how to fish for life. He needs support for this kind of liberation project.

What is Modern Slavery?

When we talk of modern slavery, we mean trafficking in persons within or outside the country by unscrupulous individuals or organizations in pretext of offering a better life to young people only to make them end up involved in demeaning activities such as prostitution, drug-peddling, domestic abuse that compel them into servitude.

Forms slavery could be Forced Labor. Involuntary servitude, forced labor is when unscrupulous employers exploit workers especially in this event of high rates of unemployment. Children and women are the common victims of what is known as domestic servitude, which in other case may result to sexually exploitation.

Sex Trafficking is common and seem to be moving at an alarming late. This are those deserved for a better life elsewhere and ends up in bondage of prostitution. As a result Sex trafficking has devastating consequences for minors, including long-lasting physical and psychological trauma, disease (including HIV/AIDS), drug addiction, unintended pregnancy, malnutrition, social ostracism, and death.

By Clenerius M Chimpali

"Two are better than one: they get a good wage for their labour. If one falls, the other will lift up his companion. Where a lone man may be overcome, two together can resist. A three ply cord is not easily broken". Eccl. 4, 9-12



**COMMEMORATION OF THE
125TH YEARS OF CARDINAL
CHARLES LAVIGERIE ANTI-
SLAVERY CAMPAIGN (1888-2013)
IN WA SECTION AT WA SCHOOL
FOR THE DEAF, WA ON THE 4TH
MAY, 2013.**

It was a great day for the people of Wa to have an opportunity of having Anti-Slavery Campaign session at Wa School for the Deaf, on the 4th May, 2013.

“I am human and nothing human is foreign to me”. This being the main theme of anti-slavery campaign as a Society of Lavigerie’s sons and daughters, we were indeed delighted to explore as a section in the Ghana-Nigeria Province for JPIC-ED what this meant for us especially in modern times. The participants turned in their numbers as the speakers coming from far and near delivered their best. The areas explored by the speakers included: the history of slavery, the dignity of the human person from the legal perspective, a poem on anti-slavery, the dignity of the human person from Islamic perspective, experiences of modern slavery in our societies today, and we drew the curtains of the day by looking at the dignity of the human person from the Christian perspective.

The history of Slavery: This presentation was done by Brother Clenerius Chimpali, M.Afr. In his presentation, he explained clearly the link between work (labour) and slavery. The misconception of work from creation; as a punishment from God and then the classification of different works; i.e. as manual work for less educated and white collar jobs for more educated. During the Industrial period, there was dire need for labour and especially manual work demanded a lot of human labour and that is why they had to search for labour especially in the African continent. The task now is in our hands to change the situation of modern slavery. We are people of hope and we are called to bring hope to others to show that Good Friday did not end everything because early Sunday morning we went to the tomb but he was not there, he was risen! We are the people of the resurrection! We are the people of hope! Let us break the chains of modern slavery!

The dignity of the human person from the legal perspective: This area was vividly explained by Mr. Bennete Naccar a lawyer from the Commission for Human Rights and Administrative

Justice (CHRAJ) in Wa, Regional Headquarters of Upper West Region in Ghana. In his exposé on the topic, the lawyer insisted that human rights are derived from the inherent dignity and worth of the human person and they are universal, inalienable and equal. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) of 1948, which was adopted just after the end of the Second World War, is internationally the key document in regard to human rights.

Human rights are inherent in every human being and therefore they cannot be taken away or surrendered or abridged by any person. All human beings have these rights in the same measure regardless of race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.

The UDHR is concretised by different countries in their constitutions. The lawyer also explained the distinction between human and civil rights. The former is enjoyed by the fact that an individual is human and is the foundation of the latter. The latter is enjoyed by virtue of citizenship. That is, it distinguishes a citizen from a resident or a visitor of a particular country. Civil rights is an agreement between a state and an individual, therefore, the context plays a significant role.

A poem on slavery: The poem recited by a student from the University for Development Studies (UDS) Wa Campus, clearly elucidated that slavery has been a painful experience especially for the African continent. But slavery is still ravaging us in our modern societies as it has transformed into different forms. Cardinal Charles Lavigerie gave us a wonderful example in fighting against slavery at his time and he lives a task for us in our times. What have we done, what are we doing, what will we do to end modern slavery?

**Experiences of modern Slavery
in our societies today: by Sr.
Jacinta Tuonibe (SMI)**

As time goes by, things change, the world changes, technology becomes more and more complex and so does the human society. It is in this complex context that we find modern slavery that keeps transforming itself to new forms every day. For example, material slavery: the society in which we live today has always convincing ways to tell us that we are missing “the latest” i.e. the

latest car or the latest phone that has just come to the market. This pushes different people to get involved in all types of delinquent practices e.g. prostitution, stealing, robbery, corruption and banditism. We also realize that the socio-cultural fabrics of the society have been transformed and eroded and so less checks and balance in moral standings.

