



SYMPOSIUM AND AGM COMSAM

SYMPOSIUM
JOHANNESBURG, SOUTH AFRICA
FROM MAY 23 TO 25, 2025

AGM
PRETÓRIA, SOUTH AFRICA
FROM MAY 26 TO 30, 2025

THEME

**HOPE, SYNODALITY AND THE
EMPOWERMENT OF CONSECRATED
LIFE IN AFRICA**

**ESPERANÇA, SINODALIDADE E O
EMPODERAMENTO DA VIDA
CONSAGRADA EM ÁFRICA**

**ESPÉRANCE, SYNODALITÉ ET
AUTONOMISATION DE LA VIE
CONSACRÉE EN AFRIQUE**



SYMPOSIUM

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Sr Laurentina Motseki

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The African Expectation of the Synod. **Sr Esther Lucas Jose Maria**

The Economic Situation in Africa. Overview 2025 **Professor Horman Chitonge**

Jubilee of Hope. **Sr Anne Arabome SSS**

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Jubilee Prayer In English

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The Jubilee Prayer

Father in heaven,
may the *faith* you have given us
in your son, Jesus Christ, our brother,
and the flame of *charity* enkindled
in our hearts by the Holy Spirit,
reawaken in us the blessed *hope*
for the coming of your Kingdom.

May your grace transform us
into tireless cultivators of the seeds of the
Gospel.

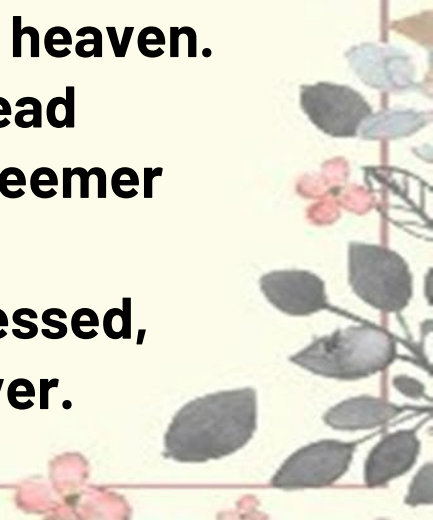
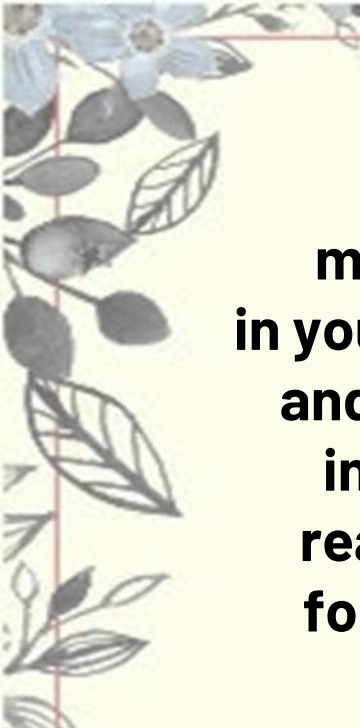
May those seeds transform
from within both humanity and the whole cosmos
in the sure expectation
of a new heaven and a new earth,
when, with the powers of Evil vanquished,
your glory will shine eternally.

May the grace of the Jubilee
reawaken in us, *Pilgrims of Hope*,
a yearning for the treasures of heaven.

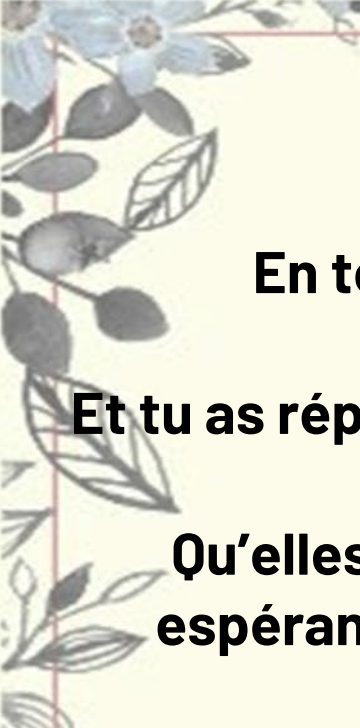
May that same grace spread
the joy and peace of our Redeemer
throughout the earth.

To you our God, eternally blessed,
be glory and praise for ever.

Amen

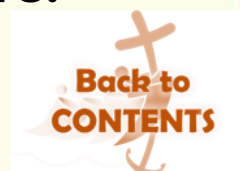



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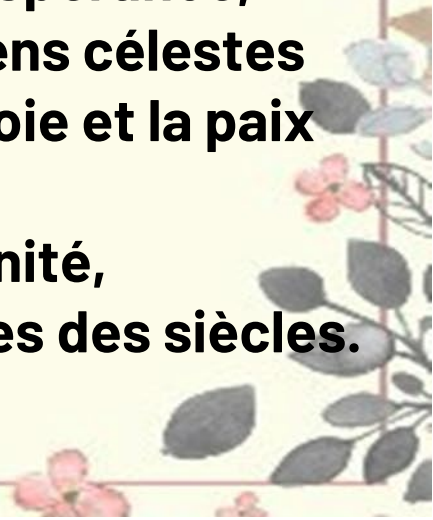


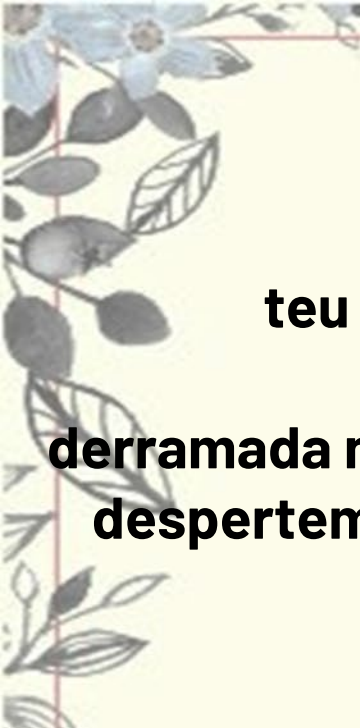
**Prière du Jubilé
Père céleste,
En ton fils Jésus-Christ, notre frère,
Tu nous as donné la foi,
Et tu as répandu dans nos cœurs par l'Esprit Saint,
la flamme de la charité
Qu'elles réveillent en nous la bienheureuse
espérance de l'avènement de ton Royaume.**

**Que ta grâce nous transforme,
Pour que nous puissions faire fructifier les
semences de l'Évangile,
Qui feront grandir l'humanité et la création tout
entière,
Dans l'attente confiante des cieux nouveaux et de
la terre nouvelle,
Lorsque les puissances du mal seront vaincues,
Et ta gloire manifestée pour toujours.**



**Que la grâce du Jubilé,
Qui fait de nous des Pèlerins d'Espérance,
Ravive en nous l'aspiration aux biens célestes
Et répande sur le monde entier la joie et la paix
De notre Rédempteur.
A toi, Dieu béni dans l'éternité,
La louange et la gloire pour les siècles des siècles.
Amen**





Oração do Jubileu
Pai que estás nos céus,
a fé que nos deste no
teu filho Jesus Cristo, nosso irmão,
e a chama de *caridade*
derramada nos nossos corações pelo Espírito Santo
despertem em nós a bem-aventurada *esperança*
para a vinda do teu Reino.

A tua graça nos transforme
em cultivadores diligentes das sementes do
Evangelho
que fermentem a humanidade e o cosmos,
na espera confiante
dos novos céus e da nova terra,
quando, vencidas as potências do Mal,
se manifestar para sempre a tua glória.

A graça do Jubileu
reavive em nós, *Peregrinos de Esperança,*
o desejo dos bens celestes
e derrame sobre o mundo inteiro
a alegria e a paz
do nosso Redentor.

A ti, Deus bendito na eternidade,
louvor e glória pelos séculos dos séculos.
Amém




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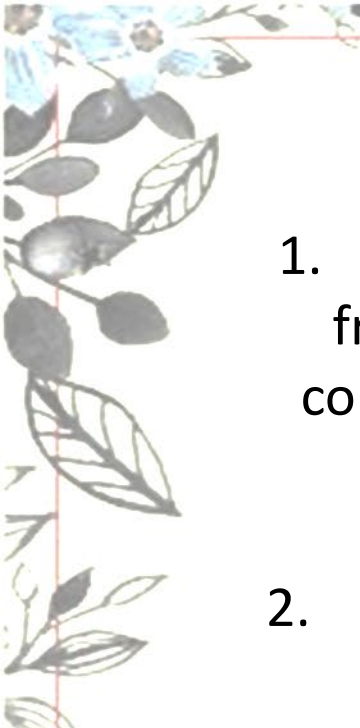
OPENING MASS

COMSAM SYMPOSIUM: 23 MAY 2025
SOUTH AFRICA - JOHANESBURG



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THEME: 'HOPE, SYNODALITY AND
EMPOWERMENT OF THE CONSECRATED LIFE
IN AFRICA'



ENTRANCE HYMN

Come, Holy Ghost

1. Come, Holy Ghost, Creator, come
from thy bright heavenly throne,
come, take possession of our souls,
and make them all thine own.
2. Thou who art called the Paraclete,
best gift of God above,
the living spring, the living fire,
sweet unction and true love.
3. Thou who art sev'nfold in thy grace,
finger of God's right hand;
his promise, teaching little ones
to speak and understand.
4. O guide our minds with thy blest light,
with love our hearts inflame;
and with thy strength, which ne'er decays,
confirm our mortal frame.
5. Far from us drive our deadly foe;
true peace unto us bring;
and through all perils lead us safe
beneath thy sacred wing.




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KYRIE: Sotho

Murena rehauhele

Kriste rehauhele

Murena rehauhele



LITURGY OF THE WORD

PROCESSION OF THE WORD

Ilizwi sizoligcina

Ilizwi sizolilonda

Ilizwi leNkosi sizol' gcina, sizoligcina enhliziweni zethu
X2

READINGS

FIRST READING:

Acts 2:1-11

When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place.

And suddenly a sound came from heaven like the rush of a mighty wind,

and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared to them tongues as of fire, distributed and resting on each one of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

Now there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men from every nation under heaven. And at this sound the multitude came together, and they were bewildered, because each one heard them speaking in his own language.

And they were amazed and wondered, saying, "Are not all these who are speaking Galileans?"



And how is it that we hear, each of us in his own native language? Parthians and Medes and Elamites and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya belonging to Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabians, we hear them telling in our own tongues the mighty works of God."

The word of the Lord.



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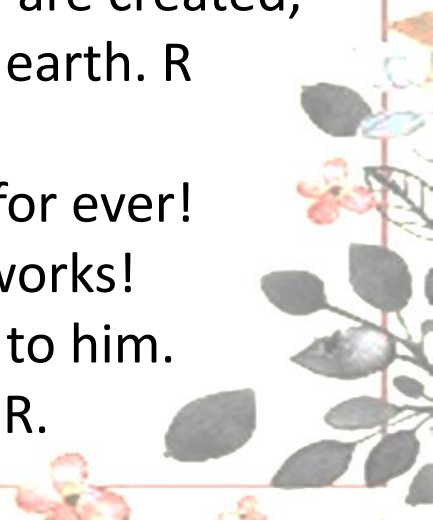
RESPONSORIAL PSALM

R. Lord, send forth your Spirit, and renew the face of the earth.

Bless the Lord, O my soul!
O Lord my God, how great you are.
How many are your works, O Lord!
The earth is full of your creatures. R

You take away their breath, they die,
returning to the dust from which they came.
You send forth your spirit, and they are created,
and you renew the face of the earth. R

May the glory of the Lord last for ever!
May the Lord rejoice in his works!
May my thoughts be pleasing to him.
I will rejoice in the Lord. R.





SECOND READING

1 Corinthians 12:3b-7, 12-13

Brethren:

No one can say "Jesus is Lord" except by the Holy Spirit. Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of working, but it is the same God who inspires them all in every one. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.

For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For by one Spirit we were all baptised into one body Jews or Greeks, slaves or free and all were made to drink of one Spirit.

The word of the Lord.

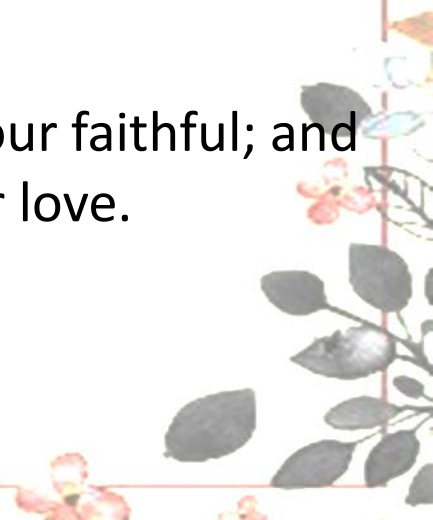


GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

ALLELUIA

Come, O Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful; and kindle in them the fire of your love.

ALLELUIA.



GOSPEL

John 20:19-23

On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being shut where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you." When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side.

Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I send you?" And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained."

The Gospel of the Lord.

Homily

PROCESSION OF THE GIFTS

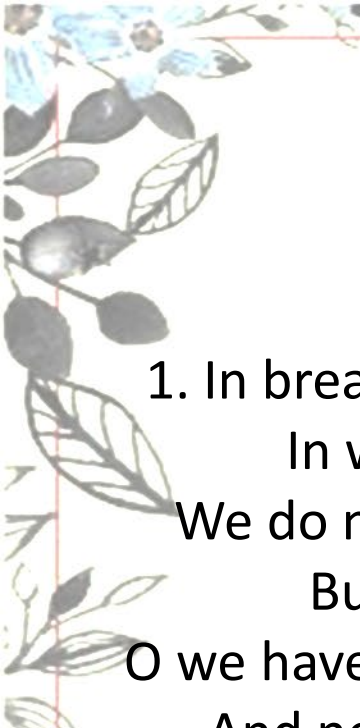
Nazi Nkosi izipho zethu, zamukele Nkosi X3

Nath iNkosi ungasishiyi samukele nazo X2

Siziletha sijabulile samukele NkosiX2

Nath iNkosi ungasishiyi samukele nazo X2


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OFFECTORY

In bread we bring you Lord

1. In bread we bring you Lord, our body's' labour
In wine we offer you our spirit's grief
We do not ask you, Lord, who is my neighbor?
But stand united now, one in belief
O we have gladly heard your word, your holy word
And now in answer, Lord, our gifts we bring
Our selfish hearts make true, our failing faith renew
Our life belongs to you, our Lord and King

2. The bread we offer you is blessed and broken
And it becomes for us our spirit's food
Over the cup we bring, your word is spoken
Make it your gift to us, your healing blood
Take all that daily toil, plant in our heart's poor soil
Take all we start and spoil, each hopeful dream
The chances we have missed, the graces we resist
Lord, in thy Eucharist, take and redeem
Lord, in thy Eucharist, take and redeem



SANCTUS: Xhosa

Soprano: Uyingcwele, uyingcwele nkosi

All: Uyingcwele, Thixo wemikhosi

Soprano: uyingcwele uyingcwele nkosi

All: Uyingcwele Thixo wemikhosi

Tenor: Izulu nomhlaba zizele

All: Izulu nomhlaba zizele

Tenor: Zizele luzuko lwakho

All: Zizele luzu-ko lwakho

Tenor: Hossana, Hossan'onyangweni

All: Hossana, Hossan'onyangweni

REFRAIN: (uyingcwele, uyingcwele....)

Tenor: Makadunyiswe ozayo

All: Makadunyiswe ozayo

Tenor: Egameni lenkosi

All: Ega-meni lenkosi

Tenor: Hossana, Hossan'onyangweni

All: Hossana, Hossan'onyangweni

Tenor: Hossana Hossan'onyangweni

All: Hossana, Hossan'onyangweni

REFRAIN (Uyingcwele, Uyingcwele)

MYSTERY OF FAITH

Uma sidla lesisinkwa, siphuza lesisitsha, simemezel'u
kufa kwakho, Nkosi Jesu uz'u buye

GREAT AMEN

Masithi Amen! Siyakudumisa X2

Masithi Amen Baba X2

Amen siyakudumisa

Our Father (Recite)

Sign of peace:

Soprano: Sinothando

All: Sinothando.

