



# Networking Cedara

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Tuesday, 5 September: Institute Liturgy (5 pm, Patrick Aleke SPS presiding)  
 Tuesday, 12 September: Institute Liturgy (5 pm, Martin O’Connor SPS presiding)

### SJTI EXCHANGE STUDENTS TO GRAHAMSTOWN

The following students applied and were accepted for the Exchange Programme with the College of the Transfiguration in Grahamstown:

- Sr Petronella Bwepe
- Silas Nsabimana MAfr
- Elie Sango MAfr
- Komlan Todjro MAfr

They will spend two weeks at the College (16-17 September to 30 September) and participate in classes and other activities.  
Sue Rakoczy IHM—Co-Programme Coordinator

### GREEN CORNER

There was a recent article in *The Witness* about the deplorable state of the CBD in Pietermaritzburg where vast amounts of rubbish are tossed onto pavements and streets.

Our situation is not as drastic but the entrance to the Institute is often “decorated” with crisp packets, banana skins, pieces of paper, etc. There are two rubbish containers right there. Some people have a very poor “aim”.

I can’t imagine anyone who spills coffee or tea on their shirt at breakfast not changing their clothes. Our entrance sends a clear message if it is cluttered with rubbish: we don’t care how we look.

## STAFF MEANDER

Fr. Paul Decock OMI will leave for Togo in the evening of Wednesday, August 30, and will be back on September 10. He will attend the Conference of the Pan-African Association of Catholic Exegetes in Atakpame. The theme is: "Migration and the Bible".

## FORMATION, EDUCATION AND TRAINING FOR MISSION AND MINISTRY

**Stuart C. Bate OMI** (SJTI Research and development officer)

At the preliminary meeting of the *SJTI Collaborative Research group*, on 15<sup>th</sup> August, members chose the theme for the 2017-2018 cycle. The group is open to all academics at SJTI who wish to collaborate in a research project on a chosen theme. We also co-opt other academics who are interested to join. We meet monthly to share progress on our work and usually organise our conference during the Easter week.

The group was established in 2012 and has produced original research on four themes. These are *HIV and AIDS* (2012-2013), *Globalisation* (2013-14), *Catholic Education* (2014-2015) and *Reform and Renewal* (2016-2017). The researches were shared at four SJTI conferences and published in various issues of our journal *Grace & Truth*. This year our provisional theme is "**Formation, education and training for mission and ministry**" and it will be finalised at our next meeting.

### Synod 2018

Our theme is informed in part by the preparation for the 2018 Synod of Bishops on "**Youth, faith and vocational discernment**".

The preparatory document notes that:

*The Church offers young people specific places for meeting, cultural formation, education, evangelization, celebration and service, putting herself first and foremost in openly receiving each and everyone. The challenge of these places and the pastoral workers involved in them is increasingly to proceed in developing an integrated network of messages to young people, and to adopt a suitable operating style of "going out", "seeing" and "calling".... Universities and Catholic schools, with their valuable cultural and educational services, are still another indication of the Church's presence among the young.....Seminaries and houses of formation have a strategic importance, because, they have the task of providing young people who respond to God's call, with experiences, including an intense communi-*

ty life, which will make them, in turn, able to accompany others...

## New members

We would welcome more members of the academic staff to join our group if they would like to make a contribution to the theme. We would also encourage a few members from formation houses who would like to participate in our research project.

Our next meeting will be on Tuesday 12 September in classroom 0-4 (the first theology class room on the ground floor) beginning at 12.15pm.

## FRIENDSHIP AND ITS BEAUTY

Felisberto Dumbo SCJ

I felt inspired to write on this topic when I was doing my pastoral work in Pretoria at the Holy Cross Home. I felt blessed to be sent to this place where I found vulnerable people and felt compassion to do something for them with regard to being a friend to them. This is because of the “intrinsic interpellation that caused me to look at the reality”. A retired politician helped me to realize that friendship is not a contract; it is not a commercial or political convenience which people gather together and agree to be friends. The retired politician believes that “friendship is more than politics, social and a human contract.

