



Networking Cedara

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Tuesday, 28 March: Institute Liturgy (5 pm, Emmanuel Ndlovu CMM presiding)

Friday, 31 March: Lecture by Prof Jan Jans (10.30, Auditorium)

Tuesday, 4 April: Collaborative Research Group (12:15, Classroom 0-4)

Institute Liturgy (5 pm, Pat O'sullivan SPS presiding)

Friday, 7 April: SJTI Graduation (2 pm, Cedara Agricultural College)

PUBLIC LECTURE

Prof Jan Jans (Professor of Ethics, Tilburg School of Humanities, The Netherlands)

"Playing Hide and Seek with *Amoris Laetitia* - The Mixed Reception of Pope Francis' *The Joy of Love*"

Friday, 31 March

10.30—Auditorium

All Are Welcome

IHM VISITORS

Sister Jane Herb IHM, President of the IHM Sisters, and Sister Patricia McCluskey IHM, Mission Councillor for Africa, will be visiting St Joseph's this week. They will participate in the Institute liturgy on Tuesday and will also be here on Thursday and Friday.

Sue Rakoczy IHM

INVITATION FOR THE CONFERENCE

St Joseph's Theological Institute will hold its fourth academic conference from **20 April 2017 – 22 April 2017** at our **Cedara Campus**.

This year we have chosen the theme *From Conflict to communion*
It is the theme of the "Lutheran-Catholic Common Commemoration of the Reformation in 2017".

However we believe that this theme is also a metaphor for many of the struggles that are going on in South Africa and beyond its borders today. From Conflict to communion is a challenge to the Church's response to the current context of hopelessness seeking hope within the social conditions of Africa today.

The conference will take place at St Joseph's Theological Institute at Cedara, Natal Midlands region.

The Conference Fee is R200 per person which includes morning and afternoon tea. Students (with Student ID card) pay a reduced fee of R50 per person.

Registration form, map and all details are available on our **website** at www.sjti.ac.za/conference2017.html.

Contact us: Email: Conference2017@sjti.ac.za Fax: 0866570012 Cell: **0724611985 (Gugu)**.

Members of the STUDENT Forum executive are working with us as of the SJTI team to ensure the success of the conference

Posters, Invitation letters and registration forms will be available in the library and selected notice boards

Stuart C Bate OMI
Conference organiser

WHERE IS OUR TATA MADIBA?

Robert Kinena Ndungu

It appears superfluous to ask such a question when we know very well that on 5th December 2013 activities in the world almost came to a standstill when Tata Madiba breathed his last. Indeed Tata Madiba was a South African no more than Jesus was a Jew and Adolf Hitler a German. The death of this great figure seems to have washed away the many evils that South Africa had been grappling with. Indeed Madiba in no uncertain terms fought apartheid, one of the greatest evil that was eating the flesh of South Africa like a cancerous tissue. But it still remains to be ascertained whether he managed to nip in the bud the offshoots of apartheid and its mutation, for instance, the high rate of violence basically manifested in constant protests where scores of people are killed, the rising trend in crime, and the upsurge of xenophobic and afrophobic attacks. I may appear as the devil's advocate but my intention is simply to take a hard look at facts that we overlook with the dawn of each day.

It is indubitable that South Africa is one of the economic giants in Africa, competing with Egypt and Nigeria. The exponential rise in the number of mines attests to this, not forgetting her extensive and magnanimous road infrastructure that

is hailed to be better than some in Europe. It is very easy to conclude based on these facts that South Africans are among the happiest people in Africa. If happiness index can be determined by infrastructures and high levels of consumption, then such might be the case. But wait a minute! How possible can one be said to be happy when he or she lives in a country that has the highest death rate in the world? Research findings by South Africa Police Service (SAPS) published by The Witness in KZN in September 2013 revealed that the level of crime had increased. The findings made it unequivocal that South Africa has the highest death rate in the world. Such a high death rate was attributed to murder, car accidents, and health complications.

Furthermore the US – based CIA Fact-book has it that South Africa has the highest death rate globally, beating war-torn countries such as Afghanistan, Syria, and Central African Republic. In addition the WHO has placed South Africa in the top ten for road traffic deaths at 31.5 people per 100000 population. The UN office on Drugs and Crimes (UNODC) Homicide Statistics for 2013 places South Africa as the 18th highest for death by murder. Other indicators on the CIA Fact book place South Africa as number one for HIV/Aids related deaths. These statistics disturb and ought to spur the nation into positive action.

It is ironic that the globally celebrated road networks have turned into death traps. Could it be that people do not know how to drive? Is somebody not doing their job? Corruption is always our refuge in this. Three years ago in Kwazulu Natal (KZN), one of the local papers, The Witness, reported of corruption involving issuance of driving licences. It is sad that many motorists pass the driving test not based on competency but on their ability to bribe the traffic officers. The consequence of this is more deaths on the roads.