Soprano: Sinoxolo

All: Sinoxolo sohlala sithembe wena X2

Soprano: Obaba Somandla All: Sohlala sithembe
wena X2

AGNUS DEI: LATIN

Agnus Dei, qui tollis, qui tollis peccata mundi,
miserere nobis, miserere nobis. x2

Agnus Dei, qui tollis, qui tollis peccata mundi,
dona nobis pacem, dona nobis pacem.


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COMMUNION HYMNS

Kabelo ea ka e ntle

1. Kabelo ea ka e ntle
Ka letsatsi lena
Ke ikhethetse ha ntle
Ke nkile Morena

Chorus:

Oho! Morena ea mosa
Ke u neha pelo
Lentsoe la ka ke lena
Jesu! Jesu! Jesu!

2. E ke lehlohonolo
Jesu o ka ho 'na
'Me a se le ka thabo
A se le ka mosa

3. Na ke tla leboha joang!
Ke tla reng kajeno!
Ke taba e makatsang
E entsoeng ke Jesu

4. Morena oa ka a re:
Tlo, o lule ho 'na
Ka arabela ka re:
Jesu, ke 'na enoa





5. E, ke taba ea 'nete
Hase 'na ea phelang
Che! Ke eena 'Moloki
Ke eena mphelisang

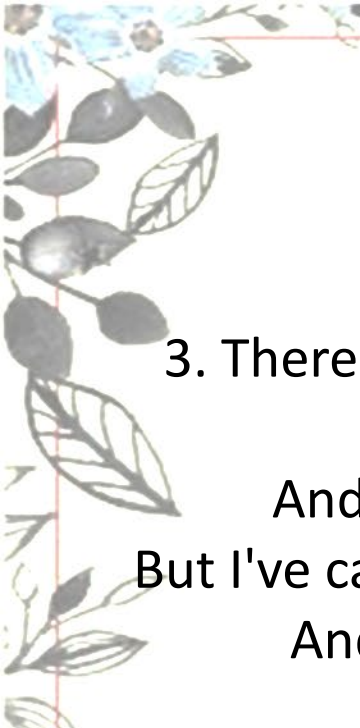
6. Lula hle! Moren'a ka
U lule ka ho 'na
Ho phele uena feela
Ka sefubeng sa ka

POST COMMUNION

Oh, the love of my Lord is the essence

1. Oh, the love of my Lord is the essence
Of all that I love here on earth
All the beauty I see He has given to me
And His giving is gentle as silence

2. Every day, every hour, every moment
Have been blessed by the strength of His love
At the turn of each tide
He is there at my side
And His touch is as gentle as silence



3. There've been times when I've turned from his
presence

And I've walked other paths, other ways
But I've called on His name in the dark of my shame
And His mercy was as gentle as silence

RECESSIONAL HYMN / ELOKUPHUMA

TENOR: Ithemba Lami

ALL: Ithemba Lami ngonyuka nalo ngingene
endumisweni (REPEAT)

TENOR: Ngingene, ngingene endumisweni

ALL: Ngingene endumisweni (REPEAT)



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BIO SKETCH FOR SPEAKERS

Sister Anne Arabome

Sister Anne Arabome SSS is a member of the Sisters of Social Service in Los Angeles, California. She has served as the Associate Director of the Faber Center for Ignatian Spirituality at Marquette University and recently founded the Sophia Institute for Theological Studies and Spiritual Formation in Namibia. She holds a PhD in Systematic Theology from the University of Roehampton, UK, and a Doctor of Ministry in Spirituality from Catholic Theological Union in Chicago. Sr. Anne is deeply committed to the theological education, spiritual formation, and transformative growth of African women religious, with a foundation rooted in Ignatian spirituality. She is the founder of the Bakhita Initiative for African Women that aims to educate and empower both lay and religious women and girls across Africa. She is the author of *Why Do You Trouble This Woman? Women and the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius of Loyola* (2022).

for Portuguese



Horman Chitonge

Horman Chitonge is Professor of African Studies at the Centre for African Studies, and research associate at PRISM, School of Economics, University of Cape Town. He is also a Visiting professor at African Studies Centre, Tokyo University of Foreign and in the Global Justice Programme, Yale University. His research interests include Economic development in Africa, agrarian political economy, water supply, social welfare, poverty and inequality and alternatives for Africa's economic growth. He has published extensively on these and related research areas. His most recent books include *Industrial Policy and the Transformation of the Colonial Economy in Africa* (published by Routledge in 2021), *The Oxford Handbook of the Zambian Economy* (Published by Oxford University Press in 2024), *Reclaiming Economic Sovereignty in Africa* (Published by Anthem Press in 2025).



Fr. Charles Chilufya, S.J.

is a Jesuit priest deeply committed to building a more just and healthy Africa. He works at the intersection of faith, health, and economics—mobilizing communities to tackle disease and push for fairer global financial systems. His passion lies in turning the moral voice of faith into concrete action: from securing access to life-saving medicines to advocating for debt relief, economic justice, and climate equity. Grounded in African realities and global solidarity, his mission is to translate the moral voice of faith into policy change and practical action that leaves no one behind.

Son Eminence, le Cardinal AMBONGO BESUNGU Fridolin,

Frères Mineurs Capucins

Archevêque Métropolitain de Kinshasa

Né et baptisé à Boto, dans le diocèse de Molegbe en République Démocratique du Congo,

Entré dans la Congrégation de l'Ordre des Frères Mineurs Capucins en 1980

A fait ses études philosophiques et théologiques dans son pays,

et son doctorat à l'Académie pontificale « ALPHONSIANUM » de Rome, avec une thèse portant comme titre « La réhabilitation de « l'humain », base de développement vrai au Zaïre. Pour une éthique de développement intégral.

Ordonné prêtre à Bwamanda, il a assumé diverses charges dans son diocèse, dans sa congrégation allant du Ministre Vice-provincial de l'Ordre des Frères Mineurs Capucins au Zaïre au Président de la Conférence des Capucins d'Afrique de l'Ouest (Concao). Il fut Président national de l'Assemblée des Supérieurs Majeurs du Congo (ASUMA) et professeur de Théologie Morale au Grand Séminaire Ss Pierre et Paul/Lisala et ailleurs.

Nommé Evêque de Bokungu-Ikela en 2004 par Saint Jean Paul II, il fut ordonné Evêque en 2005, avec comme devise « Esto Lumen Mundi ».

Comme membre de la Conférence Episcopale Nationale du Congo, Il fut président de plusieurs commissions épiscopales, et administrateur apostolique du diocèse de Kole et de l'Archidiocèse de Mbandaka-Bikoro.

Nommé, en 2016, Archevêque de Mbandaka-Bikoro et Administrateur Apostolique de Bokungu-Ikela par le Pape François, il prit canoniquement possession à Mbandaka, cette même année, avec imposition du Pallium dans son Archidiocèse.

En 2018, il fut nommé Archevêque coadjuteur de Kinshasa et Archevêque de Kinshasa, cette même année.

En 2019, il fut créé Cardinal. Il fut ensuite nommé membre du C 9 du Pape François.

Depuis 20223, il est Président du SCEAM...

His Eminence, Cardinal Ambongo Besungu Fridolin,

Capuchin Minor Friars

Metropolitan Archbishop of Kinshasa

born and baptized in Boto, in the diocese of Molegbe in the Democratic Republic of Congo,

entered the congregation of the Order of Capuchin Friars in 1980

did his country and theological studies in his country,

and his doctorate at the Pontifical Academy "Alphonsianum" in Rome, with a thesis bearing as a title "The rehabilitation of" human ", basis of true development in Zaire. For an ethics of integral development.

ordered a priest in Bwamanda, he assumed various charges in his diocese, in his congregation ranging from the Minister Vice-Provincial of the Capuchin Minor Fridays to Zaire to the President of the Conference of Capuchins of West Africa (Concao). He was the national president of the Assembly of Major High Supper in Congo (Asuma) and professor of moral theology at the Grand Seminary SS Pierre and Paul/Lisala and elsewhere.

Named Bishop of Bokungu-ikela in 2004 by Saint John Paul II, he was ordered Bishop in 2005, with as a motto "Esto Lumen Mundi".

As a member of the National Episcopal Conference of Congo, he was president of several episcopal commissions, and apostolic administrator of the diocese of Kole and the archdiocese of Mbandaka-Bikoro.

Appointed, in 2016, Archbishop of Mbandaka-Bikoro and Apostolic Administrator of Bokungu-ikela by Pope Francis, he took canonically possession in Mbandaka, that same year, with taxation of the pallium in his archdiocese.

In 2018, he was appointed Archbishop Coadjutor of Kinshasa and Archbishop of Kinshasa, this same year.

In 2019, it was created Cardinal. He was then appointed member of C 9 of Pope Francis.

Since 20223, he has been president of the SCEAM...

Sr Christiane Baka

Titre : « Thème : Consacré-e-s, signes de l'espérance »

Résumé de ma communication :

Parler de l'espérance a pour préalable la connaissance de Dieu, la connaissance de sa vraie nature au-delà des concepts à travers lesquels théologiens et philosophes ont cherché et cherchent encore à le définir. Qui est le Dieu de l'espérance ? La réponse à cette question, si elle sacrifie à l'immense travail des théologiens, invite surtout chaque croyant, chaque âme consacrée à l'examen de son rapport à Celui en qui il a mis sa foi et sa confiance. Comme le Christ le demandait à ses disciples, il s'agit de donner une réponse individuelle qui engage l'existence personnelle. En cette année sainte, il lance un appel aux consacré-e-s en Afrique à se positionner en collaborateurs de l'esprit saint capables de rendre compte de l'espérance qu'ils portent en eux. Le devoir de la vie religieuse est de porter la responsabilité de l'espérance. C'est une mission à laquelle aucun consacré-e ne peut renoncer sans manquer à son identité propre. La vie consacrée est totalement de l'ordre de l'espérance. Elle en est la manifestation. Comment en effet tout quitter pour suivre le Christ si on ne porte pas en soi la promesse d'un bien plus grand à venir ?

Notice Biographique

Sœur Christiane BAKA est membre de la Congrégation des Sœurs Notre Dame de la Paix (NDP) dont elle est la Supérieure générale depuis deux et demi. Elle est titulaire d'un Docteur en philosophie de l'Institut Catholique de Paris (ICP) et d'un Master en théologie Catholique de l'Université de Strasbourg. Elle est Enseignant-Chercheur à l'Université Catholique de l'Afrique de l'Ouest à Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire) (UCOA/UUA) et Doyen honoraire de la Faculté de philosophie de ladite Université.

Domaines de recherche : Métaphysique, et morale, Philosophie de la religion et Pensée de la Dame.
Élan vital et mystique dans la pensée d'Henri Bergson, Presses Universitaires de Strasbourg, Strasbourg, 2016.

Quelques publications :
- « D'Eve à Marie », *le chemin de la femme dans le christianisme d'après Edith Stein*, Abidjan, Editions de L'UCAO, 2019.

- *De qui Dieu est-il le nom ? Penser le divin*, en collaboration avec Gaston Ogui, Pierre Diarra et Paulin Poucouta, Karthala, 2021.

Title: 'Theme: Consecrated persons, signs of hope'

Summary of my presentation:

To speak of hope requires knowledge of God, knowledge of his true nature beyond the concepts through which theologians and philosophers have sought and still seek to define him. Who is the God of hope? The answer to this question, while sacrificing itself to the immense work of theologians, above all invites every believer, every consecrated soul, to examine his or her relationship with the One in whom he or she has placed his or her faith and trust. As Christ asked his disciples, it is a matter of giving an individual response that engages personal existence. In this Holy Year, he appeals to the consecrated men and women in Africa to position themselves as collaborators of the Holy Spirit, capable of giving an account of the hope they carry within them. The duty of religious life is to bear the responsibility of hope. This is a mission that no consecrated person can renounce without compromising his or her own identity. Consecrated life is totally about hope. It is its manifestation. How can we leave everything to follow Christ if we do not carry within us the promise of a greater good to come?

Biographical note

Sister Christiane BAKA is a member of the Congregation of the Sisters of Our Lady of Peace (NDP), of which she has been Superior General for two and a half years. She holds a doctorate in philosophy from the Institut Catholique de Paris (ICP) and a master's degree in Catholic theology from the University of Strasbourg. She is a lecturer and researcher at the Catholic University of West Africa in Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire) (UCOA/UUA) and Honorary Dean of the Faculty of Philosophy at the same university.

Areas of research: Metaphysics and Morals, Philosophy of Religion and Women's Thought

Some publications:

- Elan vital et mystique dans la pensée d'Henri Bergson, Presses Universitaires de Strasbourg, Strasbourg, 2016.**
- D'Eve à Marie", le chemin de la femme dans le christianisme d'après Edith Stein, Abidjan, Editions de L'UCAO, 2019.**
- Whose name is God? Penser le divin, in collaboration with Gaston Ogui, Pierre Diarra and Paulin Poucouta, Karthala, 2021.**

Título: 'Tema: Pessoas consagradas, sinais de esperança'

Resumo da minha apresentação:

para falar de esperança requer conhecimento de Deus, conhecimento de Sua verdadeira natureza além dos conceitos pelos quais teólogos e filósofos procuraram e ainda procuram defini-lo. Quem é o Deus da esperança? A resposta a essa pergunta, enquanto se sacrifica à imensa obra de teólogos, acima de tudo, convida todo crente, toda alma consagrada, para examinar seu relacionamento com aquele em quem ele ou ela colocou sua fé e confiança. Como Cristo perguntou a seus discípulos, é uma questão de dar uma resposta individual que envolve a existência pessoal. Neste ano sagrado, ele apela aos homens e mulheres consagrados na África para se posicionarem como colaboradores do Espírito Santo, capazes de dar um relato da esperança que eles carregam dentro deles. O dever da vida religiosa é suportar a responsabilidade da esperança. Esta é uma missão que nenhuma pessoa consagrada pode renunciar sem comprometer sua própria identidade. A vida consagrada é totalmente sobre esperança. É sua manifestação. Como podemos deixar tudo para seguir a Cristo se não levamos dentro de nós a promessa de um bem maior por vir? Estrasburgo. Ela é professora e pesquisadora da Universidade Católica da África Ocidental em Abidjan (Côte D'Voire) (UCOA/UUA) e reitor honorário da Faculdade de Filosofia na mesma universidade. UniversitAires de Strasbourg, Strasbourg, 2016.

- D'Veve à Marie ", Le Chemin de la Femme dans le Christianisme d'Après Edith Stein, Abidjan, Editions de L'Ucao, 2019.

- Nome é God? Karthala, 2021.

Sr. Jane Waruguru Kimathi – Program Director, PACTPAN

Sr. Jane Waruguru Kimathi is a Kenyan religious sister with the Sisters for Christian Community and a passionate advocate for peace, justice, and human dignity. She currently serves as the Director of Programs at the Pan-African Catholic Theology and Pastoral Network (PACTPAN), where she leads and oversees the development and implementation of strategic initiatives in leadership training, grassroots evangelization, scholarly research, advocacy, and interreligious dialogue. In her role, she works collaboratively with stakeholders and key partners across Africa and globally to promote integral human development and transformative pastoral practice.

Sr. Jane holds an MA in Peace Studies and International Relations, a BA in Development Studies, and a Diploma in Counseling Psychology. She is finalizing an MA in Religion, Science, and Philosophy and pursuing a PhD in Governance and Social Transformation at Tangaza University.

