



# Networking Cedara



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## THE NEXT TWO WEEKS AT CEDARA

**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)

**Tuesday, 31 October:** Communal Reconciliation Service (5 pm, Emmanuel Ndlovu CMM presiding)

## NEW BOOK: *THE CHURCH AND ECOLOGICAL JUSTICE*

*The Church and Ecological Justice* by Andrew Warmback, eco-theologian and Anglican priest, is now on sale at St Joseph’s. It can purchased at the Receptionist’s office. Chapters include “The Earth is Not for Sale”, “An Eco-Justice Theology”, “Greening the Church” and “Reflections on *Laudato Si*”, the encyclical of Pope Francis on ecological issues. Cost: R50.

## ON NOT RECEIVING FROM THE CUP

Recently I sat near the front at an Institute liturgy and watched as about 50% of the students received the consecrated bread and ignored the cup with the consecrated wine. This is a problem of many years at the Institute.

I have been told that students do not receive under both forms because

“Wine is not part of my culture”

“I do not like the taste”

“We do not do this in our community (why not?), my parish, my diocese, my country”

“If people do not receive under both forms we get back for supper more quickly”

None of these excuses are valid.

Many things that you do are not part of African culture, eg cell phones came from the West, the Catholic priesthood was brought here from Europe.

You take a sip of the wine, not a glass. Most students plan to be

priests—what will you do after ordination? Ignore the wine you have just consecrated?

Why do some communities not do this?

And the last excuse is ridiculous.

I welcome responses from students in issues of *Networking*.

**Sue Rakoczy IHM**

## **PREPARATION FOR THE MORNING OF REFLECTION, FRIDAY 27 OCTOBER**

The Nuncio requests that everyone read the Vatican II document, *Nostra Aetate*, in preparation for the Morning of Reflection.

It is a very short document – 3 A4 pages. A copy of the document is posted on Student Manager and on the Institute's Facebook page.

There is also a set of questions that the Nuncio wants us to think about for the group sharing we have after his presentation, and which will lead to the plenary discussion afterwards.

**Fr Neil Frank OMI**  
**President**

### **FROM THE LIBRARY**

The library would like to remind all students to kindly return pockets and books before the 22<sup>nd</sup> November.

**Just a gentle reminder to use your soft voices in the library.**

We wish all students the very best.

**Staff in the Library**

### **CLUSTER PRESENTATIONS**

The Cluster (Seminar) Presentations will take place on this Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> October 2017 at UKZN C1. Commercial building. All the Students, and the **Staff** are invited to attend.

### **FROM STUDENT FORUM DESK**

1. Announcement : 3<sup>rd</sup> 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.
2. 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**

## THE METAPHYSICAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE CONCEPT OF GENDER IN SOME AFRICAN CULTURES

**Felisberto Dumbo SCJ**

In my previous article *“Towards a formed conscience for the dignity of Woman”* I spelled that ‘from ontological point of view there is no any barrier that categorizes some people in the level of rational being and others in the level of less rational being because rationality is intrinsic in the person, universal and valid all the time’ (Dumbo 2017:2). Clearly, we see ontologically speaking between man and woman there is no any possibility of someone being more human and valuable than the other. However, there is a schizophrenic symptom in some African cultures which apply the external power of culture into the universal concept of human being in order to undermine women dignity which I see as dangerous because they use Metaphysical principles to justify their own capricious. Therefore this metaphysical temptation affects negatively in the concept of gender which relatively is based on these intellectual understandings that embody many elements such as religious, political, cultural, and historical.

To a certain extend I agree with the African Philosopher Nzegwu (2006:561) when he interestingly points out that ‘feminism in Africa has come from disciplines located within the Western body of knowledge. Scholars are often unaware how much these definitions are steeped in the mores and norms of the Judeo-Christian tradition, and the social conventions of European and European American cultures’. African feminists rely on this body of knowledge because they realized that the problem of misusing the issue of gender comes into being when we deal with the analysis of gender in universalistic manner. That is, we forget that there are values which are understood as common, tendencies which are supposed to be found in all societies. For example, the slogan that women are more “emotional” than men affects the issue of gender in general and societies use this universalistic standard as a way of excluding women from full membership in the human community because of this historical, psychological narratives that are assumed as universal ethical values. Moreover, this tendency is supported by human sciences which unfortunately are used to turn universal category of being human into relativism of seeing men as greater than women.

Sheila Ruth puts this metaphysical implication more clearly that ‘[t]hey all say that women as human beings are substandard: less intelligent; less moral; less competent; less able physically, psychologically, and spiritually; small of body, mind, and character’ (1990: 89). Women all over the world are facing this gender issue which is noticed in imperialist societies that bear in their mind patriarchal ideologies which categorize women as the negative image of man. In other words, some people in Africa use cultural tools to claim this philosophical framework by

saying that gender issue is an unrealistic problem because some feminist discussion are pointless, because they do not put into consideration African cultural nuances. This plague of impinging masculine identity as a stronger than women has been actualized in the African society thus making women be regarded as incapable of full rationality in their way of acting.

