



Networking Cedara

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In this issue..

THE NEXT TWO WEEKS AT CEDARA

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..... 1

CLUSTER STAFF DAY.....1

STAFF MEAN- DER.....2

SPIRITUAL DI- RECTION SEMI- NAR.....2

EXCHANGE PRO- GRAMME.....2

YOU HAVE STRUCK A WOMAN.....2-3

MISUNDER- STANDING OF FREEDOM..4-5

THAT WOM- AN.....2

EDITORIAL...6

Tuesday, 8 August: Institute Liturgy in Honour of National Women’s Day (5 pm, **Charles Rensburg OMI** presiding)
: Grace & Truth Committee (12.15, Board Room)

Wednesday, 9 August: National Women’s day- Public Holiday
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NO LECTURES

Thursday, 10 August: Cluster Staff Day: (1-4.30 pm at Emaphethelweni)

Friday, 11 August: Academic Assembly (10:30, Classroom 2-3)

Tuesday, 15 August: Collaborative Research Group (12:15)
: Institute Liturgy (5 pm, Luigi Morell M.Afri presiding)

CLUSTER STAFF DAY

Thursday 10 August 2017, 1 – 4.30 pm
Emaphetelweni Conference Centre, 5 Leinster Road,
Scottville

Theme: “What does the Reformation mean for me today?”

Programme

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| 13:00 | Lunch |
| 13:45 | Opening (Fr N. Frank; Prof D. Spurrett) |
| 14:00 | Panel Discussion with Bishop M. Biyela (ELCSA), Prof P. Decock (SJTI), Dr A. Goddard (UKZN), Dr B. Okyere Manu (UKZN/ESSA), Dr H. Moyo (UKZN). Facilitator: Prof S. Kumalo (SMMS). |
| 15:15 | Small groups and report back. |
| 16:00 | Ecumenical liturgy (with Prof R. Hewitt, UKZN) |
| 16:30 | Closure |

STAFF MEANDER

On Monday 7th August Fr Paul Decock OMI will be at the University of Bloemfontein taking part in a conference with some visiting Professors from Yale University in the US on Apocalyptic and Mysticism.

The Seminar in Spiritual Direction module will begin on **Tuesday, 8 August: 2 pm**, Classroom 0-3.

Sue Rakoczy IHM

EXCHANGE PROGRAMME WITH THE COLLEGE OF THE TRANSFIGURATION

Application forms are now available on the academic notice board near the stairs.

The deadline is **Friday, 25 August**.

Please contact Sue Rakoczy IHM or Luigi Morell M.Afr for more information.

“YOU HAVE STRUCK A WOMAN—YOU HAVE STRUCK A ROCK”

Sue Rakoczy IHM

South Africa celebrates National Women’s Day each year on 9th August. The day reminds the whole country of the immense contributions that women make to South African society. The 9th of August was chosen for this public holiday because on that date in 1956 more than 20,000 women of all races marched to the Union Buildings in Pretoria to protest the imposition of the pass laws on women.

The pass laws were some of the most oppressive of the apartheid laws since they severely limited residence and travel for the majority of South Africans. In September, 1955 the government announced that the pass laws were soon to be extended to women. A month later the Federation of South African Women led the first protest to the Union Buildings. The four women who organised the major protests represented the diversity of South African life: Lilian Ngoyi (black), Rahima Moosa (Indian), Sophie Williams (“coloured”) and Helen Joseph (white).

Other demonstrations against the pass laws soon followed in Port Elizabeth, Johannesburg, Durban, East London and Cape Town. But it is the March on the 9th of August that made South African history. The women defied the might of the South African apartheid government (the March could have been a bloodbath) to protest. Black women came in traditional dress and Indian women in saris; many women wore the Congress colours of green, black and gold. Women came with babies on their backs; white women and black domestic workers marched together.

Albertina Sisulu recalled that momentous day:

As we marched, we collected women. We arranged to meet at Pretoria Station. Our men walked beside us

to support us, Nelson (Mandela) and Walter (Sisulu); they accompanied us. When we arrived, the police announced from a loudspeaker that our march was banned. However, we decided to have our meeting. Instead of marching as a group, we walked in ones, twos and threes to the Union Building. I couldn't believe what I saw when I arrived. There was a sea of women, a huge mass, oh, it was so wonderful.*

The Prime Minister, J. G. Strydom, refused to meet the women. But a protest song which was composed for the march expressed the women's feelings clearly: "Strydom, you have struck a woman—you have struck a rock".

The pass laws and all apartheid laws are history but the oppression of women is not. That is why August is National Women's Month, to focus attention on all the ways that women continue to experience injustice and violence.

Some men complain and say "Why have this day? This month? What about us?"

The fact is that patriarchy makes each day, each month "men's day, men's month". Last semester I taught the module "Women Doing Theology" and I learned even more about how traditional African culture oppresses women and undermines their human dignity. The students wrote about customs such as female genital mutilation, the marriage of a sister to a man older than their father, the removal of their sisters from school, the cultural axiom that women cannot lead and hold leadership positions, eating customs which insist that the girls and women receive much less food than the men and boys at the family table.