With over 20 years of experience, she has led impactful programs in peacebuilding, trauma healing, gender justice, and anti-human trafficking. She has facilitated workshops on human trafficking, leadership, Human sexuality, consecrated life, and formation for mission.

Sr. Jane is the founder of the Gender Wing Network in Kibera and a seasoned international speaker and author. She is widely respected for her commitment to faith-based, inclusive, and transformational leadership.

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Sr. Jane Waruguru Kimathi est une sœur religieuse kenyane avec les sœurs de la communauté chrétienne et un défenseur passionné de la paix, de la justice et de la dignité humaine. Elle est actuellement directrice des programmes du Pan-African Catholic Theology and Pastoral Network (PACTPAN), où elle dirige et supervise le développement et la mise en œuvre d'initiatives stratégiques dans la formation en leadership, l'évangélisation de la base, la recherche universitaire, le plaidoyer et le dialogue interreligieux. Dans son rôle, elle travaille en collaboration avec les parties prenantes et les partenaires clés à travers l'Afrique et dans le monde entier pour promouvoir le développement humain intégral et la pratique pastorale transformatrice.

SR. Jane tient une maîtrise en études de paix et aux relations internationales, un BA dans les études de développement et un diplôme en psychologie de conseil. Elle finalise une maîtrise en religion, science et philosophie et poursuit un doctorat en gouvernance et en transformation sociale à l'Université de Tangaza. ~ avec plus de 20 ans d'expérience, elle a dirigé des programmes percutants dans la construction de la paix, la guérison des traumatismes, la justice sexiste et le trafic anti-humain. Elle a facilité des ateliers sur la traite des êtres humains, le leadership, la sexualité humaine, la vie consacrée et la formation pour la mission.

SR. Jane est la fondatrice du Gender Wing Network à Kibera et un conférencier et auteur international chevronné. Elle est largement respectée pour son engagement envers le leadership confère, inclusif et transformationnel.

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Sr. Jane Waruguru Kimathi - Diretora do Programa, Pactpan

Sr. Jane Waruguru Kimathi é uma irmã religiosa queniana das irmãs da comunidade cristã e uma defensora apaixonada pela paz, justiça e dignidade humana. Atualmente, atua como diretora de programas da Pan-African Catholic Theology and Pastoral Network (PactPan), onde lidera e supervisiona o desenvolvimento e a implementação de iniciativas estratégicas em treinamento em liderança, evangelização de base, pesquisa acadêmica, advocacia e diálogo inter-religioso. Em seu papel, ela trabalha em colaboração com as partes interessadas e parceiros -chave em toda a África e globalmente para promover o desenvolvimento humano integral e a prática pastoral transformadora.

SR. Jane possui um mestrado em estudos de paz e relações internacionais, um bacharelado em estudos de desenvolvimento e um diploma em psicologia de aconselhamento. Ela está finalizando um mestrado em religião, ciência e filosofia e buscando um doutorado em governança e transformação social na Universidade de Tangaza.

Com mais de 20 anos de experiência, liderou programas impactantes em construção da paz, cura de trauma, justiça de gênero e tráfico anti-humano. She has facilitated workshops on human trafficking, leadership, Human sexuality, consecrated life, and formation for mission. Sr. Jane é a fundadora da rede de asas de gênero em Kibera e uma oradora e autor internacional experiente. Ela é amplamente respeitada por seu compromisso com a liderança baseada na fé, inclusiva e transformacional.

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PERFIL

Nome: Irmã Linah Siabana

Congregação: Irmãs Missionárias de Nossa Senhora da África

Nacionalidade: Zambiana

Primeira profissão: 2009

Formação Acadêmica:

- Bacharel em Psicologia pela Universidade La Salle, Cidade do México, México.
- Realizou pesquisa aprofundada para sua tese intitulada "Tráfico de Pessoas: Variáveis que Influenciam a Exploração Sexual de Mulheres na Região de La Merced, Cidade do México". Esta pesquisa envolveu a análise de fatores socioeconômicos, dinâmicas comunitárias e a eficácia de programas de intervenção voltados à proteção de mulheres vulneráveis.

Formação atual:

- Atualmente cursando especialização em terapia de Dessensibilização e Reprocessamento por Movimentos Oculares (EMDR) no Instituto EMDR, na Holanda. Esta terapia é projetada especificamente para ajudar indivíduos que vivenciaram traumas, com foco em facilitar o processamento de memórias angustiantes e melhorar a resposta emocional.

Experiência Profissional:

- Pensão Alimentícia: Trabalhou extensivamente com crianças vulneráveis nas ruas da Tanzânia e do Malawi, oferecendo cuidados diários, apoio educacional e treinamento em habilidades para a vida.
- Engajamento Juvenil: Trabalhou ativamente com jovens na Zâmbia em uma paróquia e atuou como coordenadora assistente de projetos em um centro local de treinamento de habilidades, onde foi responsável por apoiar assuntos estudantis, mentoria e desenvolvimento de programas após sua primeira profissão.
- Colaboração com Jesuítas: Colaborou com a rede de jovens jesuítas em Morelia e na Cidade do México, com foco em programas de extensão voltados ao empoderamento de jovens por meio de iniciativas educacionais e serviço comunitário.
- Trabalho Terapêutico: Ofereceu terapia e apoio a mulheres envolvidas na prostituição na Cidade do México, utilizando sua formação psicológica para ajudá-las a superar seus desafios e explorar caminhos para escolhas de vida mais seguras e saudáveis.

Ocupação atual:

- Atualmente trabalha com refugiados do Sudão do Sul nos assentamentos de Agojo e Maaji, no distrito de Adjumani, no norte de Uganda, onde oferece serviços terapêuticos e apoio emocional tanto aos refugiados quanto à comunidade anfitriã.
- Coordena programas para religiosos e religiosas no Vicariato de Adjumani, com foco em colaboração e construção comunitária.
- Facilita workshops sobre conscientização em saúde mental e oferece sessões educativas sobre desenvolvimento humano, estratégias de enfrentamento e resiliência para candidatos e postulantes de diversas congregações, enfatizando a importância do bem-estar mental na vida religiosa e oferecendo acompanhamento psicológico aos religiosos.

Por meio de suas diversas experiências e formação, a Irmã Linah Siabana continua a ser uma defensora comprometida das populações vulneráveis, dedicada a promover a cura e o empoderamento em suas comunidades.

PROFIL

Nom : Sr. Linah Siabana

Congrégation : Sœurs Missionnaires de Notre-Dame d'Afrique

Nationalité : Zambienne

Première profession : 2009

Éducation:

- Licence en psychologie de l'Université La Salle, Mexico, Mexique.
- Elle a mené des recherches approfondies pour sa thèse intitulée « Traite des êtres humains : variables influençant l'exploitation sexuelle des femmes dans le quartier de La Merced à Mexico ». Ces recherches ont consisté à analyser les facteurs socioéconomiques, la dynamique communautaire et l'efficacité des programmes d'intervention visant à protéger les femmes vulnérables.

Formation actuelle :

Je suis actuellement une formation spécialisée en thérapie de désensibilisation et de retraitement par les mouvements oculaires (EMDR) à l'Institut EMDR aux Pays-Bas. Cette thérapie est spécialement conçue pour aider les personnes ayant subi un traumatisme, en facilitant le traitement des souvenirs pénibles et en améliorant la réponse émotionnelle.

Expérience professionnelle :

- Soutien aux enfants : J'ai beaucoup travaillé avec des enfants vulnérables dans et hors des rues de Tanzanie et du Malawi, en leur fournissant des soins quotidiens, un soutien éducatif et une formation aux compétences de vie.
- Engagement des jeunes : Elle s'est activement engagée auprès des jeunes en Zambie dans un cadre paroissial et a occupé le poste de coordinatrice adjointe de projet dans un centre local de formation professionnelle, où elle était chargée de soutenir les affaires étudiantes, le mentorat et le développement de programmes après sa première profession.
- Collaboration jésuite : Collaboration avec le réseau de jeunes jésuites de Morelia et de Mexico, en se concentrant sur des programmes de sensibilisation visant à autonomiser les jeunes par le biais d'initiatives éducatives et de service communautaire.
- Travail thérapeutique : J'ai fourni une thérapie et un soutien aux femmes engagées dans la prostitution à Mexico, en utilisant sa formation psychologique pour les aider à surmonter leurs défis et à explorer des voies vers des choix de vie plus sûrs et plus sains.

Occupation actuelle :

- Elle travaille actuellement avec des réfugiés du Soudan du Sud dans les camps d'Agojo et de Maaji dans le district d'Adjumani, dans le nord de l'Ouganda, où elle offre des services thérapeutiques et un soutien émotionnel aux réfugiés et à la communauté d'accueil.
- Coordonne les programmes pour les religieux et religieuses du Vicariat d'Adjumani, en mettant l'accent sur la collaboration et le renforcement de la communauté.
- Anime des ateliers de sensibilisation à la santé mentale et propose des séances éducatives sur le développement humain, les stratégies d'adaptation et la résilience aux candidats et aux postulants de diverses congrégations, en soulignant l'importance du bien-être mental dans la vie religieuse et en offrant un accompagnement psychologique aux religieux

Grâce à ses diverses expériences et formations, Sœur Linah Siabana continue d'être une défenseure engagée des populations vulnérables, dévouée à favoriser la guérison et l'autonomisation dans ses communautés.

Name: Sr. Linah Siabana

Congregation: Missionary Sisters of Our Lady of Africa

Nationality: Zambian

First profession: 2009



Education:

- Bachelor's Degree in Psychology from the University La Salle, Mexico City, Mexico.
- Conducted in-depth research for her thesis titled "Human Trafficking: Variables That Influence the Sexual Exploitation of Women in the Area of La Merced in Mexico City." This research involved analyzing socioeconomic factors, community dynamics, and the effectiveness of intervention programs aimed at protecting vulnerable women.

Current Training:

- Currently pursuing specialized training in Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR) therapy at the EMDR Institute in the Netherlands. This therapy is specifically designed to help individuals who have experienced trauma, focusing on facilitating the processing of distressing memories and improving emotional response.

Work Experience:

- **Child Support:** Worked extensively with vulnerable children on and off the streets of Tanzania and Malawi, providing daily care, educational support, and life skills training.
- **Youth Engagement:** Engaged actively with youth in Zambia within a parish setting, and served as the assistant project coordinator at a local skills training center, where she was responsible for supporting student affairs, mentorship, and program development after her first profession.
- **Jesuit Collaboration:** Collaborated with the Jesuit youth network in Morelia and Mexico City, focusing on outreach programs aimed at empowering young people through educational initiatives and community service.
- **Therapeutic Work:** Provided therapy and support to women engaged in prostitution in Mexico City, using her psychological training to help them navigate their challenges and explore pathways to safer, healthier life choices.

Current Occupation:

- Presently working with refugees from South Sudan in the Agojo and Maaji settlements in Adjumani District, Northern Uganda where she offers therapeutic services and emotional support to both refugees and the host community.
- Coordinates programs for male and female religious members in the Adjumani Vicariate, focusing on collaboration and community building.
- Facilitates workshops on mental health awareness and provides educational sessions on human development, coping strategies, and resilience to candidates and postulants across various congregations, emphasizing the importance of mental well-being in religious life and gives psychological accompaniment to religious

Through her diverse experiences and training, Sr. Linah Siabana continues to be a committed advocate for vulnerable populations, dedicated to fostering healing and empowerment in her communities.

Frère Benjamin Sombel sarr, est religieux

prêtre de l'Ordre des Pêcheurs, dominicains.

-Docteur en philosophie moderne et contemporaine;

- Docteur en Théologie dogmatique;

Professeur Titulaire des Universités du CAMES (Conseil Africain et Malgache de l'enseignement Supérieur) en Lettres et sciences Humaines, et en Théologie.

Il a enseigné dans plusieurs universités en Afrique, France, Suisse, Canada.

Il est l'auteur de 13 ouvrages en théologie et en philosophie dont deux sur la vie consacrée : Théologie de la vie consacrée, questions théologiques, Paris Harmattan, 2014;

Vie consacrée et prophétisme en Afrique, Paris Harmattan, 2015.

Il a exercé plusieurs charges dans son Ordre: prier des couvents de Cotonou, Abidjan, Prieur provincial des dominicains d'Afrique de l'Ouest, recteur fondateur de l'Université Saint Dominique au Burkina Faso.

Présentement prier du couvent saint Thomas d'Aquin de Yamoussoukro et vicaire épiscopal chargé de la vie consacrée, membre du Comité théologique du Sceam et Recteur de l'Université Saint Jean Paul 2

Auteur de 13 ouvrages en théologie et philosophie dont:

-Théologie de la vie consacrée, questions d'inculturation, Paris l'Harmattan, 2014.

- Prophétisme de la vie consacrée en Afrique, Paris,Harmattan, 2015.



Brother Benjamin Sombel Sarr, is a priest from the religious Order of Fishermen, Dominicans.

-Docteur in modern and contemporary philosophy;

- Doctor of Dogmatic Theology;

Full Professor of Cames Universities (African and Malagasy Higher Education) in letters and human sciences, and in theology.

He taught in several universities in Africa, France, Switzerland, Canada.

He is the author of 13 works in theology and philosophy including two on consecrated life: theology of consecrated life, theological questions, Paris Harmattan, Paris Harmattan, 2014;

Consecrated life and prophetism in Africa, Paris Harmattan, 2015.

He exercised several charges in his order: prior of the convents of Cotonou, Abidjan, provincial prior of the Dominicans of West Africa, founding rector of Saint Dominique University in Burkina Faso. Responsible for consecrated life, member of the theological committee of the SCEAM and rector of Saint John Paul University 2

~ author of 13 works in theology and philosophy including:

-theology of consecrated life, Questions of inculturation, Paris L'Harmattan, 2014.

~- Prophetism of the consecrated life in Africa, Paris, Harmattan, 2015.

Apresentação

O irmão Benjamin Sumbel Sarr, é religioso da Ordem dos Pescadores, Dominicanos.

-Docteur na filosofia moderna e contemporânea;

- Doutor em Teologia Dogmática;

Professor completo de universidades de cames (ensino superior africano e malgaxe) em cartas e ciências humanas e em teologia.

Ele ensinou em várias universidades da África, França, Suíça, Canadá.

Ele é o autor de 13 obras em teologia e filosofia, incluindo dois sobre a vida consagrada: teologia da vida consagrada, questões teológicas, Paris Harmattan, Paris Harmattan, 2014;

Vida e profetismo consagradas na África, Paris Harmattan, 2015.

Ele exerceu várias acusações em sua ordem: antes dos conventos de Cotonou, Abidjan, Provincial Prior dos Dominicanos da África Ocidental, fundadora da Saint Dominique University em Burkina Faso. Responsável pela vida consagrada, membro do comitê teológico do scam e reitor da Universidade de São João Paulo.

Sister Christiane BAKA is a member of the Congregation of the Sisters of Our Lady of Peace (NDP), of which she has been the Superior General for two and a half years. She holds a Doctor of Philosophy from the Catholic Institute of Paris (ICP) and a Master of Catholic Theology from the University of Strasbourg. She is a Professor-Researcher at the Catholic University of West Africa in Abidjan (Ivory Coast) (UCOA/UUA) and Honorary Dean of the Faculty of Philosophy of the said University. Research Areas: Metaphysics and Morality, Philosophy of Religion, and Women's Thought

Selected Publications:

- Vital and Mystical Elan in the Thought of Henri Bergson, Presses Universitaires de Strasbourg, Strasbourg, 2016.

Sœur Christiane BAKA est membre de la Congrégation des Sœurs Notre Dame de la Paix (NDP) dont elle est la Supérieure générale depuis deux et demi. Elle est titulaire d'un Docteur en philosophie de l'Institut Catholique de Paris (ICP) et d'un Master en théologie Catholique de l'Université de Strasbourg. Elle est Enseignant-Chercheur à l'Université Catholique de l'Afrique de l'Ouest à Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire) (UCOA/UUA) et Doyen honoraire de la Faculté de philosophie de ladite Université.