We are not yet sure whether there is a desire and will to understand the reason for the rise in the culture of violence, for instance, the high death rates due to rape and murder? Mary de Haas, from KZN Violence monitor, affirms that the high death rate is due to South Africa's violent society. She opines that violence has been used for a long time not only to solve problems but as a means to an end. On the other hand the KZN Provincial Commissioner, Lieutenant- General Mmamonye Ngobeni, maintains that there is no single explanation for the rise in crimes. For him "some of the causes of crime are deeply rooted and related to the history and socioeconomic realities of our society".

In his book *When Mandela Goes*, Venter avers that 'apartheid has been the major progenitor of the abnormally high level of crime in south Africa. This means that the further the new south Africa moves away from its apartheid past, the fainter its effect will be – and the greater hope there is for a decrease in crime...the unhappy conclusion is that only a future generation, with new values, can bring about a reversal in the crime patterns in South Africa. Until then, they must continue on the path they have taken ...and get worse before they get better.' Venter could not be truer based on what is currently happening. His sentiments reverberates with plain truth. This is the truth that the whole nation should be ready to make sacrifices to own. A truth that will usher a South Africa that is healed, reconciled to herself and her neighbours, and committed to annihilate the culture of violence.

MORALISM AND CHRISTIANITY

Kelvin Francis Thabo Banda, OP.

Moralism and Christianity are on different sides of the coin. They never complement each other in any way whatsoever. Being a Christian is not about necessarily following an ethical code or what one does as a Christian; “it is about *who we are*” (Cameron 2009:119). Basically, it is a personal encounter with Jesus Christ which makes us Christians. On the other hand, moralism takes for granted that a pre-set moral principle or moral initiatives such as rules, precepts, the laws, and various dogmas will create good Christians. Laws or dogmas are good; however, such must not make a person, a reprobate of one’s faith leads to certain behaviour and not to Christ.

Cameron thinks that moralism is a sort of idolatry since it associates the meaning of life with the ordinary observance of the law, instead of developing an intimate friendship with God. In this line of thought, moralism is the “reduction of the mystery of the faith to a list of dos and don’ts” (Sullivan). The question is; do the dos and don’ts bring about inner joy, peace, happiness and love for self as well as for the other, and above all, do such lead to being moral or to being a good Christian? Being Christian is the crucial test of discerning the authentic Gospel from counterfeits, while moralism has no place for proper discernment. In this case, moralism deceives humanity to think that God is more interested in our eagerness to our moral irreproachability than our union with God in Christ. Jesus Christ had a problem with the scribes and Pharisees concerning their abominable moralism; placing heavy burdens on others whom they refused to help (Lk 11:46).

The luring of moralism is the essence of its power. Humanity is easily lured into believing that he/she *can* gain all the approval needed by way of a particular behaviour. This is true. But, as Mohler says, in order to participate in this luring, humanity must negotiate a moral code that expresses acceptable behaviour with infinite loopholes. The theological temptation of moralism for many people/preachers is hard to resist. Mohler explains that, the danger for luring is that, one would want to converse both directly and indirectly about what God expects of fallen humanity which is moral perfection. Nevertheless, in so doing, one sabotages the Gospel and communicates a false gospel to a fallen world. The “patron saint” of moralism is the Pharisee in the temple who, with unacceptable *philautia* (selfishness; vanity or self-love), prays, “O God, I thank you that I am not like the rest of humanity – greedy, dishonest, adulterous, fornicators...” (Lk 18:11). This sort of moralism eradicates the personality of a human person.

The whim of moralism nowadays reduces the Bible to a codebook for human behaviour and substitutes moral instruction for the Gospel of Jesus Christ. A number of evangelical pulpits are given over to moralistic messages rather than preaching the Gospel. To agree with Mohler, ‘moralism makes sense to sinners, for it is but an expansion of what we have been taught from our earliest days. But moralism is

not Gospel, and it will not save'. In this sense, moralism is enjoining a moral code upon others without clearly indicating that grace is the means for effective salvation. It is through grace that God enables people to do what seems impossible to them; without clearly revealing how the given course of action is integral to the realisation of human happiness.

Hence, to eradicate moralism, the world needs people, priests, religious and scholastics who have an "understanding of the Gospel of Christ that moves them to embrace that morality, not moralism is their way of life" (Cameron 2009:133). Morality is not about preaching severely against what one would consider terrible sins, "failing to realize that before a sick person is given bitter herbs, one needs to be prepared by being put into the right frame of mind really to benefit from it" (:133). Morality and being Christian would only complement each if Christ becomes the source and cause of moral excellence for those who believe in him. The Law cannot impart life but, as Paul insists, it "has become our tutor to lead us to Christ, so that we may be justified by faith" [Gal. 3:24]. The poisonous hazard of moralism has been a constant temptation to some as an ever-convenient substitute for the Gospel.