Poor education has also created many dropping out of school and so ending up in the streets as street kids, kayayee or roadside sellers. The poor education has also facilitated teenage pregnancies, sexual abuse, child abuse, child soldiers and encouraged human trafficking.

Poor catechesis in homes and schools resulting to confusion in the youth and broken families. Therefore, the Church today is called to intensify her mission of being a sacrament to humanity as she



is called to liberate our society from all types of modern slavery.

**The dignity of the human person
from Islamic perspective:**

by Fr. Aloysius Nuolabong

In the Qur’ān all persons are equal before God. Pre-modern *shari’ah* have restricted the rights of women, and militant Islam have denied the rights of non-Muslims and religious minorities. The promotion and defence of Islamic human rights in the world will depend on how Muslim scholars interpret the Qur’ānic principles. Some Muslims will interpret the Qur’ān and deprive certain persons of their human rights. Others will use the Qur’ān as the rationale to promote and defend the equality and dignity of all persons, irrespective of sex, race or religion. God knows best! May God’s will be done.



The dignity of the human person from the Christian perspective: by Fr. Eugene Suom-Dery

In his talk, Fr. Eugene Suom-Dery thanked the Society of the Missionaries of Africa for the initiative to commemorate 125th years of Cardinal Charles Lavigerie's anti-slavery campaign. He also underlined that Cardinal Lavigerie in his campaign was driven by his Christian conviction that every human being is a person with dignity and rights which should never be violated. While concluding his talk, he challenged the audience to learn from the example Cardinal Lavigerie has put before us, and therefore, we should open our eyes to the various forms of slavery that are



still existing in our society today and to be apostles of anti-slavery.

The gravity of the problem and urgency of the task have become abundantly clear to us today. We are therefore, invited to move into action to help end all forms of slavery in the world, in Africa and in Ghana, beginning with the communities, families or places where we live and work.

JPIC-ED MEETING IN KAMPALA By: Fr. Patrick Obai Emukule, M.Afr.

From 20th-28th November, 2012 JPIC-ED (Justice, Peace, Integrity of Creation, Encounter and Dialogue) held a meeting in Kampala, Uganda for the Coordinators. The meeting was well attended with around 21 confreres representing different provinces in the Society of the Missionaries of Africa.

The JPIC-ED apostolate is wide and touches many, if not all aspects of our life. This therefore, calls us to be

humble and more attentive to all activities and projects carried out by our community members and for sure many of them will be in this line of JPIC-ED. What needs to be kept in mind is our close cooperation with civil society in order to make our work more feasible. Therefore, networking with other congregations, provinces, groups and stakeholders is of paramount importance.



Time and again questions are asked on the relationship between JPIC and ED. These two ministries (JPIC-ED) are at the centre of our Christian vocation and mission. Though these two ministries are different, they are closely linked to each other. To carry out JPIC, we need to encounter and dialogue with different individuals. In fact, we realise that encounter is the basis of all these. To do JPIC we need to encounter people, and to dialogue we need an encounter with people as well. The first encounter is in the Triune God who became human in Jesus Christ and the whole life of Jesus is full of encounters with different people, even those marginalised by society.

As the Sector of Uganda prepared commemorating the 125th Anniversary of Anti-Slavery Campaign many confreres who went for the coordinators' meeting took part. The colourful event took part at Sharing Youth Centre with a theme of the week: "At 50 years of independence: Empower the youths against modern slaveries and injustices". They had a variety of events namely: plays, dances, poems, songs and the conference was in two parts-(i) Fr. Richard Nnyombi talked of Cardinal Lavigerie Anti-Slavery Campaign and -

(ii) The New forms of Slavery in Uganda a presentation given by John Paul II Justice and Peace Centre. Then there was also a talk given by Honourable Miriam Matembe,



an Ex-Minister for Ethics and Integrity in Ugandan government. She mainly underlined the degrading moral standards in the Ugandan society and the appalling levels of corruption in the current Ugandan government.

The collaboration between parishes and centres for JPIC-ED is of great importance as they enrich each other. For example FENZA which is a centre for Faith and Encounter in Zambia. This centre among other things, prepares for workshops, educates and forms the parishioners according to their topics of demand. For example at one time they had to study the question on Satanism and then prepared a workshop on this, many parishes participated and appreciated.

Another important centre is John Paul II Justice and Peace Centre in Kampala, Uganda. This centre was founded by six (6) different missionary congregations namely: Missionaries of Africa, Mill Hill, Comboni Fathers, Holy Cross, Society of Jesus and Comboni Sisters. The main aim of the centre is: research, education and advocacy.