Domaines de recherche : Métaphysique et morale, Philosophie de la religion et Pensée de la femme

Quelques publications :

- Elan vital et mystique dans la pensée d'Henri Bergson, Presses Universitaires de Strasbourg, Strasbourg, 2016.

- « D'Eve à Marie », le chemin de la femme dans le christianisme d'après Edith Stein, Abidjan, Editions de L'UCAO, 2019.

- De qui Dieu est-il le nom ? Penser le divin, en collaboration avec Gaston Ogui, Pierre Diarra et Paulin Poucouta, Karthala, 2021.



The Economic Situation in Africa: An Overview of Socioeconomic Outcomes

Abstract

Majority of countries on the African continent reported high economic growth rates during the 2000s. The continent was home to seven of the 10 fastest growing economies in the world according to the International Monetary Fund (IMF, 2011) Report. While the average annual Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth rate for the continent was about 5 percent between 2000 and 2011, there were countries such as Ethiopia, Rwanda, Tanzania, Angola, Ghana, Nigeria and Mozambique which grew at an annual average rate of above 7 percent over the same period. In 2011, several countries were projected to grow above 7 percent in the period 2011-2015 (IMF, 2011). This strong economic growth reported on the continent generated optimism, framed by global media as the Africa Rising Narrative. While this was the longest economic growth episode on the continent, the growth momentum in most countries rapidly waned off by 2015 when commodity prices on the global market fell abruptly. Since then, GDP growth rate for the



African continent has been much lower, averaging 3.1 percent in the period between 2015 and 2019. Economic growth rates were particularly depressed in 2020 and 2021 as a result of the Covid-19 Pandemic. Though most countries have recovered from the impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic, growth rates in most countries remain lower than in the first decade of the 21st century.

In this paper, I examine the economic situation on the continent, focusing on the socioeconomic outcomes over the past two decades and half. The paper highlights some of the key socioeconomic challenges on the continent which include high rates of underemployment and unemployment in most countries, high rates of working poor, persistently high levels of poverty, rising levels of public debt, the low capacity of most economies to create sufficient employment opportunities to match the rapidly growing labour force. These and other challenges have led to a situation where most African economies are finding it difficult to promote inclusive growth as evident in the rising levels of inequality in most countries (World Bank, 2024). While the current geopolitical and geoeconomic shifts triggered by the ongoing trade wars have generated a great deal of uncertainty for the



continent, there is hope for sustained growth, given the continent's youthful population, rising demand for critical resources needed for green transition, improving levels of human capital and the growing awareness of the need to promote broad-based and inclusive growth that puts the well-being of all people at the centre of economic policy.

Key Words: Africa, economic growth, socioeconomic outcomes, inclusive growth, poverty, inequality, unemployment, underemployment, hope

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23 to 25 May 2025 in Johannesburg, South Africa
‘Hope, Synodality and the Empowerment of Consecrated Life in Africa’.

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Africa and the Global Economy: A Moral and Prophetic Perspective

By Charlie Chilufya, S.J

Introduction: A Foundational Question

“What is the place of Africa in the global economy?” This is not merely a technical or economic inquiry—it is, fundamentally, a moral and spiritual one. Africa is a continent of extraordinary human and natural wealth: rich in minerals, biodiversity, youth, and spiritual vitality. Yet, it remains marginalized in global economic structures and decision-making. This contradiction demands critical engagement, particularly from religious communities who are called to uphold justice, solidarity, and the common good.

1. Africa’s Contributions to the Global Economy

Africa plays a critical role in sustaining the global economy:

- The continent holds 70% of the world’s cobalt, 90% of its platinum group metals, and over 50% of its gold reserves—essential for electronics, green energy, and industrial processes (UNCTAD, 2021).
- It is a leading global producer of cocoa and coffee.
- Over 60% of its population is under the age of 25, representing the youngest and one of the most rapidly growing workforces in the world (UNDP, 2022).
- The Congo Basin, the second largest tropical rainforest after the Amazon, plays a crucial role in carbon sequestration and climate regulation.
- Africa is home to over 400 million Christians and growing Muslim communities, making it a center of global religious vitality (Pew Research Center, 2015).

Despite these contributions, Africa’s share of global trade remains below 3%, a stark indicator of its peripheral role in the international economic order.

2. The Global Economic Contradiction

While Africa enriches the world in material, environmental, and spiritual terms, it remains locked out of the systems that govern global wealth distribution:

- Africa loses approximately \$88.6 billion annually through illicit financial flows—capital flight, tax evasion, and trade misinvoicing—undermining development and governance (UNCTAD, 2020).
- Many African countries allocate more to debt servicing than to essential services like health and education.



- Africa holds only about 3% of voting power at the International Monetary Fund and World Bank, despite the profound impact of their policies on African economies.
- The continent bears the brunt of climate change, even though it contributes less than 4% to global greenhouse gas emissions (IPCC, 2022).

This disparity reveals the moral failure of global economic governance, which privileges the interests of the powerful while marginalizing the most vulnerable.

3. Historic and Structural Injustice

The roots of Africa's economic marginalization lie in enduring structural injustices:

- Colonial systems of extraction have morphed into neocolonial economic arrangements.
- Trade rules favor the export of raw materials and the import of expensive finished goods, preventing Africa from moving up the value chain.
- Debt systems continue to operate in ways that favor creditors, often without transparency or fairness.
- Africa remains underrepresented in global economic institutions such as the G20, WTO, IMF, and World Bank.

As Pope Francis warns in *Laudato Si'*, “The environment is one of those goods that cannot be adequately safeguarded or promoted by market forces” (LS, 190)—and this also applies to the economic systems that govern Africa's interaction with the world.

4. Why Religious Communities Must Care

Faith communities possess unique moral authority and a long-standing tradition of social engagement:

- Catholic Social Teaching affirms the principles of human dignity, the common good, solidarity, and subsidiarity—principles that call for systemic transformation of unjust structures (Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church, 2004).
- These principles also demand a framing of economic issues that transcends mere metrics and market performance. At the heart of any economic structure must be the flourishing of the human person. In the words of Pope Paul VI, “Development is the new name for peace” (*Populorum Progressio*, 76), reminding us that economic justice is inseparable from human dignity.
- The Biblical concept of Jubilee (cf. Leviticus 25) mandates periodic debt forgiveness and restoration of equity, offering a scriptural foundation for modern debt cancellation campaigns.
- In *Fratelli Tutti*, Pope Francis calls for renewed global solidarity, writing: “The marketplace, by itself, cannot resolve every problem... It requires a proactive policy... directed to ‘promoting the economy and ensuring the equitable distribution of goods’” (FT, 168).
- *Laudato Si'* calls for an integral ecology that links care for creation with care for the poor, urging a rethinking of growth, progress, and development (LS, 139).

5. What Must Change?

Fundamentally, what is required is the transformation of the global economy into one that includes and gives life. It is about changing the rules of the game—rules that have long been written by and for the interests of the Global North, often to the detriment of Africa and other regions in the Global South. Transforming Africa's role in the global economy thus requires a reordering of priorities and policies:

- Cancel illegitimate and unsustainable debts, and establish fair and inclusive sovereign debt workout mechanisms (Jubilee Debt Campaign, 2023).
- Deliver on climate finance promises, especially for adaptation and loss and damage, ensuring they reach the most affected communities.
- Reform trade systems to allow Africa to add value to its products, supporting industrialization and economic diversification.
- Promote digital inclusion and regulate global tech in ways that empower African economies and protect against digital colonization.
- Invest significantly in education, innovation, and youth leadership to harness the continent's demographic dividend.

6. From Service to Prophetic Witness

Religious communities must move beyond charity and service to advocacy and prophetic action:

- Speak truth to power by engaging international institutions and challenging unjust policies.
- Mobilize faith networks to influence global policy discussions and elevate African perspectives.
- Support African-led solutions, rooted in local wisdom and democratic participation.
- Form consciences—especially in the Global North—through education and moral formation about economic justice.

As the African proverb says, “Until the lion learns to write, every story will glorify the hunter.” Religious leaders can help Africa write its own economic story—one grounded in justice and dignity.

Conclusion: A Shared Journey of Justice and Hope

Africa does not ask for charity—it asks for justice. This is the rallying cry of a continent rich in promise yet constrained by injustice. For religious communities, the path forward is clear: to accompany Africa not as benefactors, but as partners in the pursuit of global justice. Through prayer, advocacy, education, and prophetic witness, we can work together for a world where Africa's full dignity and potential are realized—not as an afterthought, but as a cornerstone of the global common good.

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Presentation Summary

Africa and the Global Economy: A Moral and Prophetic Perspective – Summary

By Charlie Chilufya, S.J

Africa's Global Role:

Africa is central to the global economy—rich in natural resources (e.g., 70% of global cobalt), home to the world's youngest population, and a guardian of vital ecosystems like the Congo Basin. It also hosts vibrant faith communities that shape global spirituality.

The Contradiction:

Despite these contributions, Africa remains marginalized—contributing less than 3% to global trade, losing \$88.6 billion annually through illicit financial flows, and bearing disproportionate climate impacts despite contributing under 4% of emissions.

Root Causes:

Africa's economic exclusion is rooted in colonial legacies, unjust trade practices, debt dependency, and underrepresentation in global financial institutions like the IMF and WTO.

Why Faith Communities Must Engage:

Faith traditions emphasize human dignity, solidarity, and justice. Catholic Social Teaching and biblical traditions (e.g., the Jubilee) call for economic systems that promote equity. Pope Francis urges us to reimagine the economy as a means of promoting the common good (Fratelli Tutti, 168).

The Moral Imperative for Change:

Transformation is needed—not reform at the margins. This means changing the rules of the global economic game, which have long been shaped by Northern interests. Solutions include:

- **Canceling illegitimate debts and creating fair debt mechanisms.**
- **Delivering on climate finance for adaptation and loss and damage.**
- **Reforming trade rules to allow African value addition.**
- **Ensuring digital justice and youth-driven innovation.**

A Prophetic Role for Religious Communities:

Faith actors must shift from service delivery to global advocacy. They are called to:

- **Speak truth to power,**
- **Amplify African voices in global policy,**
- **Promote Africa-led development,**
- **Form consciences for economic justice.**

Conclusion:

Africa does not seek charity—it calls for justice. Religious communities are invited into a shared journey of solidarity, helping build a global economy that gives life, includes all, and respects the dignity of every person



The Economic Situation in Africa: An Overview of Socioeconomic Outcomes

Abstract

Majority of countries on the African continent reported high economic growth rates during the 2000s. The continent was home to seven of the 10 fastest growing economies in the world according to the International Monetary Fund (IMF, 2011) Report. While the average annual Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth rate for the continent was about 5 percent between 2000 and 2011, there were countries such as Ethiopia, Rwanda, Tanzania, Angola, Ghana, Nigeria and Mozambique which grew at an annual average rate of above 7 percent over the same period. In 2011, several countries were projected to grow above 7 percent in the period 2011-2015 (IMF, 2011). This strong economic growth reported on the continent generated optimism, framed by global media as the *Africa Rising Narrative*. While this was the longest economic growth episode on the continent, the growth momentum in most countries rapidly waned off by 2015 when commodity prices on the global market fell abruptly. Since then, GDP growth rate for the African continent has been much lower, averaging 3.1 percent in the period between 2015 and 2019. Economic growth rates were particularly depressed in 2020 and 2021 as a result of the Covid-19 Pandemic. Though most countries have recovered from the impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic, growth rates in most countries remain lower than in the first decade of the 21st century.

In this paper, I examine the economic situation on the continent, focusing on the socioeconomic outcomes over the past two decades and half. The paper highlights some of the key socioeconomic challenges on the continent which include high rates of underemployment and unemployment in most countries, high rates of working poor, persistently high levels of poverty, rising levels of public debt, the low capacity of most economies to create sufficient employment opportunities to match the rapidly growing labour force. These and other challenges have led to a situation where most African economies are finding it difficult to promote inclusive growth as evident in the rising levels of inequality in most countries (World Bank, 2024). While the current geopolitical and geoeconomic shifts triggered by the ongoing trade wars have generated a great deal of uncertainty for the continent, there is hope for sustained growth, given the continent's youthful population, rising demand for critical resources needed for green transition, improving levels of human capital and the growing awareness of the need to promote broad-based and inclusive growth that puts the well-being of all people at the centre of economic policy.

Key Words: Africa, economic growth, socioeconomic outcomes, inclusive growth, poverty, inequality, unemployment, underemployment, hope

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Horman Chitonge

Horman Chitonge é Professor de Estudos Africanos no Centro de Estudos Africanos e pesquisador associado do PRISM, Escola de Economia da Universidade da Cidade do Cabo. Ele também é professor visitante no Centro de Estudos Africanos da Universidade de Tóquio e no Programa de Justiça Global da Universidade de Yale. Seus interesses de pesquisa incluem desenvolvimento econômico na África, economia política agrária, abastecimento de água, bem-estar social, pobreza e desigualdade e alternativas para o crescimento econômico da África. Ele publicou extensivamente sobre essas e outras áreas de pesquisa relacionadas. Seus livros mais recentes incluem "Industrial Policy and the Transformation of the Colonial Economy in Africa" (publicado pela Routledge em 2021), "The Oxford Handbook of the Zambian Economy" (publicado pela Oxford University Press em 2024) e "Reclaiming Economic Sovereignty in Africa" (publicado pela Anthem Press em 2025).

A Situação Econômica na África: Uma Visão Geral dos Resultados Socioeconômicos

Resumo

A maioria dos países do continente africano relatou altas taxas de crescimento econômico durante a década de 2000. O continente abrigou sete das 10 economias com crescimento mais rápido do mundo, de acordo com o Relatório do Fundo Monetário Internacional (FMI, 2011). Embora a taxa média anual de crescimento do Produto Interno Bruto (PIB) para o continente tenha sido de cerca de 5% entre 2000 e 2011, países como Etiópia, Ruanda, Tanzânia, Angola, Gana, Nigéria e Moçambique cresceram a uma taxa média anual superior a 7% no mesmo período. Em 2011, projetava-se que vários países cresceriam acima de 7% no período de 2011 a 2015 (FMI, 2011). Esse forte crescimento econômico relatado no continente gerou otimismo, enquadrado pela média global como a Narrativa da Ascensão da África. Embora este tenha sido o período de crescimento econômico mais longo no continente, o ritmo de crescimento na maioria dos países diminuiu rapidamente em 2015, quando os preços das commodities no mercado global caíram abruptamente. Desde então, a taxa de crescimento do PIB do continente africano tem sido muito menor, com uma média de 3,1% no período entre 2015 e 2019. As taxas de crescimento econômico foram particularmente baixas em 2020 e 2021, como resultado da pandemia de Covid-19. Embora a maioria dos países tenha se recuperado do impacto da pandemia de Covid-19, as taxas de crescimento na maioria dos países permanecem mais baixas do que na primeira década do século XXI.

Neste artigo, examino a situação econômica do continente, com foco nos resultados socioeconômicos das últimas duas décadas e meia. O artigo destaca alguns dos principais desafios socioeconômicos do continente, que incluem altas taxas de subemprego e desemprego na maioria dos países, altas taxas de trabalhadores pobres, níveis persistentemente altos de pobreza, níveis crescentes de dívida pública e a baixa capacidade da maioria das economias de criar oportunidades de emprego suficientes para corresponder ao rápido crescimento da força de trabalho. Esses e outros desafios levaram a uma situação em que a maioria das economias africanas está encontrando dificuldades para promover o crescimento inclusivo, como evidenciado pelos níveis crescentes de desigualdade na maioria dos países (Banco Mundial, 2024). Embora as atuais mudanças geopolíticas e geoeconômicas desencadeadas pelas guerras comerciais em curso tenham gerado grande incerteza para o continente, há esperança de crescimento sustentado, dada a população jovem do continente, a crescente demanda por recursos essenciais para a transição verde, a melhoria dos níveis de capital humano e a crescente conscientização sobre a necessidade de promover um crescimento amplo e inclusivo que coloque o bem-estar de todas as pessoas no centro da política econômica.