From a philosophical point of view, friendship (Greek *philia*) “essentially unites peers only, for friendship can be made only in reciprocity” (cf. Aristotle in his *Nicomachean Ethics*). Meaning that, no free human being can be a friend of a slave, for example. In this case, only in a closed circle of peers can there be friendship. Does this kind of friendship accomplish the beauty and standard of what it means to be human or is it a kind of exclusivism based on contract? In this case friendship seems to be a contract because it is closed only for those “birds of the same feathers” which flock together. Furthermore, when Immanuel Kant spoiled *Metaphysics*, he closed the possibility of having a transcendental beauty in things. For him, friendship was not summarized in what can be called as *Eros*, charity. He believed that friendship combines two elements which are interconnected: affection and respect. Here friendship is seen from its practical point of view. Moltmann (1978:51) explains that, ‘you may be a respected person, enjoy awe and admiration, and still find that no one “likes you”. One does not have to submit to a friend, [I mean to feel compromised by a person because of friendship]. In friendship, one experiences oneself just as one is, readily accepted and respected in one’s own freedom’. Therefore, a friend is someone who likes and loves you the way you are. Friendship is not about what I am or who you are. Rather, it is all about us which results from the infusion of two freedoms: yours and mine.

Friendship is not only sharing feelings of affection, it goes beyond that. It seems tautology however, friendship surpasses the boundaries of individuality. It is a

human relationship that arises out of freedom. Friendship is the encounter of two or more freedoms, and perseveres this freedom. Friendship is what Hegel called “the concrete conception of freedom”. Pope Francis recently said to Lay men and women from Serra International that we become friends only if “our encounter with another person is more than something outward or formal”. I think that to “be with, *umuntu*” is what today society needs. How many people are used as objects in the name of contract or political business of friendship? How many people feel comfortable of having virtual (computer-generated) friends than concrete (real) friends? The retired politician shared her worries about friendship because of the new fashion of using human beings with the word friend. We have misunderstood the meaning of network relationship. Humanity has forgotten that the existential sense of friendship demands the “sense of mortification for one another, yet we have forgotten that one is a friend when one stands at another’s side, and listen closely”. Humanity needs to go beyond the expectations of only rewards or benefits. In this perspective we live the beauty of friendship because friendship is a relationship where two freedoms encounter and journey together in the spirit of truth.

## **DOES LOVE EXIST?**

KELVIN BANDA, OP

Does love exist or is it just a mere illusion? This article reflects a true story of a certain a person who no longer believes in the existence of love. For such a person, love is merely an illusion. For me, it is disturbing news to listen to a person whose heart has been broken because of “love.” It is a very challenging reality when a person starts believing that there is no love; that love is only for the delusional.

Waking up from sleep, Neri found a text message on her phone. “I no longer love you.” “What!” Neri screamed. “This is a joke! Probably Muso wrote after having too much whisky.” Neri loved Muso so much so that she gave up her part of life for Muso. Neri is now skeptical about the existence of love. Muso, Neri’s fiancé, who promised to marry her during their many years of courtship, ended up impregnating another girl. For Neri, this was very devastating news – a heartbreak that drove her close to the point of committing suicide. “How could he do this to me? Was I not enough for him? But, he said that he loves me. Why has this happened few weeks before our wedding? God help me!” Neri went into acute/deep depression while Muso wedded the other girl he impregnated before he broke-up with Neri. As it turned out Muso had only known the girl for a short period of time.

The question is: how can two people who are in a relationship/courtship prove their love for each other? Is it by having sexual intimacy every now and then? Is it about getting to know each other through talking time and again? There are several things people can do or can talk about to improve their relationship. The fact is that every relationship or friendship needs some disclo-

sure at one point or the other. If not, such a relationship is a time bomb waiting to explode.