National Women's Month Day this year is an invitation to the male students through discussions in their communities to examine their attitudes towards women. The fact is that on Sundays 70-80% of the congregation at Sunday liturgy are women so as priests they will minister ministering primarily to women.

Here are some areas for reflection:

How do I refer to women?

Do I use demeaning language about women? If so, why?

How does my traditional culture influence my attitudes towards women? Do these customs promote life? Or harm life?

In what ways do I take positive steps to affirm women's dignity?

During National Women's Month, *Networking* extends an invitation to both male and female students to share their reflections on women's dignity in cultures, society and the Church.

*Peter Magubane and Carol Lazar, *Women of South Africa: Their Fight for Freedom*. (Boston: Bullfinch Press, Little Brown and Co, 1993), 39.

FIRST REFLECTION: THE MISUNDERSTANDING OF FREEDOM AND ITS CONSEQUENCES

Felisberto Dumbo SCJ

When we confront the theme of freedom what comes to mind is the logic behind the word freedom. Questions arise at different levels because it is one of the topics that has been discussed by many philosophers and thinkers and somehow it has not been easy to formulate a complete answer because of the gap that many of them have left. Nevertheless, to speak about freedom and its consequences, is to take a risk because many thinkers have studied about it. In view of this I shall try to only give some ideas that for me seem to be fundamental.

When we talk about freedom we think immediately in terms of Joan Paul Sartre who is regarded as one of the philosophers who spoke a lot about freedom and delineated what freedom is, as a concept and affirmed that human beings are “condemned to be free”. Sartre’s philosophy starts from the point that “existence precedes essence”. From this point of view, Sartre builds his crucial foundation of defending that the concept of man is in God’s mind. Then, there is a possibility of no existence of God because “there is at least one being in whom existence precedes essence, a being that exists before he can be defined by any concept, and that this being is man...” (Kreeft 20:2005). It means that to place existence first is to affirm that man/woman exists, appears on the scene and afterward defines her/himself. Here there is no place for God because it is the same man/woman who has made what he will be.

This first conclusion of Sartre draws us to what is more dangerous. Once humanity destroys its path of existence the result will be the “annihilation” of God. Therefore, a human being is nothing but what s/he makes of his/herself. Man/woman, then, is the principle and the end of his existence because everything starts in him/her and is drawn with him/her and is decided by him/her. The question is: where has man/woman placed his nature? In this sense man/woman has no nature

since there is no God to conceive it. Immediately we see the consequences here because Sartre regards the freedom of man/woman as being a damnation. The misunderstandings flow when we put God outside of human life. For an existence, without God I have to decide for myself what I understand by “being a man”. Unfortunately, such ideas penetrated society in such a way that many people not only discarded God’s existence but also assumed life as being only and simply freedom. So, I would like to ask, is that really what man/woman is? If yes, how do we understand freedom?

Certainly, human beings are born free even in the chain. Freedom is fundamental in human beings because it does not come from outside but from within. The problem is that the misunderstanding of freedom brought a radical separation of freedom and truth and once there is no truth there is no measure in human life and moral principles. Yet this “complete absence of truth, the complete absence also of any kind of moral or metaphysical restraint, the absolute anarchic freedom of man constituted by his self-determination, is revealed, for anyone who tries to live it out” (Ratzinger 248:2004). The practical examples that we can apply here is the social tendency of living without law and order. People today think that the absence of law is the openness of freedom, yet this kind of freedom that is not connected with truth destroys the environment where human beings are involved. Freedom does not destroy life, does not destroy others and does not see others as hell; rather, freedom is fulfilled when it is lived in accordance with reason and truth. Freedom is a coexistence of other freedoms. Freedom is not unmeasured as people claim today. The absence of law is the absence of freedom because only if human beings accept the coexistence of freedom that order and law will be the way of living happily in freedom which is not contrary to truth. If it is so, I do not agree at all with the new perception of freedom today in society, because freedom against truth is not freedom but a distorted freedom which destroys moral principles, and thus it is a diabolical freedom.

THAT WOMAN
Emmanuel Nyerere, SAC

When we rise above that cloud
And try to ponder
That which in many ways allowed us to look yonder
Down the hill that sways
The screaming streams
Streams that carry lives
Lives that ooze of hope
A hope that does not want to die,
We shall always remember
That it was you who put us there
Through thick and thin you drove us
With a love so tender; yet iron-strong
And gave us that which we always long:
A victory unmatched!
And it is for this reason
That I write this song.

EDITORIAL TEAM

Editor: Emmanuel Ndlovu, CMM

Reporter: Sue Rakoczy, IHM

Layout: Isaac Mutelo, OP, Emmanuel Nyerere, SAC,
Justus Oseko, MCCJ & Badjanga Titi Jean-Pierre, M.Afr.

Production & Distribution: Octavio Francisco Bernardo, SCJ

All articles must be submitted by Wednesday afternoon.

Email: emmanueln@sjti.ac.za

SJTI Website: <http://www.sjti.ac.za>

Student body Facebook Page:

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/St-Josephs-Theological-Institute-Student-Forum/431392193576786>