Palavras-chave: África, crescimento econômico, resultados socioeconômicos, crescimento inclusivo, pobreza, desigualdade, desemprego, subemprego, esperança

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..... croissance inclusive, comme en témoigne l'augmentation des niveaux d'inégalité dans la plupart des pays (Banque mondiale, 2024). Bien que les changements géopolitiques et géoéconomiques actuels déclenchés par les guerres commerciales en cours aient généré une grande incertitude pour le continent, il y a de l'espoir pour une croissance soutenue, compte tenu de la jeunesse de la population du continent, de la demande croissante de ressources essentielles nécessaires à la transition verte, de l'amélioration des niveaux de capital humain et de la prise de conscience croissante de la nécessité de promouvoir une croissance large et inclusive qui place le bien-être de toutes les personnes au centre de la politique économique.

Mots clés : Afrique, croissance économique, résultats socio-économiques, croissance inclusive, pauvreté, inégalité, chômage, sous-emploi, espoir

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The Economic Situation in Africa: An Overview of Socioeconomic Outcomes

HOPE, SYNODALITY AND THE EMPOWERMENT OF CONSECRATED LIFE IN AFRICA

(A SYMPOSIUM ORGANISED BY COMSAM)

23-25 May, 2025

**For the
Abstract**

Professor Horman Chitonge

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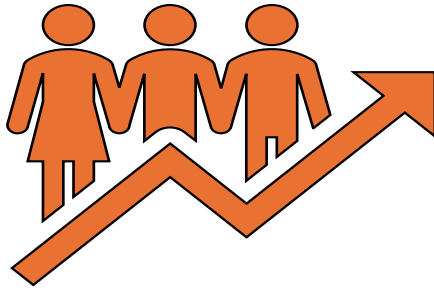
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OUTLINE

- Economic Situation in Affrica



- Socioeconomic conditions: Challenges



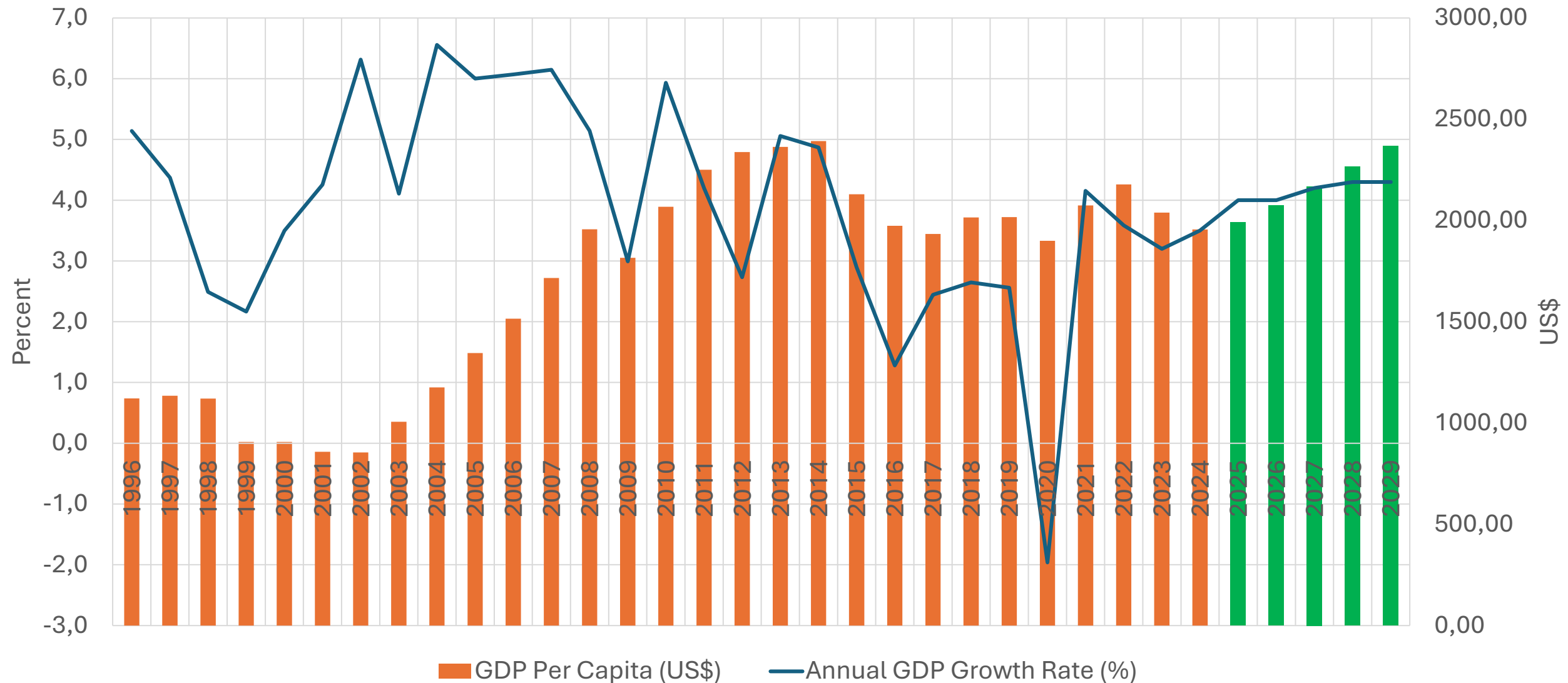
Looking forward: challenges and Opportunities



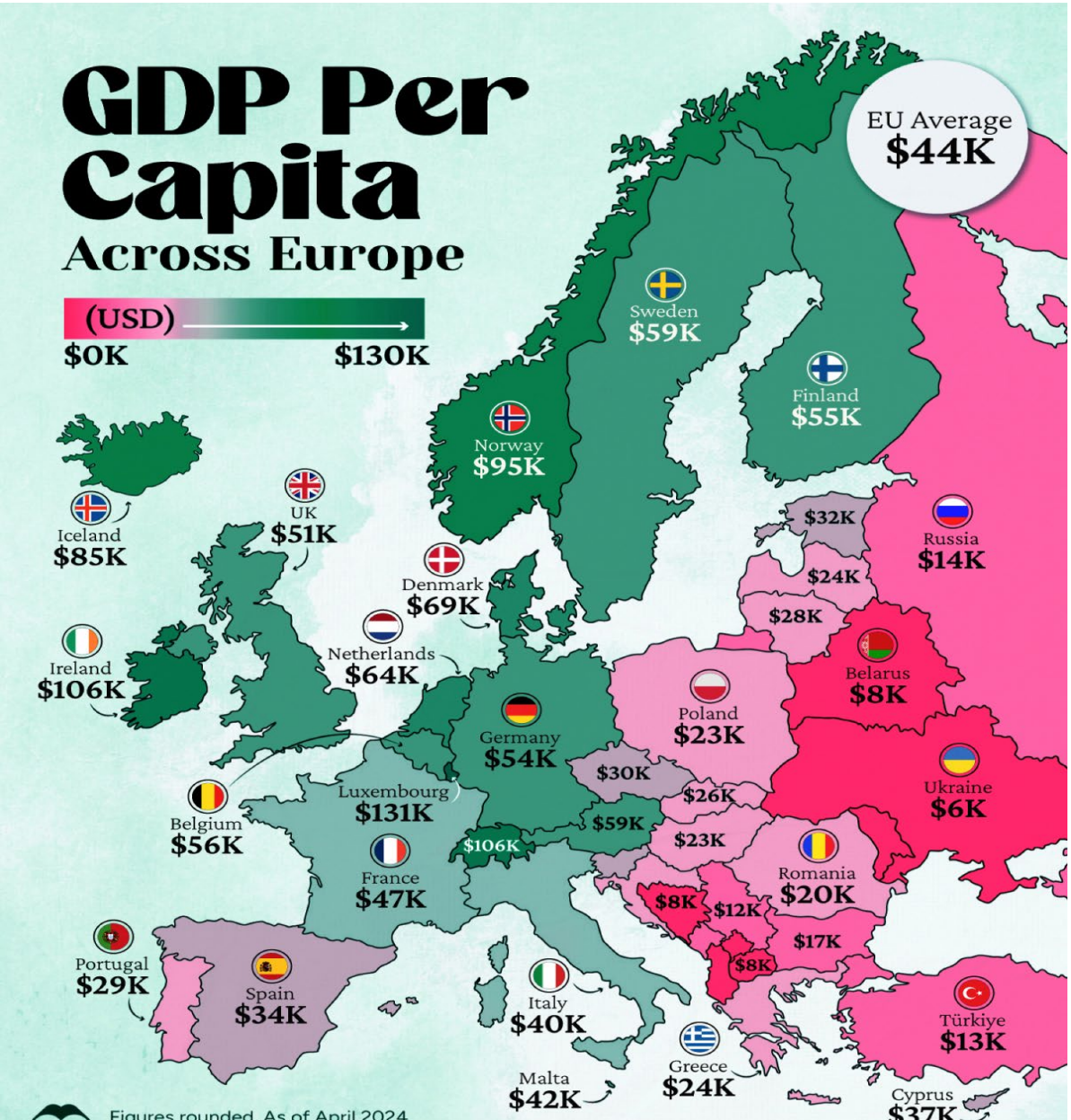
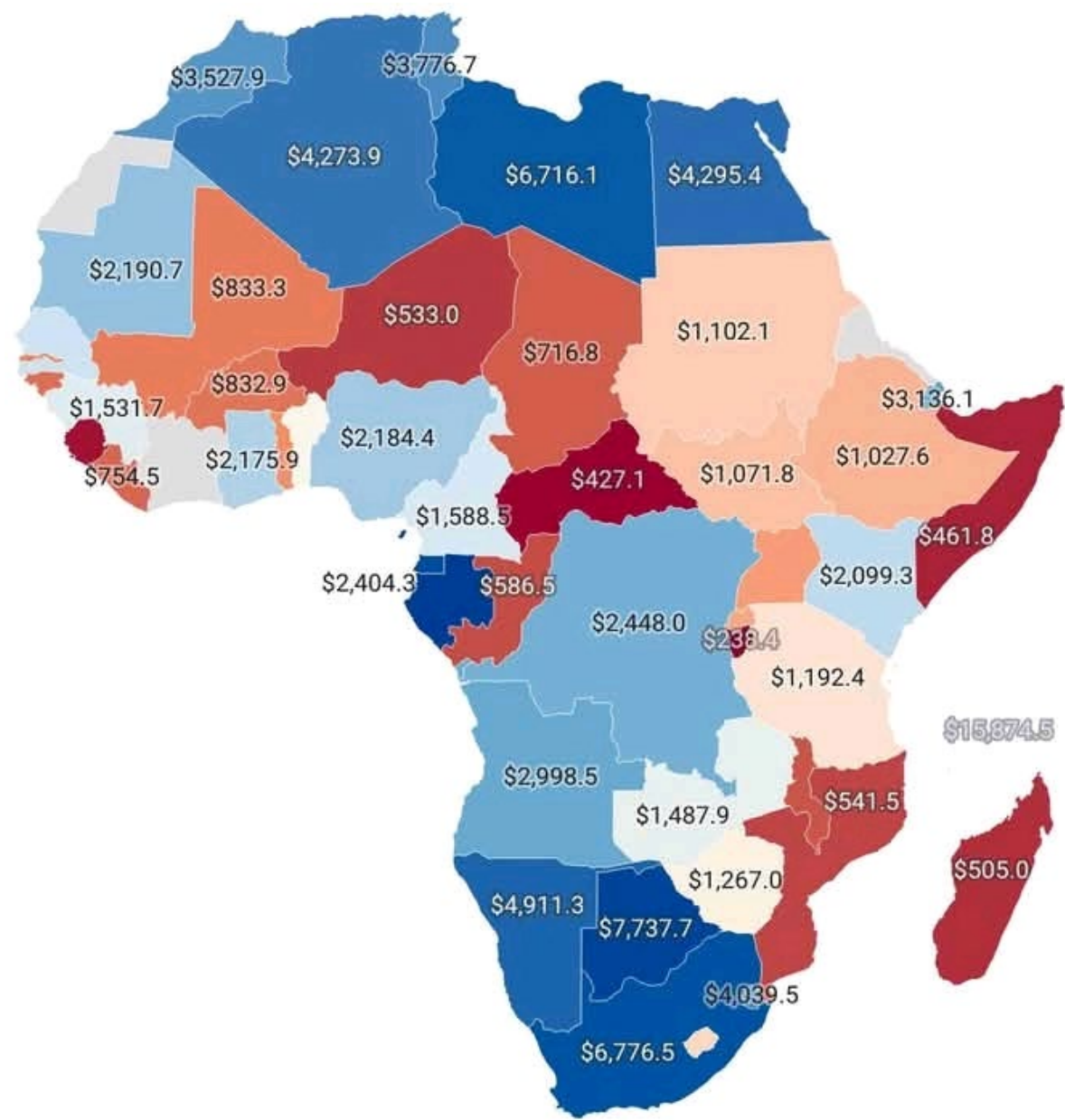
Economic Situation in Africa

- Shapes the way we live and look at the future—with hope or despair
- The African economy **in general** faces many challenges, some arising from within but also those from outside
- However, the continent has several emerging opportunities to strengthen and sustain economic growth, as a foundation for improving the well-being of all people
- In order to take advantage of the emerging economic opportunities and overcome the current socioeconomic challenges, the continent needs leaders with vision and a strong belief and commitment to the idea that the continent can do better
- Improving the well-being of peoples of Africa will require African leaders to work and walk together to ensure that the continent's massive resources are used in a fair and sustainable way—this is why synodality comes.