Communication is not only important in a relationship but in all aspects of life. Getting to know the other person well is better than simply claiming to love someone just out of selfishness. Love at first sight! Thanks to that. Rather, get to know the person well. Neri and Muso did not make time to get to know each other well during their courtship. Courtship or friendship is a time of discovery. Knowing the other person's dos and don'ts well is important. This is how humanity can build authentic love. Love is not found by building castles in the air. Rather, love is built by *trust* through *communicating* and reciprocal *listening*.

Why are so many relationships or marriages breaking up nowadays? One can recite various reasons. One reason is that some people in relationships do not make time to listen to the other. Sometimes it is all about *me and not the other*. For as long as I am happy, life still goes on, that is it. In some relationships, happiness for certain individuals is based on manipulation of the other – using others like a piece of cloth or a piece of toilet paper which one uses now and loses its importance when one flushes the toilet. Such relationships do not last despite the excitement in the beginning. For as long as there is no communication, listening and trust, such relationships are *recipes for disaster*. Communication, listening and trust are the three tools needed to add value to the relationships of people in which one can open up to the other and come to a realization that there is authentic love and not just a mere dream, illusion or fantasy as in the case of Neri.

Believe it or not, science attests that “love does not exist.” Therefore, there is nothing to get worked up about. Meaning that, persons who claim to love each other are just objects to be used for experience or in experiments such as self-gratification in case of sexual intimacy. After further examination, it can be observed that Muso and Neri did not make time to communicate with and to listen to each other. Above all, the two did not trust each other. Hence, when Muso found a person whom he could communicate with; where each listened to the other, Muso fell in love instantly. Unlike in his relationship with Neri, Muso and his new love opened up to each, and within a few months, knew each other better. The only communication between Muso and Neri was sexual intimacy, which would not survive a future relationship. This was just an experiment. There was no authentic love; at least in my own opinion. Both were confused with sexual relationship – experimenting. There was no “authentic love making.” Authentic sexual intimacy is reserved for *reproduction specifically among married couples* and it becomes for the couple a celebration of two people who truly and deeply love each other. It is not for experimenting or to relieve stress. As a result of confusion between Muso and Neri not communicating but experimenting, Neri has ended up not believing in love. “No love existed in our relationship. I think it was

just a time of experimenting,” stated Muso. This indicates that the two could not have had a divine connection between themselves. This is because love is intrinsically felt in the heart of each. It is a spiritual vibration that connects people to each other. Love goes beyond the physical arena of a person.

It is therefore, a challenge for every one of us to work towards love that does not just involve experimentation. A love that does not involve selfishness, cruelty and other complications like hatred in our lives and towards other people. Love must be above all else, a total gift of oneself to the other which can bring a combination of joy, gratitude, serenity, calmness, bliss, acceptance of the other and peace. Lastly, love assists human hearts to develop to relieve pain such as grief. Love can lead to greater happiness and peace through communicating, listening and trusting each other. It must be noted that the three tools mentioned in this article help to build love in every area of life.

## MARRIAGE, AS AN INSTITUTION OF OPPRESSION?

*Cebelihle Cibane OMI*

Following the series of presentations and research on the aspect of Marriage and Sexuality in some of our African cultures, mostly the patriarchal cultures I find it fitting to scrutinize these cultures as giving less voice to women. In light of the activism against violence and abuse against women and children and in the month where we commemorate women, I feel this reflection is fitting. Upon reading an article by Nompumelelo Zondi titled *When Marriage as an Institution Ceases to Be a Partnership: Contested Issues of Rape and Other Forms of Sexual Abuse as Condoned by Culture*, reflecting on how culture becomes an institution that protects men abusing women in marriage, I also found other similarities from other cultures outside that of my own.