FOURTH REFLECTION: FATHER DEHON AND HIS LEGACY

Felisberto Dumbo SCJ

As I said in the first reflection, there are many things to write about Venerable Father Dehon, however, I am just giving some important events about him. Before ending the month of his birth (March) I would like to share with you that my personal experience of being a member of the Congregation of the Priests of the Sacred Heart, has been so strong, especially when we try to balance what the founder emphasized on. Namely the contemplative life which means adoring every day the Blessed Sacrament, and the Holy hour that we have monthly. These have been fundamental for my spiritual growth. This two moments are very important today, nevertheless, as SCJ we share spiritually with those who are most in need, we pray, we repair and we sacrifice our life praying for the restoration of the world. Certainly it was fundamental for Father Dehon, that is why, today more than ever before we are called to be one. As SCJ, we believe that by praying we contribute in the spiritual life of each one, especially for the wounds of the world. This is what Venerable Father Dehon calls "consolation".

Another landmark is the social sensibility that Father Dehon left for us. During his time all the social problems affected him, many people did not know why they were suffering injustice. Father Dehon helped them, had courage to speak and get clarity from the rulers and after that from the workers, once understood he started writing articles that which aimed to putting an end to injustice. What about us today?

What have we done for our society? Even though at that time social problems were different, today we still face different problems. Then what are we doing in order to understand the social system and to help those who are suffering and those who are making others suffer? I think today there is a need to use our potential to apply what we know and what we have so as to touch the wounds of others as Father Dehon did. Perhaps, today we have to use all the ways and means to be close to the people, we have to be missionaries as Father Dehon insisted to his first followers, we have to “leave the sacristy” because our ministry is not resumed there. Going to difficult missions was one of the wishes of Father Dehon and today we still see that the first missions and communities were built far from the city. What about today? Obviously, we are living in a globalized world; however, let us not forget that there are still many people far from the city that need to be evangelized and when the bishops ask us to go to start a mission we have to be available in the spirit of *Ecce Venio*.

Many people do not understand why we are called Priests of the Sacred Heart of the Jesus. Some think we don't have lay brothers. We do have permanent brothers, we are brothers and priests with the same right. Each one in his ministry is called to share fully what he has because of the spirit of victimhood that identifies us. If you read the full history of Venerable Father Dehon, you will understand why we are called *Sacrum Corde Jesus* (SCJ) and no other name. To conclude, I would like to emphasize that truly speaking, our mission is huge; we are challenged to study different sciences in order to be able to understand and to follow the signs of time, the need of the people and the difficulties which the world presents today” (From the letter of the current Superior General Father Wilmer in occasion of the Feast of Sacred Heart of Jesus, June 2016).

FAITH AND TECHNOLOGY (PART II)

OCTÁVIO FRANCISCO, SCJ

The two realities viewed separately lead us to the horizons of human existence. To exist is a question of faith. Although the object of faith is different from that of the scientific knowledge one needs not to pit one against the other. Faith is to get into the unknown while technology is the application of what we know for particular purposes. However, the darkness of faith helps us to see better in the light of technology. They can help each other to reach the extraordinary from the

ordinary. In addition, technology should not be looked upon as an evil that we have to get rid of, or some sort of disgraceful thing that happened to us. It is a human reality and it is an integral part of human history. Therefore, we cannot neglect it without serious consequences to the existence of humanity. On the other hand one cannot be content with low levels of stability acquired by technology so far. To reject faith because we are afraid of obscurantism is also dangerous. It encapsulates us inasmuch as it has serious consequences for human existence.

Faith and technology need not be put together in order for them to be relevant. Let us preserve the particularity of each one of them in order not to have either destroyed. As part of human existence, one has to know the essence of each one and direct it to its natural end. Therefore, I challenge concord or some sort of marriage between faith to technology. For me faith has a mission in the world of technology: it reminds us that the created order has limits or boundaries and that every attempt to overstep them brings not only serious consequences but also makes us play God ourselves. Therefore, faith is not to believe ingenuously but, as Aquinas has it, faith imports assent on the intellect to that which is believed. On the other hand, technology has also a mission in the world of faith: it helps us to face reality and, if it is well understood, it also helps us to faithfully and coherently live out what we believe. Currently one does not need to take the Bible, Breviary and many other books along to spend a weekend somewhere: one only needs a good electronic device.

All in all, technology and faith are called to dialogue and to challenge each other not for the sake of challenge but for the wellbeing of the human race at large. They ought to be taken as they are if we want them to serve their purposes because they are human realities which help us to become more human.

THE
FORTY
DAYS
of LENT



RETURN
to the
LORD
YOUR
GOD

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