GDP Per Capita and GDP Growth Rate 1996-2028



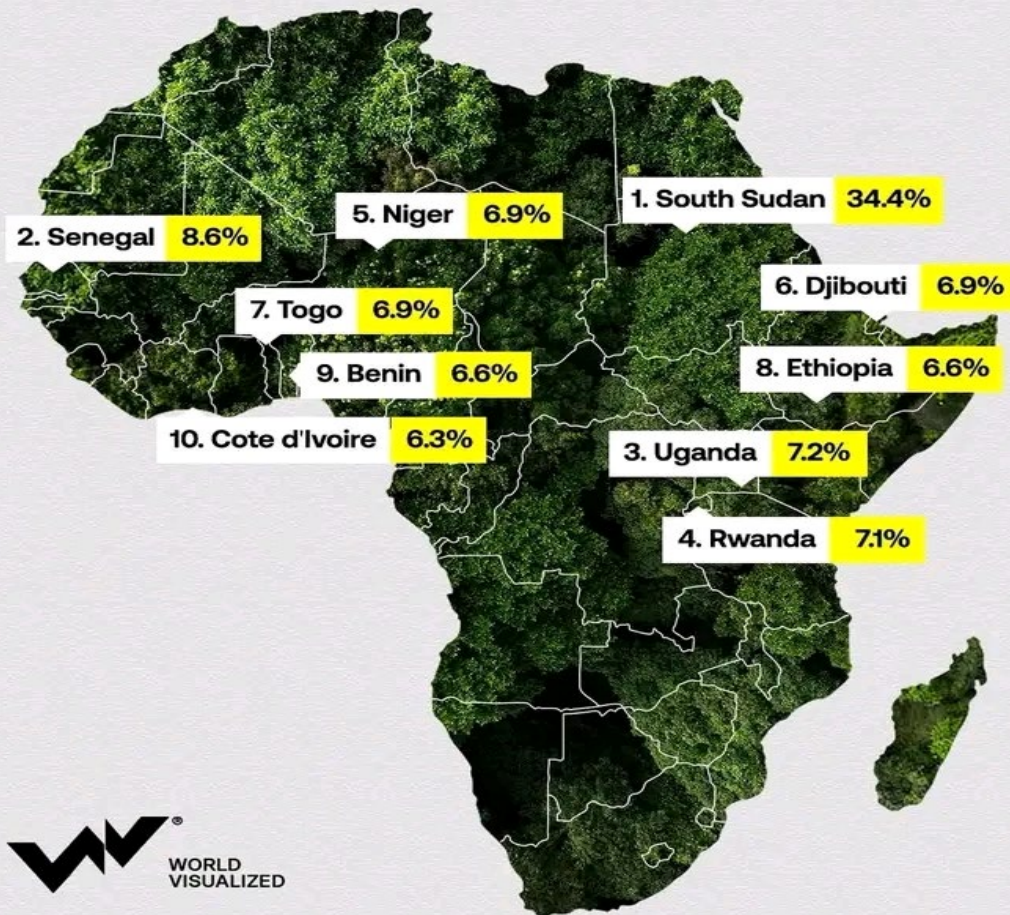
GDP Per Capita by Country



Fastest Growing Economies in Africa and World

FASTEST GROWING ECONOMIES IN AFRICA

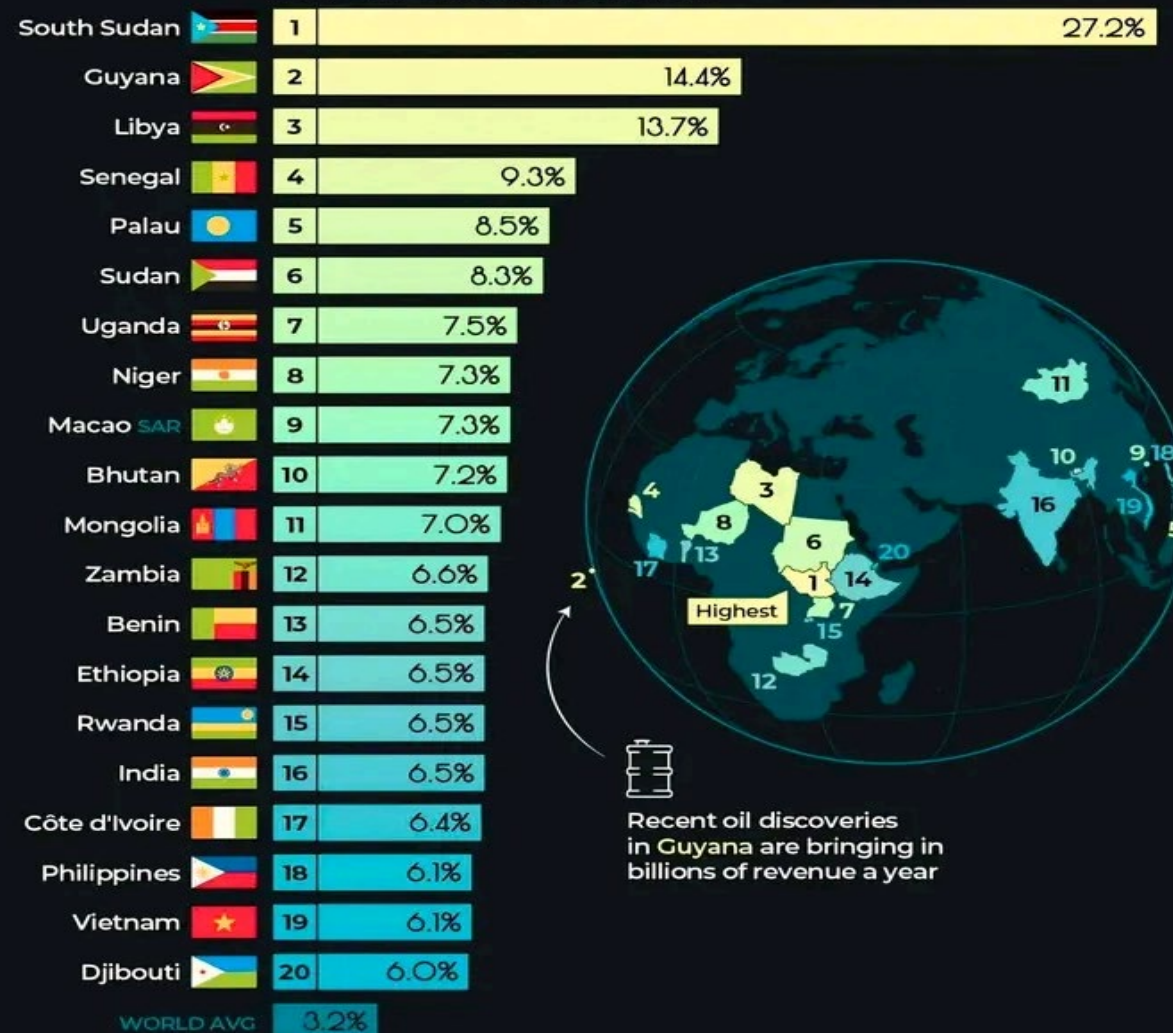
(2025 - 2026 projections)



Fastest Growing Economies

in 2025

Real GDP Growth Projections



Economic Challenges

Economic growth is not inclusive, leading to rising Inequality

African Economies not generating enough real jobs to match the growing labour force

Rising unemployment/underemployment

Large informal economy activities

Large proportion of working poor

stubbornly high poverty rates

High Sovereign Debt Obligations

Negative effects of climate change

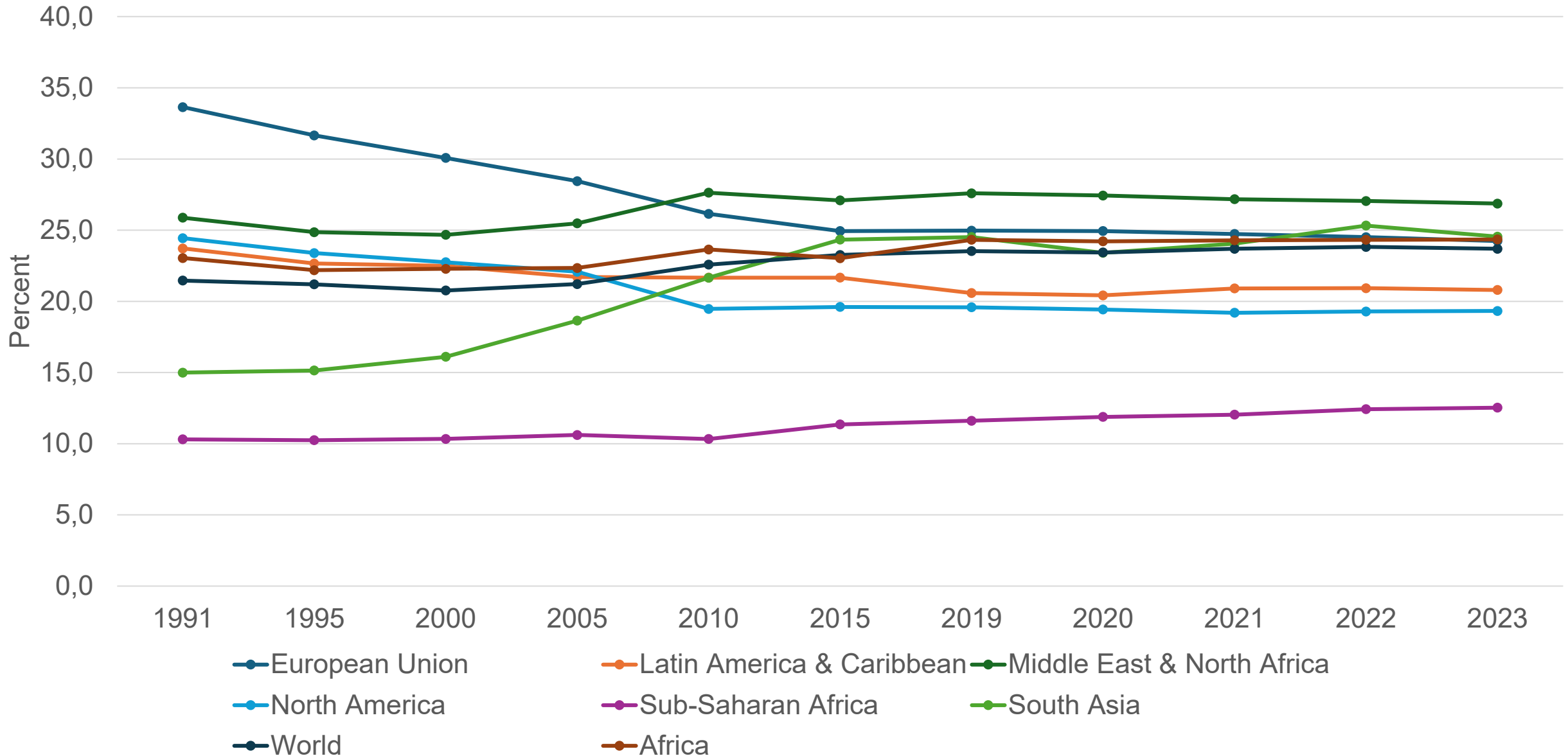


- 10-12 million join the labour force every year, only 3.5 million jobs created (ILO, 2017; AfDB, 2017) = EC ratio 1: 3.4
- “The lack of productive and decent jobs remains the **largest labour market challenge for young people** in Sub-Saharan Africa. ”
- Africa clearly “off track” to meet its SDG 8 commitment (Decent Jobs)

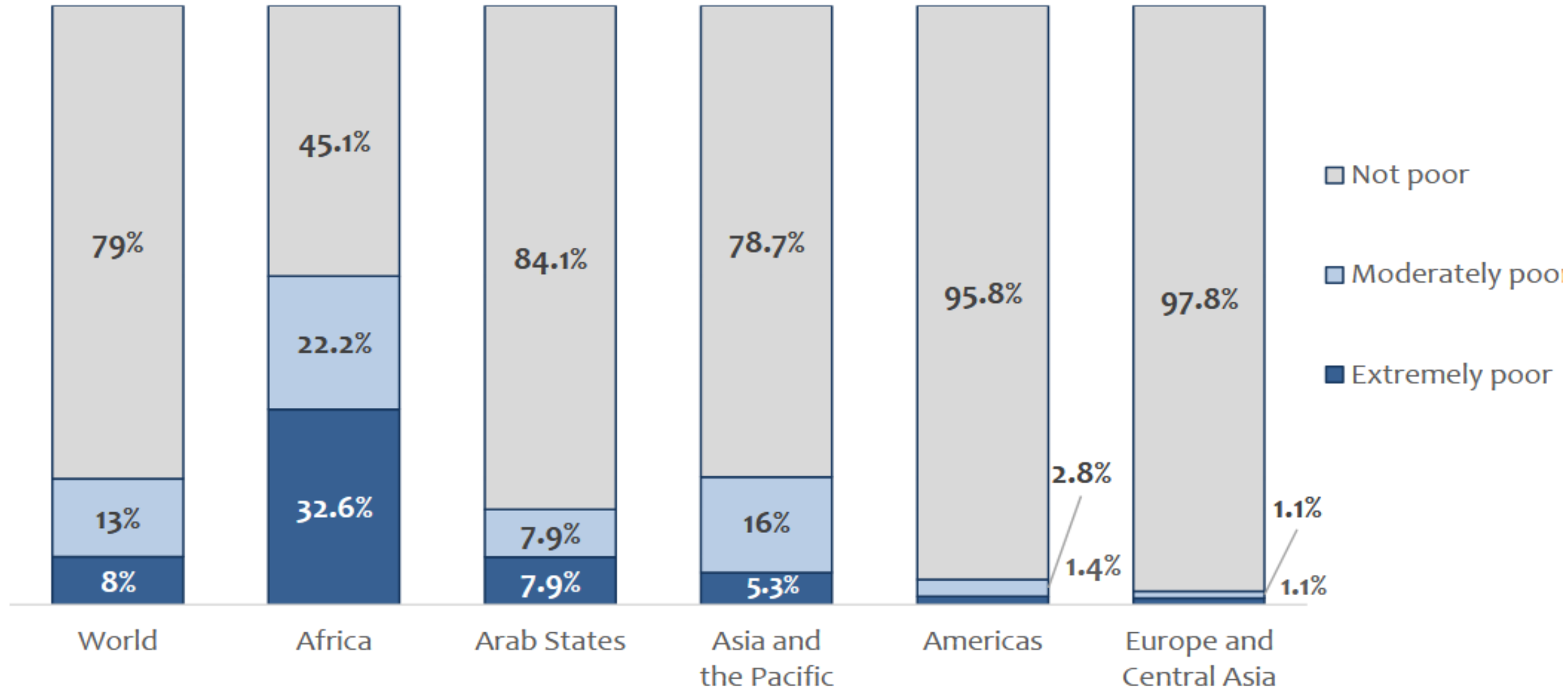
The African Employment Crunch

Sector-specific reforms focusing on **labor-intensive** sectors such as **agribusiness**, **construction**, and **micro-enterprises**, targeted support for vulnerable regions, **regional trade integration** can help develop **manufacturing activities** to boost economic diversification, **crucial to spark rapid job creation**

Employment in Industry by Region



Working Poor by Region 2018

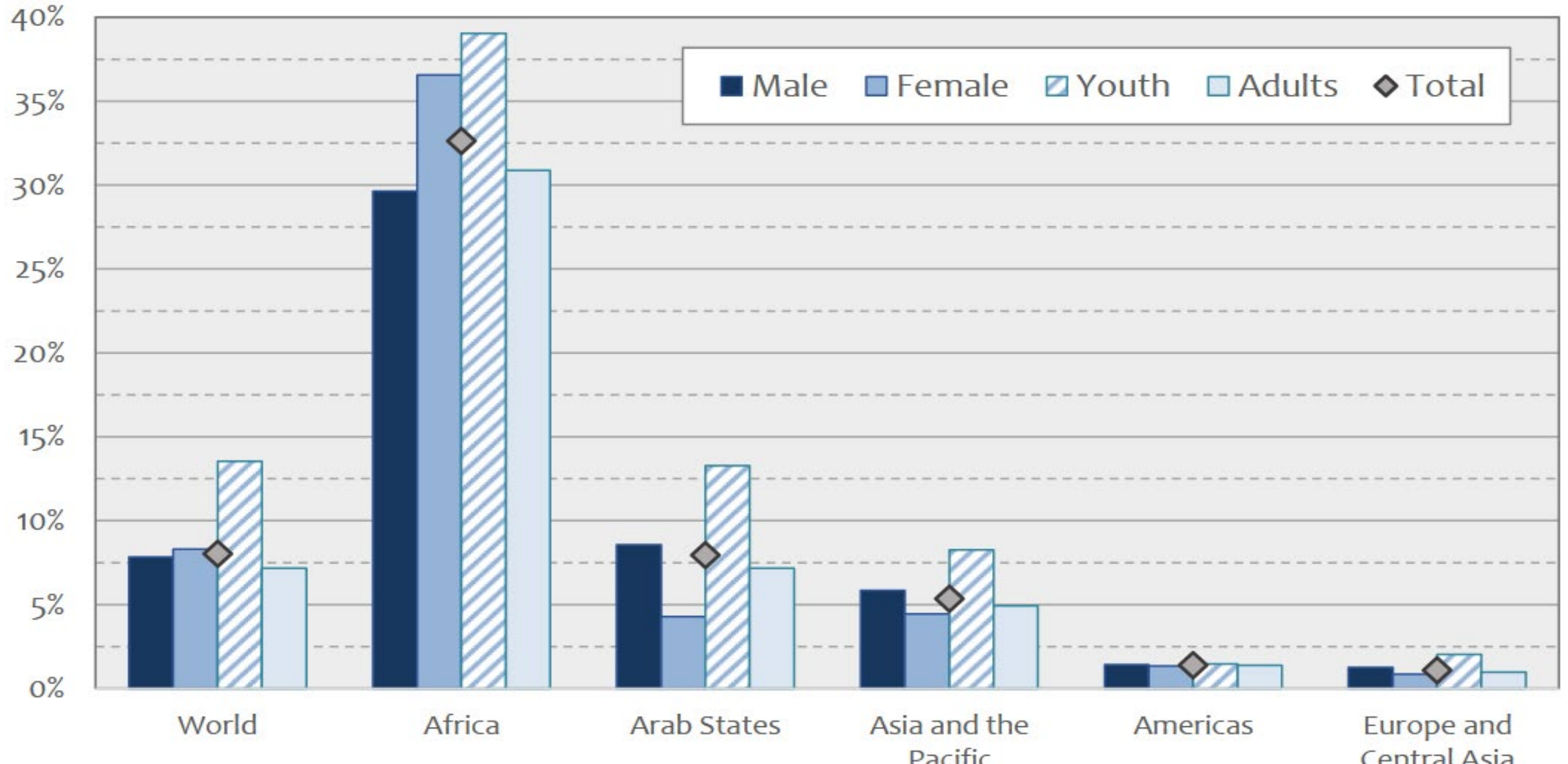


Working Poor, Selected African Countries

<u>Country</u>	<u>Working poor @ US\$1 (%)</u>	<u>Working poor @US\$2 (%)</u>
Botswana	47.4	82.6
Burundi	63.1	95.0
Central African Republic	80.8	94.4
Ghana	54.8	89.7
Lesotho	63.4	87.7
Madagascar	73.6	94.4
Malawi	49.4	89.9
Mali	82.8	95.0
Mozambique	44.4	90.9
Namibia	58.2	83.1
Niger	74.1	95.0
Nigeria	79.9	94.5
Uganda	89.0	95.0
Zambia	79.9	95.0
Zimbabwe	67.3	91.5