When marriage is to take place in a Zulu traditional setup, the male representatives of the groom approach the male representatives of the bride in order to negotiate the proceedings of this marriage. This is of course after the consent from both the bride and the groom. To make this point clear, Zondi (2007:21) quoting Msimang asserts:

*Ancient Zulu society saw marriage as essential for the continuation of a man's lineage so that he could achieve the status of 'ancestor', revered and remembered by his descendants for generations. A woman was 'brought in' as a kind of 'borrowing' to 'do the job' of producing children for the man and his clan. The idea of 'borrowing' soon became one of 'buying the services of due to the greed of the 'lending' family. Hence, the institution of ilobolo (dowry or bride price) and ukulobola, the process of obtaining a wife through the exchange of property, came into being.*

This clearly shows the subordination women experience and continue to endure in

some traditions, that is, the establishment of ‘pay-pal’ methods in order to attain their services that are in most cases abused. Do women have a say in what culture prescribes as tradition? In this regard I would beg to differ. As much as this has been tradition carried out through the ages, I would ask if they protect women from the abuses that come with these traditions. When a woman is to get married there is always pieces of advice passed on by the elders that **‘in marriage women should persevere’** and interestingly this advice is given to the bride prior to getting married and moving to the groom’s family. Is this the way to say culture “accepts’ abuses?

The issue of arranged marriages is also an example of marriage becoming an institute of oppression. A twelve year old grows up unable to pick their preferred partner because there is already an agreement between the father and another man of another household. In this regard a girl cannot contest this decision, in some cases even young man. A girl enters this marriage not even aware of what sort of a person she is being given to. She is often reduced to property because she was ‘given’ and no matter what sort of abuse she experiences, it is hard to go back home because the family **‘gave her away’**.

Child marriage is a common practice in some of our African cultures, girls are given into marriage as early as fourteen years in some cultures, often marrying men who are older than them. This kind of relationship is most likely to result in an inability to negotiate. The effects of such a practice are to be perceived and are perceived at a social and traditional level; ‘because a husband frequently expects his wife to bear children soon after marriage (the couple’s families often have similar expectations), child marriage also permits sexual exploitation and places a girl’s health at risk. In addition, children of adolescent mothers start life at a disadvantage, thus perpetuating a cycle of poverty and relative deprivation’ (Maswikwa et al 2015:58).

In one of the presentations given on the understanding of marriage in Zambia, a video clip was shown of a girl; fourteen years old who was being prepared for marriage, she was being taught by the her elder kin on how to handle a household, that includes the husband. One of the things that was emphasized was the sexual aspect, and one wonders in a manner of speaking if this was a way of also giving a lee way to possible sexual abuses. Men in that culture are surely aware of this rite of passage that their brides go through and thus abuse doors are opened. If a wife is trained for this surely the conception would be that she must provide these ‘services’ no matter what.

The Massai practice of ‘wife-sharing’ is also an indication of women subordination. The notion instilled in women by this practice is that they are objects. Entering into marriage in this regard opens to abuse even though this will be perceived by tradition as ‘cultural’ therefore good. Do women accept this because it has been a practice carried through the ages, or it renders them the fullness of their being?

These and the many practices within marriage need to be looked at in a different eye, they are not all oppressive but are they open enough to the voice of women?

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## 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](mailto:emmanueln@sjti.ac.za)

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

*Applications and Student Records:* [registrar@sjti.ac.za](mailto:registrar@sjti.ac.za)

*Academic Dean:* [dean@sjti.ac.za](mailto:dean@sjti.ac.za)

*Sibanda Gideon Mth, Head of Development Studies:* [hodsrs@sjti.ac.za](mailto:hodsrs@sjti.ac.za)

*James Calder PHD, Head of Philosophy Department:* [calderjg2003b@yahoo.ca](mailto:calderjg2003b@yahoo.ca)

*Patrick O'Sullivan STL, Head of Theology Department:* [hodth@sjti.ac.za](mailto:hodth@sjti.ac.za)

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*Student Forum Office:* [studentsforumsjti@gmail.com](mailto:studentsforumsjti@gmail.com)

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