



Networking Cedara



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In this issue...

The next two weeks at Cedara

TWO WEEKS AT CEDARA....1

Fr Sylvester David OMI—New Vicar General... 1

CHART Seminar on HIV and AIDS.....1

IS CONFESSION RELEVANT TO-DAY?.....2-3

STUDENT FORUM DESK3

RECOVERING FROM LOSS.....4

EDITORIAL4



Tuesday, 17 October: Institute Liturgy (5 pm, Real Doucet M.Afri presiding, Sue Rakoczy IHM preaching)

Tuesday, 24 October: Institute Liturgy (5 pm, Frederick Agalo IMC presiding)

Tuesday, 27 October: Institute Morning of Reflection with Archbishop Peter Wells, Apostolic Nuncio to South Africa (8:30 Auditorium)

Fr Sylvester David OMI—New Vicar General

We congratulate Fr Sylvester David OMI, lecturer in Scripture and past president of the Institute (2007-2015) who has been named Vicar General of the Archdiocese of Durban.

Blessings on his new ministry.

CHART Seminar on HIV and AIDS

The Collaborative for HIV and AIDS, Religion and Theology (CHART) Seminar

“Setting the global research agenda on engaging the faith sector in providing community based services for people living with HIV”

Sabina van Elst and
Martha Teijema

Desmond and Leah Tutu Legacy Foundation

Tuesday, 17 October

16.30-1800

Room 107—New Arts—University of KwaZulu-Natal



IS CONFESSION RELEVANT TODAY?

Kelvin Francis Banda, OP & Felisberto Juliana Dumbo, SCJ

One of the challenges facing the Church is how to convince the contemporary persons especially some youth about the essence of Confession. Some years ago, we would witness people queuing for Confession. It is not that people do not go for confession anymore. The argument is that, it has lost its principle to some people – that sense and desire people had for Confession is vanished. Nowadays, Confession is for old people and most probably, some seminarians for sake of passing through formation in order to get ordained. Most young people do not find Confession fruitful and desirable as they think that it is embarrassing. Some only receive the Sacrament of Confession on their death-bed. The article will briefly reflect on few reasons why Confession is seen as outdated today.

Confession is believed to be good not only for the soul, but also for the body and the mind. This is because the physical and mental health requires purity. However, it is not the case to some extent in our contemporary society where many people think that it is no longer necessary to go for Confession. Confession today is being questioned as some state that, it was “the Church Fathers who developed this idea of having private Confession with a priest. To them, it is not from Christ.” Probable such persons have misunderstood Matthews 28:19-20, which talks about Christ commissioning his apostles to ‘baptize and forgive sins’.

Some even further say that, Confession is not divine. It is rather a human invention and they cannot confess their sins to their fellow sinners, but, prefer to confess straight to God. Confession to some is not documented in the Scriptures. Some people say that, they do not go for Confession because some pastors/priests are bad examples to the communities and know their secrets well. Thus, it does not make any logic to confess to someone whose hidden agendas they know well [whatever it might be]. In this regard, pastors/priests lose that persona Christi – powers to forgive sins. This is not quite true. What some do not understand well is that, it is Christ who forgives the repentant sinner’s guilt. Confession nowadays has been misunderstood as some people hold that, if God is Omnipotent, then, there is no need to confess to a priest as one has God’s grace. Thus, each one can privately confess one’s own sins straight to God.

To further this, some have a belief in predestination and state that, whether they confess or not, if they are to go to heaven, they will go; and if not, if not. Such theology is wrong. God did not create human persons some for hell and others for heaven. Such theology needs to be corrected and help people know that true belief in God is the only thing that is absolutely required. If it is there, all that is needed is Confession containing at the most the revelation of only those sins that weigh most heavily on a person’s conscience. But, if a person does not have the right attitude/disposition of the heart and belief, and the true desire for salvation, should not go for Confession because if one does, it will be ambiguous and it will not make any impact in the life a person.

In addition, the practice of Confession for many has become so unthinking, so much so that is just a matter of duty, so privatized, that it has lost its real relevance in their lives as a Sacrament of social accountability and reconciliation. For Bonhoeffer, the danger is that of ‘reducing the divine commandment to a mere code of laws’. Therefore, Bonhoeffer argues that, this could only be overcome through a re-discovery of the ‘office of preaching’, that is, the ministry of the word of grace and forgiveness that calls humanity to discipleship. If there is no link between the individual wrongfulness and social issues, Confession will still be regarded as irrelevant. This is because personal evils affect the community in which one lives. The essence of Confession is to find justice, healing, peace and reconciliation between a person and God as well as one’s whole community.

Therefore, the fact that the Church requires Confession may not force a person to confess. On the contrary, a person should stay away from it until one comes to a better understanding and attain the right attitude of the heart of Confession. The accusations that some bring against pastors/priests as being bad examples to society because of scandals from the of past and present, do not justify some people’s egocentric, poor reasoning and ignorance towards the power of God in the Sacrament of Confession as God has conferred power in a priest – persona Christi, to forgive sins.

Lastly, in spite of the negatives pointed out above, Confession is divine as God is against sin or evil. Hence, to confess one’s sin is to restart ones human path towards holiness. Confession today is needed because we are existential beings. We need to strengthen each another. Human persons are neither islands nor isolated beings. Rather, we are social beings who are connected to each; and to all God’s creation. This relational aspect draws us to say that Confession is a crucial point of restoring our relations with God; each other and our cosmic relations. The effective power of the Sacrament of Confession still holds. It still heals and restores human soul to God and to one’s community.

Student Forum Desk

- ⇒ Announcement 3rd November, Cedara cultural day and end year party 2017. All students from various countries are requested to prepare a presentation based on their country’s culture.
- ⇒ Student forum are hiring the loud speakers (public address) for entertainment at R50 to various communities with parties or end year celebration. For further information visit student's forum office.

Community Animator

RECOVERING FROM LOSS

George M. kambwili Chanda SCJ

Have you ever failed an exam before? Have you ever lost the last pocket money you had? Have you ever lost a beloved one? A loss is painful to deal with. How do you recover from a loss? Most of the time we look for help from outside but remember there is one thing you remain with. You always remain with yourself. And recovering from loss begins from there. There is this story from ancient times about Socrates the philosopher and a young man. A young man asked Socrates the secret to heal from loss. Socrates asked the young man to walk with him toward the river. When the water got up to their neck, Socrates took the young man by surprise and ducked him into the water. The boy struggled to get out but Socrates was strong and kept him there until the boy started turning blue.

Socrates pulled his head out of the water and the first thing the young man did was to gasp and take a deep breath of air. Socrates asked: "What did you want the most when you were down there?" The boy replied: "Air." Socrates said: "That is the secret to heal from a loss. When you want heal from a loss as badly as you wanted the air, then you will get it. There is no other secret." The motivation to heal comes from the burning desire to achieve a purpose. Napoleon Hill wrote: "Whatever the mind of man can conceive and believe, the mind can achieve." A burning desire is the starting point of all accomplishment. Just like a small fire cannot give much heat, a weak desire cannot produce great results. My brother, my sister, it is said "denial is the first stage of grief but acceptance is the last stage of grief." You can recover from whatever loss you are going through.

Note: It's not easy to recover from loss but is possible. Sometimes we are faced with decisions which are very hard to make but at the end of the day one has to decide.



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