Working Poor by Gender and Age, by Region

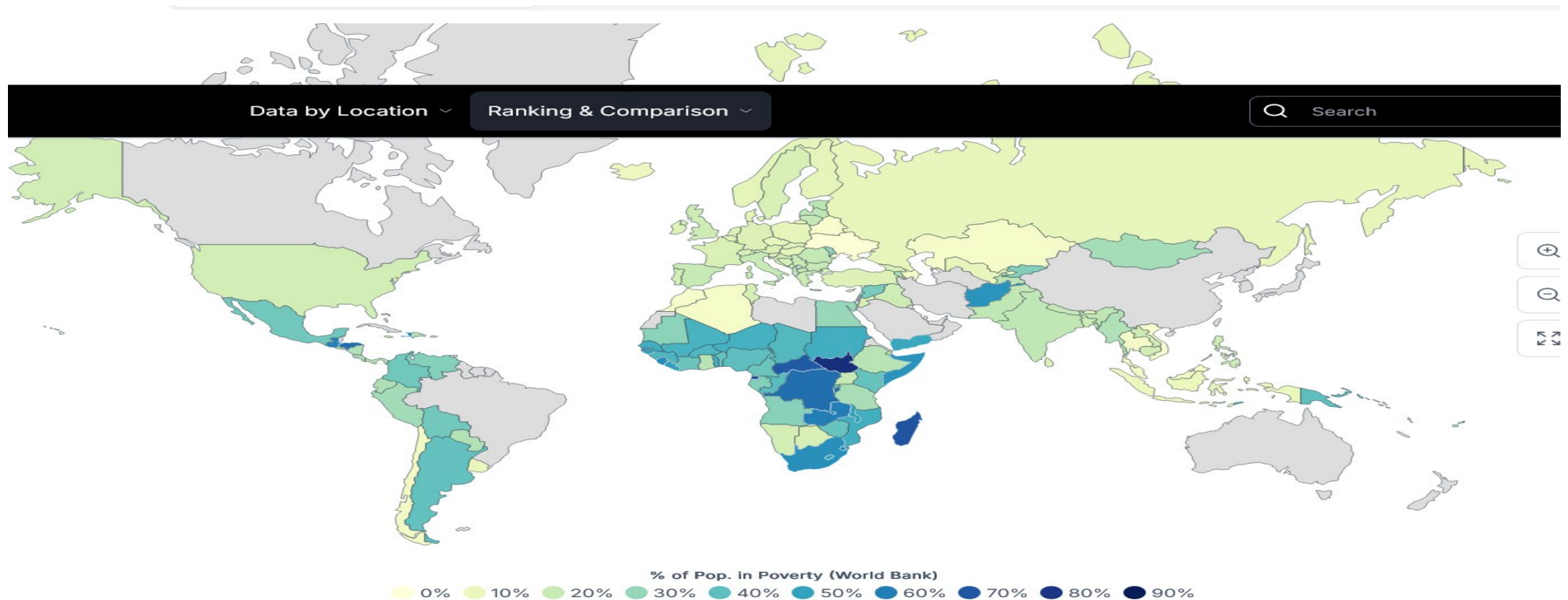


Poverty Headcount Trends By Region (% @1.90/day/capita)

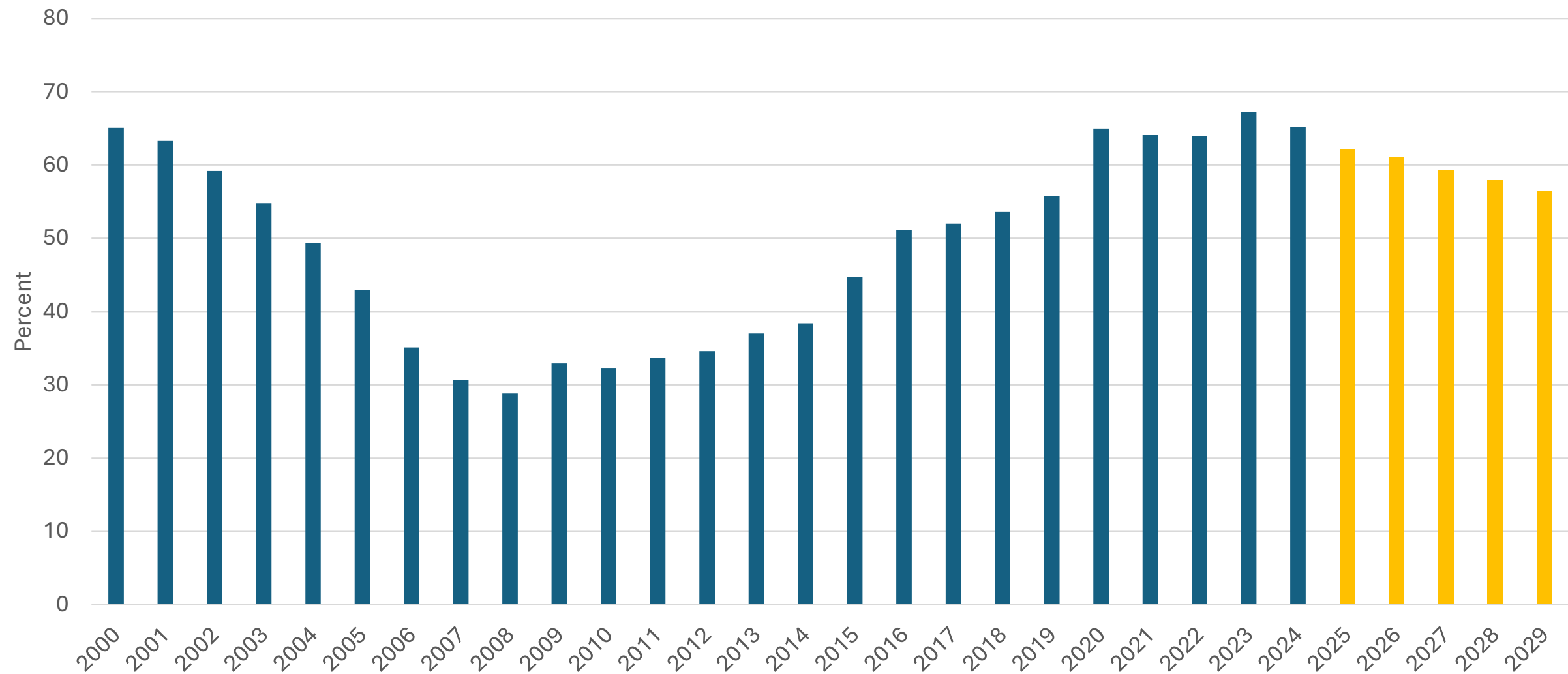
	1990	1993	1996	1999	2002	2005	2008	2011	2015
East Asia & Pacific	57	51.7	38.3	35.9	27.3	16.7	13.7	7.9	4.1
Europe & Central Asia	1.5	2.9	4.3	3.8	2.1	1.3	0.5	0.5	0.3
Latin America & Caribbean	12.2	11.9	10.5	11	10.2	7.3	5.4	4.6	4.3
Middle East & N. Africa	5.8	5.3	4.8	4.8	3.8	3	2.1	1.7	2
South Asia	54.1	52.1	48.6	45	44.1	38.3	34.1	24.5	18.1
Sub-Saharan Africa	56.6	60.9	59.7	59.3	57.1	52.8	49.7	46.8	40.9
World	36.4	35.1	30.4	29.1	26.1	21.1	18.6	14.5	11.5

Poverty Rates by Country 2025

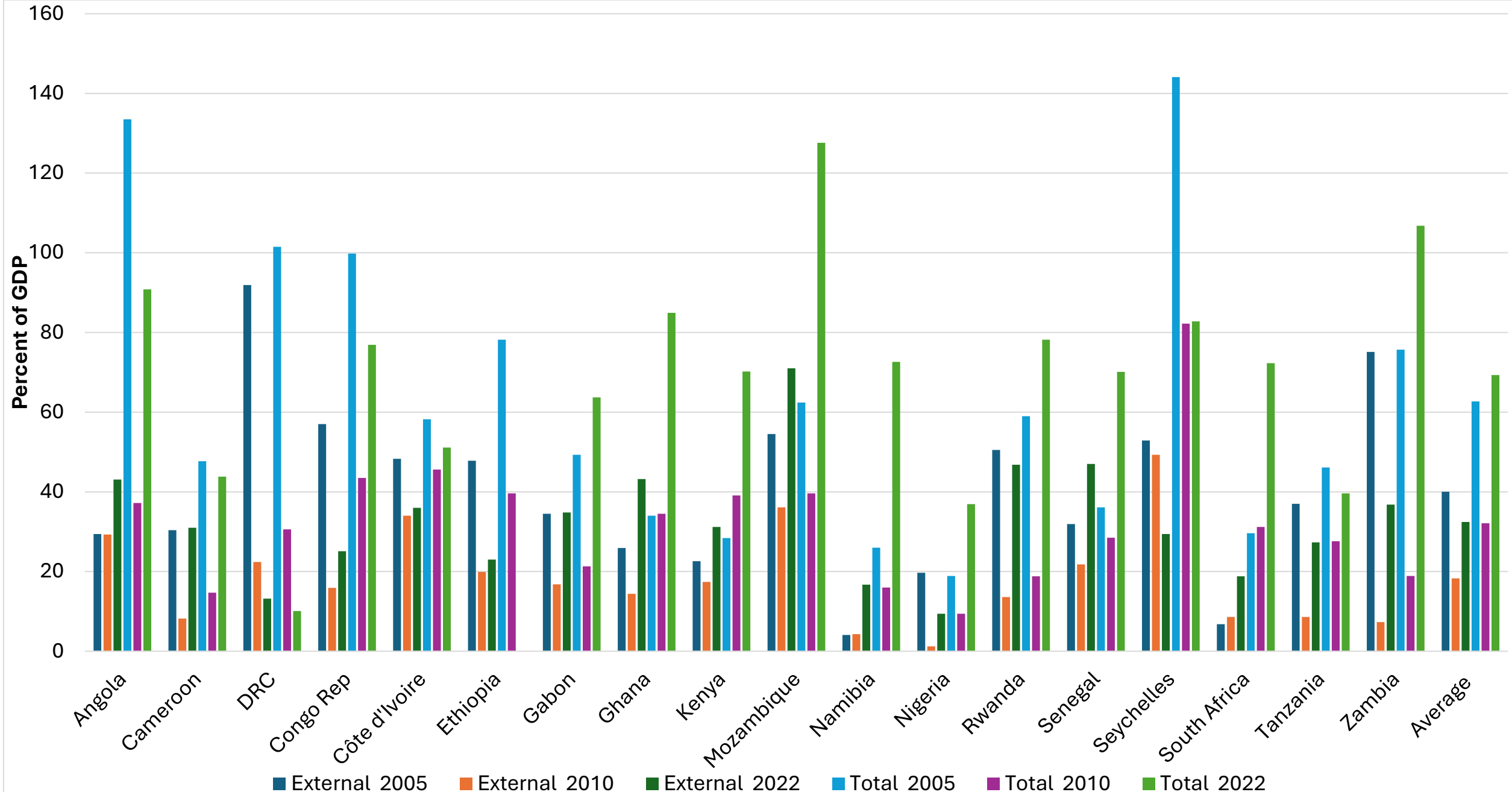
<https://worldpopulationreview.com/country-rankings/poverty-rate-by-country>



General government gross debt (Percent of GDP)



Public Debt to GDP Ratio, Selected Countries



Opportunities

1. Africa's youthful population: **youngest continent** on the planet
2. Africa's natural capital: **The Critical Energy Transition resources**
3. **Rapidly Urbanisation population** bring potential for transformation
4. Deepening regional integration: **the AFCFTA Factor**



Land, Water, Minerals & Biodiversity





AFRICAN CONTINENTAL FREE TRADE AREA CREATING ONE AFRICAN MARKET

#AfCFTA2018 | 17-21 March 2018 | Kigali, Rwanda



AU MEMBER STATES HAVE
SIGNED THE AfCFTA AGREEMENT
AS OF APRIL 2023



STATE PARTIES AS OF APRIL 2023



PEOPLE WILL POTENTIALLY BE
LIFTED OUT OF EXTREME POVERTY



INCOME BOOST IN AFRICA
BY 2035: **A 7% GAIN**

African
Continental
Free Trade Area



Adding Value to Africa's Natural Capital



Adding Value to Africa's Export



Conclusion

- The African continent still **faces many economic challenges** including: lack of capacity to create employment for the growing labour force; high proportion of working power, persistently high rates of poverty; rising inequality and climate related risks.
- Rising **geopolitical and geoeconomic tensions and shifts** may induce negative impact on the continent's economic situation
- These challenges have various **socioeconomic impact** on people
- But there are also **emerging opportunities** for the continent to address these challenges: A young population, abundant natural resources, growing urban population, potential for deeper regional integration—AFCFTA.
- Taking advantage of the emerging opportunities require the **solidarity of African people** and governments.



Jubilee of Hope: From the Bible to the life of the Church

Sr. Anne Arabome, SSS

[click for French](#)

[click for Portuguese](#)

Abstract:

In my presentation, I will reflect on the theme of hope in the context of the Jubilee Year, drawing from Scripture, Pope Francis's reflections, and the lived experiences of African religious women. In particular, I will examine hope as a gift rather than something we create ourselves, a virtue that sustains our faith and ministry, and a grace that calls for trust, resilience, and perseverance amid uncertainty and challenges. My talk will include questions for reflection, inviting participants to engage deeply with how hope strengthens their vocations and ministries. As pilgrims, we recognize that hope is not passive; it is alive.

"Everyone knows what it is to hope. In the heart of each person, hope dwells as the desire and expectation of good things to come, despite our not knowing what the future may bring." (1).

With these words, our beloved Pope Francis begins his letter on hope, which he titled "*Spes non confudit*," from Saint Paul's letter to the Romans, chapter 5, verse 5.

I wrote this talk before the passing to eternal life of Pope Francis. It was his reflections on hope that inspired my thinking and reflection in preparing this talk. May the Spirit of the Risen Christ that he embodied continue to animate us with joy, mercy, and hope. Let's take a minute to pause and remember the gift that Francis was to the Church and to the world....