The issue of gender is a crucial analysis today because it affects all the societies and in Africa many women feminist are trying to find ways of surpassing this plague by saying that 'masculine and feminine identities are not scribed in nature but are only the result of a social construct, a role played by individuals through social tasks and functions' (Sarah 2015:163). The real problem in my opinion is not a utopic equality, but freedom and respect for the dignity of women because the concept of gender involves an illogic chain which constructs sex differentiation as equivalent to sex discrimination. That is why, the feminist, political and scientist Okin (1989:2) put this *contradictio in terminis* (contradiction in terms) brilliantly when declares that 'gender is the deeply entrenched institutionalization of sexual difference, it maps the culture of discrimination against women'. This statement reveals that the contemporary metaphysical implications of the concept of gender rely on the analytic category of gender as cognate with the category of woman. Some African cultures have to accept human external/internal differences but in unity, as Bernardo (2017:5) puts it eloquently 'although it can mean many things, for all intents and purpose, differences do not mean contradictions or opposites. Difference unites in as much as unity differentiates'.

### **AM I A CHRISTIAN OR I JUST DO GOOD**

**George M. Chanda SCJ**

When you hear the word moral corruption, you may think of the corruption of one's moral beliefs. But here, however, I am referring to something else - The corruption of one's moral sentiments (opinions) by moral beliefs. This is a far more insidious process. I see everywhere examples of how the innate goodness of people is corrupted by the religious and moral beliefs that are supposed to encourage it. I can give an example from my life. In my own childhood as an Altar Server (ABC or Kampenga) I used to walk bare feet and at times hit my head on doors because I was taught that suffering is a virtue. This is an example of 'corruption of goodness or corruption of good morals,' because goodness includes being good to oneself. Am I right there?

Ok let's try to move on and use other examples, but let me assure you these ones are not so obvious to the untrained eye. I'll use another short and true story to explain which we can all call a story of moral corruption. Here it is.....

A few weeks ago my friend and I were walking along Cairo road in Lusaka near the new shopping mall, and we came upon a man laying by the roadside, waving and yelling at the passing traffic and the people. We weren't sure if he was

injured or just mentally sick, but he did ask for us to call the police or his family or anyone who can help, and complained that nobody had stopped to help for a long time. Since he didn't seem to be bleeding or have any broken bones, we left him after managing to call one of the numbers he gave us saying that it was his niece's number.

Now, think about this for a moment. Hundreds of people of many moral beliefs drove by and others passed by, including at least 150 Christians. They saw the man laying there covered in mud on the side of the road, motioning to them to help him. All of them are sure had heard about the story of the good Samaritan, and all had moral beliefs that called for helping their fellow humans. Why did none of them stop?

The cynical among you will say that people just don't care about other people. I don't buy that, and I wonder what experiences people have had. (Or maybe the question is what experiences did they choose to focus on?) This case and others like it are more complicated than this more cynical view allows for. After all, people often do go to great lengths to help others.

In fact, people can even feel sympathy for a wounded bird or other wild animal and take it into their homes to feed it and help heal it. But I have seen it happening here in South Africa even in Zambia and it made me wonder. If people more easily care about a wounded house dog than another human laying on the side of the road, does this provide a clue to what is going on here? First of all, the feeling of compassion that makes them care about that house dog is natural as far as I can tell. It is present in all normal people. But it seems it would extend to other humans as well, so what is going on? Putting myself in their place, with their thoughts and feeling in mind, I think I have come upon an answer. Their beliefs are getting in the way. More precisely, the unrealistic expectations created by their moral beliefs make them hesitate to help. It is easier to ignore the man, or excuse themselves by saying, 'He's just insane or drunk.' What are these unrealistic expectations? Here I will become a preacher like a Christian. Consider for a moment the story Jesus tells in Luke, Chapter 21: 'As he looked up, Jesus saw the rich putting their gifts into the temple treasury. He also saw a poor widow put in two very small copper coins. "I tell you the truth," he said, "this poor widow has put in more than all the others. All these people gave their gifts out of their wealth; but she out of her poverty put in all she had to live on.'"

This and other moral teachings of the Christian faith make it clear that there is almost no limit to what you are expected to do for others if you want to do what is right. This sense of unbounded duty to others is essential to many religious teachings on morality. The idea is that the better man is the one who sacrifices the most, and it is absolutely contrary to our normal impulses towards self-preservation. When a person who has been brought up on these beliefs sees a man asking for food, or sees a man laying on the side of the road, he has a choice.

He can stop to help, but he doesn't know how deeply he will get involved, and his moral beliefs tell him that he really should do everything he can to help. That's a potentially heavy burden if he doesn't feel like doing much. But then there is the other option: Avoid this potential moral dilemma by not getting involved, and making an excuse.