As the collaboration between the parishes and the centres is important, so too is the collaboration between the Missionary congregations with the local Church. It is in this regard that we had the visit of Archbishop Odama of the archdiocese of Gulu in the northern part of Uganda. The Archbishop deeply shared his long and touching experience with the Lord Resistance Army (LRA) in search for peace especially in the north. Though difficult, he continues with the search for peace in the north where LRA has caused more harm than good especially to the Acholi people.

We also had a visit of Bishop Guiseppi Filippi of Kotido diocese, Karamoja in Uganda. He shared the challenges he encounters especially on issues of Justice and Peace and one of his major headaches was how to eliminate domestic violence.

It is our hope that this reality of Justice, Peace, Integrity of Creation, Encounter and Dialogue may be realised and lived by each of the community members as our world today is in dire need of it than ever.

**THE MINISTRY OF GOVERNANCE, JUSTICE AND PEACE
IN NAVRONGO-BOLGATANGA DIOCESE (BY FR,JEAN
BOSCO NTHIBUWAYO [M.AFRI])**

'Let justice flow like water, and integrity like an unfailing stream' (Amos 5:12), and " One of the tasks of the Church in Africa consists in forming upright consciences receptive to the demands of justice, so as to produce men and women willing and able to build a just and social order by their responsible conduct" (Africae Munus #22). These words remind us that the ministry of Justice and peace and integrity of creation, encounter and dialogue are deeply rooted in the Bible and official documents of the Church. It remains part and parcel of our activities. In our little ways we can still do something.



"To be consecrated means to be all things to all because one has said to the God of all: I am all yours."

The Navrongo-Bolgatanga diocese has a diocesan Governance Justice and Peace commission (GJP), firmly commitment to justice and peace. This body has an oversight responsibility for all related issues on governance, justice and peace in the diocese. One of these tasks as the diocesan commission has been to suggest some guidelines for working governance justice and peace committees in the parishes. The commission has also been training parish-based groups on the diocesan vision and mission with regards to governance justice and peace ministry.

Another significant task of this commission is to conduct a study about conflict in the diocese with an objective of coming up with a conflict map for the diocese to help in her pastoral realities and focus. The ministry of GJP is, then, like a walking stick for the pastoral endeavors, to ensure that our actions are rooted in our Christian tradition: faith and scriptures. It also gives meaning to our involvement in social issues through the Social Teaching of the Church. In so doing, we will deepen our drive for good governance, justice and peace in the parishes, in the deaneries and the diocese as well. This, hopefully, will deepen our spiritual lives and give shape to our actions.

So, in the context of 125th anniversary of anti slavery campaign, we know that blood shedding, sexual abuse, power abuse, corruptions, conflicts, land disputes, position disputes and other evils are still flowing. The prophet Amos calls on us, in our time, in our style, in our outreach, to work together for a U-turn, against the structures of evil in us and around us. The Church, the society and the Society of Missionaries of Africa, of which we are members, must be conscious and mindful of its responsibility to diligently and tactfully continue this prophetic ministry of spreading justice and peace within the Church and the society at larger. Very often, '*justice*' and '*peace*' can begin or end where each one of us is. The attitude in every situation makes a difference and sets the tune.

THE CRY OF THE YOUTH FOR A LISTENING EAR (By: Fr. Patrick Obai Emukule, M.Afr)

The zeal in the youth challenges the Church, the society and indeed all the stakeholders to respond to the quest of these young leaders. They have indeed many questions running across their minds and some even approaching the future with uncertainty hence developing some fear in them. This is indeed the right and ripe time for intervention to guide and encourage them to face the future with hope and confidence.



The youth often find themselves in a dilemma in the sense that in the family they are being condemned and rejected as being irresponsible, and as they go to the Church, the priests and pastors point at them to refrain from immoral behaviour. This situation has resulted in some of them being rebellious and independent. Some of them even leave their family for

unknown destination and some never set a foot in the church or any religious gathering, they simply do not trust anybody not even the members of their own families.

Meeting and listening to some of the youth sharing their side of the story, I discovered that the elders and decision makers often have no time to listen to the young people neither are these youth given time to decide on issues that matter to their life, instead the decisions are made for them and they have to implement these decisions. This kills the spirit of creativity and innovation in the young people, hence lack of transformation in society. Can they be given a chance to be on the decision-making table? Can these youth be trusted and entrusted with responsibilities?

Yes, the youth can be trusted and be helped to build confidence in themselves right from the family. The Church has a significant role to play in helping the youth to have confidence and trust in themselves, then trust others and probably gain their trust in God. The youth have the zeal to do great and marvelous things but what matters is how much trust is invested in them.