This is about the psychology of the situation. Suppose you see a man asking for food. You stop to give him the last half of your maize cob. He tells you about how he was robbed of the money that was supposed to get him back home in the next town. He has no job and is living on the street. Could you give him some money, he asks, or give him a place to sleep for a few days. He begs you. You knew this was a possibility, and it is more than you want to do, but your moral beliefs say that you have an obligation to help. You know that something like this is a possibility in any such situation, so in reality it is easier on your conscience to drive by or pass by and not even give him the maize cob. You can pretend you didn't see him, say that he is just looking for money for booze or he wants to rob people, or make any other excuse. Your beliefs have placed too heavy a burden on you, and so discourage you from helping.

On the other hand, a person who has no belief in ANY obligation to help others (that's me) doesn't face this dilemma. People like me have no obligation. If I find a stranded person and he asks for transport money, and I don't want to help, I can simply say no, and wish him the best. I don't have a "duty" to do more than I want to do. This makes it very easy to help others as the opportunity arises, because I can feel good helping only as much as I am prepared to help. This is the opposite of the "give until it hurts" moral theory. I say that if it hurts, you are giving too much. There may come a time when you have more to give, or there may come a time when your own personal development makes giving easier. In the meantime, with a morality based on self-interest, you have no heavy burden and no guilt. You help to the extent that feels right for you, and leave it at that. In other words, the common moralities don't even accomplish what they aim at. They even can result in moral corruption. In the cases discussed, this is the corruption of the impulse to help another. Christian and moral systems don't make people more loving or generous. People's natural loving feelings and generosity may make these moral beliefs seem good, but then the beliefs create a standard that people can't possibly live up to. This makes believers into hypocrites, a self-image they can only hide from by avoiding those situations which point it out. This process is moral corruption. A man writes a check for a charity because it's easy. But at the same time he avoids any real encounters where his moral beliefs and guilt may suck him in deeper than he wants to go, because he either goes or his hypocrisy is exposed.

## SHORT REFLECTION: *OIKOS* PASTORAL WORK AT DENIS HURLEY CENTRE

Nelly Amasaja Iyese MC & Octavio Bernardo SCJ

It is arguably difficult to define exactly what humanity is. Humans are one of the most complex and difficult beings to be defined. Nonetheless, there are some aspects which shine forth quite clearly. It has been pointed out by some philosophers that we are relational beings. In other words, we are not just a simple atom thrown senselessly into the universe. We are all constantly being spoken and loved into existence. In addition, for us to exist means to co-exist. It is within this framework that we want to situate our pastoral visit to Denis Hurley Centre. The voluntary work done on the 8th of October came at a very epochal time, not as something absolutely new rather it came about as newness in continuity. It was an open-hearted response to the willingness that we as *OIKOS* have to share our time and talents with our brothers and sisters who are marginalized, put underside of the history, downtrodden and outcast.

Having arrived at the centre, we were cordially welcomed by Mr Raymond who is the director of Denis Hurley Centre. A number of homeless people were already at the centre. They were quietly seated and waiting to have breakfast. It is stunning to note that in many societies, refugees or those in need are normally considered unrestful, particularly on the issue of food. We were therefore markedly inspired by the remarkable discipline they portrayed. The same pattern was expressed during lunchtime. Most of them were quietly seating outside, and when they were served with food, they ate calmly and went.

We definitely learnt the importance of discipline and order in little things in our daily life. If the homeless and refugees were noisy and troublesome, we would have got a different impression. Generally we were moved and fascinated by their calmness. They were actually thankful for what they received. The work involved serving tea and bread, preparing a cooked meal for lunch, serving the food and washing up afterwards. We also noticed that spending time talking and sharing with the homeless is also a part of ministry! The work was supervised by the chef in charge.

After lunch, Mr Raymond explained to us what the centre is all about. From his explanation, on how the centre began, we got an overview of Denis Hurley's life. Indeed the centre stands as a concrete example of Hurley's legacy. Mr Raymond insightfully explained the role of the Church in dealing with a context marked by hunger, bitterness, frustration and existential humiliation whereby a substantial number of people live a miserable life. A context in which the rich are trampling on the poor, where a number of people are being put at the underside of history, are being downtrodden and condemned to live a life which is closely related to the life of the animals by their own brothers and sisters. Furthermore, he stunningly men-

tioned that they wanted the centre to be a home for the homeless and provide a voice for the voiceless. Thereby it should be so welcoming in such a way that it accepts everyone and it refuses no one.

Furthermore, from Raymond's talk about the centre, we saw that the church does not tire in its recognition of the dignity of the human person. Its concern for the development of the people continues through different projects that are affiliated to Denis Hurley Centre. Therefore, it is not only a centre which provides food but it is a place where the needs of those who come there can be seen and ways of responding to these needs are met.

We now turn our minds and hearts to all those who made it possible. We express our heartfelt gratitude to the Dominican Order and the Priests of the Sacred Heart of Jesus for their incredible and openhearted support and for their tireless assistance. We are grateful to the Dean of Studies Father Ewen and our Patron Father Gideon Sibanda and to everyone who made it possible. We once more assure you our continued good wishes and prayers for you and your families. God bless us all!



## Networking Cedara

### LAYOUT TEAM

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