Investing in the youth is of paramount importance in terms of time, financial and human resources. As I visited families, parish outstations, schools, polytechnics and universities, I discovered that the youth need to be accompanied as some undergo tough experiences which they need to share with somebody they trust. These experiences, as they pile up affect them even in their academic life as it appears to them as if they are climbing an endless mountain, to some is like the world has crumbled, life has lost meaning, nothing makes sense, not even the Church nor God. This situation if not handled well at a good time may lead to despair, the Church therefore, as a mother is called to be attentive to the cries her children at all times and everywhere.

Sharing and discussing with some youth, they had pertinent issues that came out for example on the question of God is love and forgiveness. One lady asked: "how does she forgive her uncle or father who makes her pregnant after raping her several times? Should she allow this child to be born? What will be her relationship with this child? How can she recover from this trauma?"

It is indeed not easy and apparently not possible to forgive from a purely human perspective, this calls each of us to humility and to accept our limitedness as human beings. Forgiveness is a process and is a gift from God. Taking the perpetrators to court and prison is good but not enough to heal the wounds and the trauma suffered by the victims. The victims need a serious spiritual and psychological accompaniment.



JUSTICE, PEACE, INTEGRITY OF CREATION AND ENCOUNTER DIALOGUE

JPIC-ED

Be my apostles, nothing but my apostles!

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Fr. Martin Balemans lived this words of Lavigerie: *"Take care of the sick, serve the people in their difficulties. Do not discuss religion. Love them and try to be loved because God is love". Fr. Martin! Rest in*



"Whenever you are confronted with an opponent; Conquer him/her with love."
(Mahatma Gandhi)



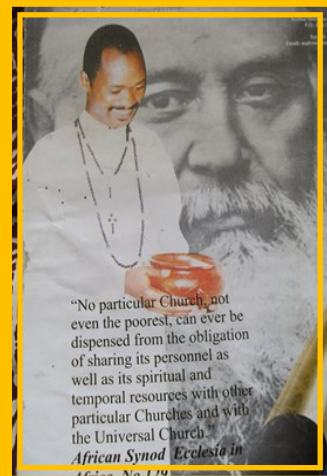
**UNANIMA IN GHANA:
2013**

I was privileged to be part of UNANIMA youth forum in Tamale – Ghana. It brought many people from different countries, with different experiences together to reflect and re-ignite our commitment in fighting human trafficking and Child labour. The messages of this forum was very clear; we have to work together, join hands to protect our future and said No! to all new



**"LORD TO WHOM SHALL WE GO?
YOU HAVE THE MESSAGE OF ETER-
NAL LIFE..."**

"I offer you peace. I offer you love. I offer you friendship. I see your beauty. I hear your need. I feel your feelings. My wisdom flows from the Highest Source. I salute that Source in you. Let us work together for unity and love". Mahatma Gandhi



JPIC-ED WORK

The Justice, Peace, Integrity of Creation and Encounter Dialogue is a Missionary of Africa Ministry in the province of Ghana-Nigeria. Our interest is to restore justice and peace and care for the environment. We follow the footsteps of Our founder Lavigerie by diligently promoting human dignity and strengthen the capacity of confreres in the province in the field to promote the respect of human rights, justice, peace, and democratic culture in the non-violent struggle against impunity. We also believe and in strengthen the networking, prophetic witness, transformation of unjust structures and care for the environment .

SLAVERY CALLED CHILD ABUSE

Those who read often newspapers will find common, the following story and the like. "The first time I had sex was with my uncle. I was 10 years old. He was the husband of my untie; my mother's elder sister. When I was 12 years old, another

uncle of mine, an elder brother of my mother, raped me. The encounter was painful, I cried and cried but he forced himself on me and I was powerless. This went on for some time and the pains didn't disappear immediately. It reached the point that I became interested in sex. These experiences, though painful, remained secret at that point in time because one of these uncles threatened me. Not only that, I was given gifts to make me remain silent and nobody would think of anything since the gifts where from my uncle". This experience was shared with people when the victim was 26 years old. Similar stories like that one have come to our hearing. I read and reflect on such common stories especially that I have become a passionate fighter against HIV-AIDS.

To shorten this story, the victim is HIV positive, she does not know where and how she was infected. But if we presuppose that she got it from the Uncle then the likelihood for her to infect the second uncle, the brother and many others who may had sex with her is there. If we presuppose that the uncles were not faithful to their wives, they may have had other girls or ladies who may have shared in the same fate.

In many African cultures, relatives such as uncles become guardians of those children who lose their parent or parents. This makes me ask so many questions! How can these orphans be made safe if there are uncles of this nature? Is there any way of breaking a culture of silence in the midst of evil uncles, brother and other people who do not respect their nieces, children? Can we continue to be silent while we hear such stories?