To me, and perhaps to you as well, it may sound ironic that I am giving this presentation on hope – the Jubilee of Hope. Who among us does not know the meaning of hope? Who among us has not experienced the awesome power of hope? Who among us is encountering this reality called hope for the first time? To repeat the words of Pope Francis, "everyone knows what it is to hope."

So, what is it to hope? Have you ever thought of this question? What does the Jubilee of Hope call us to as religious, particularly as religious from Africa? I believe that Pope Francis gives us the most profound way not only of understanding hope but also, and more importantly, living in hope. Someone recently described Pope Francis as "the modern prophet of hope." For that reason, as I said, I will be drawing inspiration from his teaching on hope.

I will structure my reflection into four parts or themes:

 Hope is a Gift



-  Hope is Faith in Action
-  Hope is the Foundation of Religious Vocation
-  Hope is a Pilgrimage

Hope is a Gift

For me, I see hope as a gift and a power bestowed on us. We don't manufacture it; we don't own it; it is given to us to hope. As a gift and as a power, hope represents that interior capacity for us to keep believing and moving forward when everything around us seems uncertain and tells us it is not worth it. We may not know what lies ahead or around the corner, but something tells us not to give up. That 'something' is hope; that 'something' is the conviction that God is preparing something good for us. We may not see it, or as Paul says in 1 Corinthians 13:12, we may only see it darkly; but we don't give up. We hold on. I remember when Pope Francis spoke to the entire world during the Coronavirus crisis and the pandemic in March 2020. He evoked the power of hope. He linked hope with Jesus Christ. He said:

We have an anchor: by his cross we have been saved. We have a rudder: by his cross we have been redeemed. We have a hope: by his cross we have been healed and embraced so that nothing and no one can separate us from his redeeming love.... Let us not quench the wavering flame (cf. Is 42:3) that never falters, and let us allow hope to be rekindled.... By his cross we have been saved in order to embrace hope and let it strengthen and sustain all measures and all possible avenues for helping us protect ourselves and others. Embracing the Lord in order to embrace hope: that is the strength of faith, which frees us from fear and gives us hope.

What I find particularly significant here is that Pope Francis associates hope with the cross. I think this is important for many reasons. First, it reminds us that hope is not cheap: it calls for sacrifice. Second, hope is a gift from the Risen Christ. And, third, like the death of Jesus, even when we do not see the resurrection, we know that God is faithful. But Paul also tells us that hope grows through struggle. He explains that suffering produces endurance, endurance builds character, and character leads to hope.

Let's stop and think about that for a moment: hope does not take away suffering. Rather, hope transforms our suffering. It gives meaning to endurance, strengthens character, and deepens faith. That is why it is possible to go through a difficult experience and come out feeling stronger and with a new courage through the valley of the shadow of pain, suffering, and death. That is hope in action. In this sense I find it interesting that Pope Francis thinks that the best witnesses and examples of hope are martyrs. Because, as he says in his letter, "Steadfast in their faith in the risen Christ, they renounced life itself here below, rather than betray their Lord" (20).

I would like to pause and invite you to spend some time in quiet reflection on these questions:

- ✚ As a religious, when in your life has hope carried you through a difficult time in your vocation or in your ministry? How did you recognize hope, and what helped you hold onto it?
- ✚ How have you been a source of hope for others, especially members of your community as they faced challenges and uncertainty?

Would anybody like to share with us briefly the outcome of your reflection?

Hope is Faith in Action

To continue this presentation, another thing that we discover about hope is that is not passive. We don't simply wait and hope for things to get better. Hope is actually active, because it is that interior reserve of strength or resilience or perseverance when we are tempted to despair. If we recall the message of Pope Francis during covid-19 we realize that hope is alive, because Christ is our hope. It is Christ who offers us the promise that all will be well, a promise from God, revealed through Jesus Christ, sustained by the Holy Spirit. This is a hope that never fails, never disappoints. To quote the full text of Saint Paul in Romans 5, *"Hope does not disappoint, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit."*

I want to come back to the core of my message: hope is not something we earn. We cannot manufacture it. Hope is a gift. It is grace that only God can give us. But it is not given alone. It is given with the gift of faith: if we don't trust, we cannot hope. Saint Augustine, one of the great teachers of the Church, reminds us of this compelling truth: *"Faith, hope, and love are woven together. You cannot live without them."* It is that simple. If we don't have faith in something bigger than us, we cannot move forward. As someone put it, "hope requires faith and charity before it can come alive."

The reason why I keep insisting on hope as a gift is to stress the fact that it is not given to us to hoard, hide, or hold. It is a gift to be shared. We don't own it, we are given it to share, especially in those moments of despair in our world. It is not meant to stay inside us; it is meant to be shared, to be lived, to be embodied in our words and actions. Hope is contagious. In that sense you could say that hope is a missionary virtue. But let's not forget: we cannot give what we don't have. So, think about those moments or places where hope is needed not only in our world, but, perhaps, in your own life?

Let's pause and reflect for a moment....

- ✚ Where do you need hope in your life today?
- ✚ As a religious where do you feel uncertainty?
- ✚ Where do you feel that your trust is fading? Where do you need the Risen Christ to be the anchor of your life?

Pause and reflect for a moment and share your thoughts if you feel moved by the Spirit....

Hope is the Foundation of Religious Vocation

As I think about it, especially as African religious, hope is the foundation of our vocation. I know this may surprise some of you who are thinking “Shouldn’t love be the foundation of our vocation?” Or, “Shouldn’t faith be the foundation of our vocation.” Of course, love and faith are important; I don’t deny that. But think of the work that we do as religious in Africa and all the ministries that we engage in: the challenges, the difficulty, and the uncertainty associated with our ministries ... of caring for the sick in hospitals and clinics, sometimes in rural areas, where we struggle to find medicine, equipment, and well-trained doctors and nurses; educating children in schools, sometimes in remote villages or refugee camps, without classrooms, school materials, and trained teachers; supporting the poor and the marginalized who depend on us for everything, when we ourselves do not have enough to offer.... Hope is about these situations. It takes the gift of hope to trust in faith and the gift of hope to act in love. Pope Francis calls these “signs of hope” in his letter on hope. That is why Pope Francis reminds us that we can’t separate faith, hope, and love. He says “Hope, together with faith and charity, makes up the triptych of the ‘theological virtues’ that express the heart of the Christian.” What he is saying is that faith, hope, and charity are like an African three-legged stool. It is never balanced without all three legs.

Across Africa, as religious, we serve in communities facing poverty, social crises, and limited resources. Yet we hold onto hope, believing that our faith and service will bring transformation, change, and healing. That is why I said hope is a gift from God. It is the foundation of our strength; hope sustains our mission; hope guides our footsteps every day.

Hope is a Pilgrimage

Speaking of footsteps, Pope Francis associates hope with pilgrimage. This image of hope as a pilgrimage contains some deep lessons on the meaning of hope. Think about it: a pilgrimage is a journey that we make over time and for a purpose. So, we need preparation and we need patience. We don’t get to our destination instantaneously. It requires patience, time, and effort to get to our destination. This requires trust and perseverance even when the path ahead is unclear. Ultimately, our journey transforms us. We don’t return the same or to the same self. I believe that as an experience of pilgrimage, hope reminds us that God’s plan unfolds in God’s time, not ours. We may not yet see the full picture, but we know that God is faithful. This Jubilee Year reminds us that hope leads to renewal, to conversion, to transformation. Like pilgrims, we are traveling toward a sacred place, we carry hope within us or, rather, hope carries us. For us to reach our destination, we need the interior space of silence where we can encounter the presence of God who never leaves or abandons us.

At the end of his letter, Pope Francis quotes a text from Hebrews: “May we who have taken refuge in Christ be strongly encouraged to seize the hope set before us. We have this hope, a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul, a hope that enters the inner shrine behind the curtain, where Jesus, a forerunner on our behalf, has entered” (Heb 6:18-20). Pope Francis comments on this text, saying “The image of the anchor is eloquent; it helps us to recognize the stability and security that is ours amid the troubled waters of this life, provided we entrust ourselves to the Lord Jesus.” (25). This is a good place to end this brief reflection.

So, to conclude, I invite you again to spend some time in quiet reflection:

- + What gives you stability and security to continue in your journey as a religious?
- + What is the source of your hope as you journey through life as a religious?

Spend some time reflecting on these questions, and share your thoughts as the Spirit moves you....

Finally, I would like to invite you to join me in reciting this **Anthem of Hope**, inspired by the letter of Pope Francis on hope. Let's take turns reciting each line. Please pause after each phrase or sentence:

- + Hope does not disappoint
- + Hope dwells in the signs of the times that the Risen Christ gives us
- + Hope is a sign of our desire for peace in our world
- + Hope shapes our vision for the future with enthusiasm for life and a readiness to share it
- + Hope dwells in our hearts as the desire and expectation of good things to come, despite our not knowing what the future may bring
- + Hope is born of love and based on the love springing from the pierced heart of Jesus upon the cross
- + At the center of our hope is Jesus Christ
- + Hope is the constant companion that guides our steps towards the goal of our encounter with the Lord Jesus
- + Hope gives inward direction and purpose to our life of faith
- + Hope finds its supreme witness in Mary, the Mother of God, and our mother
- + We are pilgrims of hope, walking together toward the promises of God

Ending (Together)

As bearers of hope, may we now be drawn to this hope! Through our witness, may hope spread to all those who anxiously seek it.... May the power of hope fill our days, as we await with confidence the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and glory, now and forever.

Amen!

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Jubileu da Esperança: Da Bíblia à vida da Igreja

Ir. Anne Arabome, SSS

Resumo

Na minha apresentação, refletirei sobre o tema da esperança no contexto do Ano Jubilar, com base nas Escrituras, nas reflexões do Papa Francisco e nas experiências vividas por religiosas africanas. Em particular, examinarei a esperança como um dom, e não como algo que criamos nós mesmos, uma virtude que sustenta nossa fé e ministério, e uma graça que exige confiança, resiliência e perseverança em meio à incerteza e aos desafios. Minha palestra incluirá perguntas para reflexão, convidando os participantes a se envolverem profundamente com a forma como a esperança fortalece suas vocações e ministérios. Como peregrinos, reconhecemos que a esperança não é passiva; ela é viva.

“Todos sabem o que é ter esperança. No coração de cada um, a esperança habita como desejo e expectativa de coisas boas que virão, apesar de não sabermos o que o futuro nos reserva.” (1).

Com estas palavras, o nosso amado Papa Francisco inicia a sua carta sobre a esperança, que intitulou “*Spes non confudit*”, da Carta de São Paulo aos Romanos, capítulo 5, versículo 5.

Escrevi esta palestra antes da passagem do Papa Francisco para a vida eterna. Foram suas reflexões sobre a esperança que inspiraram meu pensamento e minha reflexão na preparação desta palestra. Que o Espírito de Cristo Ressuscitado, que ele encarnou, continue a nos animar com alegria, misericórdia e esperança. Vamos parar um minuto para refletir e recordar o presente que Francisco foi para a Igreja e para o mundo...

Para mim, e talvez para você também, pode parecer irônico que eu esteja fazendo esta apresentação sobre esperança – o Jubileu da Esperança. Quem entre nós não conhece o significado da esperança? Quem entre nós não experimentou o incrível poder da esperança? Quem entre nós está encontrando esta realidade chamada esperança pela primeira vez? Para repetir as palavras do Papa Francisco: “todos sabem o que é ter esperança”.

Então, o que é ter esperança? Você já pensou nesta pergunta? A que o Jubileu da Esperança nos convoca como religiosos, particularmente como religiosos da África? Acredito que o Papa Francisco nos oferece o caminho mais profundo não apenas para compreender a esperança, mas também, e mais importante, para viver a esperança. Alguém recentemente descreveu o Papa

Francisco como "o profeta moderno da esperança". Por essa razão, como eu disse, vou me inspirar em seus ensinamentos sobre a esperança.

Estruturarei minha reflexão em quatro partes ou temas:

-  A esperança é um dom
-  A esperança é a fé em ação
-  A esperança é o fundamento da vocação religiosa
-  A esperança é uma peregrinação



A esperança é um presente

Para mim, vejo a esperança como um presente e um poder que nos foi concedido. Não a fabricamos; não a possuímos; ela nos é dada para termos esperança. Como presente e como poder, a esperança representa aquela capacidade interior de continuarmos acreditando e seguindo em frente quando tudo ao nosso redor parece incerto e nos diz que não vale a pena. Podemos não saber o que nos espera à frente ou ao virar da esquina, mas algo nos diz para não desistir. Esse "algo" é a esperança; esse "algo" é a convicção de que Deus está preparando algo bom para nós. Podemos não ver isso, ou como Paulo diz em 1 Coríntios 13:12, podemos apenas ver isso de forma obscura; mas não desistimos. Nós perseveramos. Lembro-me de quando o Papa Francisco falou ao mundo inteiro durante a crise do Coronavírus e a pandemia em março de 2020. Ele evocou o poder da esperança. Ele vinculou a esperança a Jesus Cristo. Ele disse:

Temos uma âncora: pela sua cruz fomos salvos. Temos um leme: pela sua cruz fomos redimidos. Temos uma esperança: pela sua cruz fomos curados e abraçados, para que nada nem ninguém nos possa separar do seu amor redentor... Não apaguemos a chama vacilante (cf. Is 42, 3) que nunca se apaga, e deixemos que a esperança se reacenda... Pela sua cruz fomos salvos para abraçar a esperança e deixar que ela fortaleça e sustente todas as medidas e todos os caminhos possíveis para nos ajudar a proteger-nos a nós mesmos e aos outros. Abraçar o Senhor para abraçar a esperança: esta é a força da fé, que nos liberta do medo e nos dá esperança.

O que considero particularmente significativo aqui é que o Papa Francisco associa a esperança à cruz. Acredito que isso seja importante por muitas razões. Primeiro, nos lembra que a esperança não é barata: ela exige sacrifício. Segundo, a esperança é um dom de Cristo Ressuscitado. E, terceiro, como a morte de Jesus, mesmo quando não vemos a ressurreição, sabemos que Deus é

fiel. Mas Paulo também nos diz que a esperança cresce através da luta. Ele explica que o sofrimento produz perseverança, a perseverança constrói o caráter e o caráter leva à esperança.

Vamos parar e pensar nisso por um momento: a esperança não elimina o sofrimento. Pelo contrário, a esperança transforma o nosso sofrimento. Ela dá sentido à perseverança, fortalece o caráter e aprofunda a fé. É por isso que é possível passar por uma experiência difícil e sair dela sentindo-se mais forte e com uma nova coragem através do vale da sombra da dor, do sofrimento e da morte. Isso é esperança em ação. Nesse sentido, acho interessante que o Papa Francisco pense que as melhores testemunhas e exemplos de esperança são os mártires. Porque, como ele diz na sua carta, “firmes na fé em Cristo ressuscitado, renunciaram à própria vida aqui na terra, em vez de trair o seu Senhor” (20).

Gostaria de fazer uma pausa e convidá-lo a refletir sobre estas questões:

 Como religioso(a), em que momento da sua vida a esperança o(a) ajudou a superar um momento difícil na sua vocação ou no seu ministério? Como você reconheceu a esperança e o que o(a) ajudou a mantê-la?

 Como você tem sido uma fonte de esperança para outros, especialmente para os membros da sua comunidade, enquanto enfrentavam desafios e incertezas?

Alguém gostaria de compartilhar conosco brevemente o resultado da sua reflexão?

Esperança é Fé em Ação

Para continuar esta apresentação, outra coisa que descobrimos sobre a esperança é que ela não é passiva. Não simplesmente esperamos e torcemos para que as coisas melhorem. A esperança é, na verdade, ativa, porque é aquela reserva interior de força, resiliência ou perseverança quando somos tentados ao desespero. Se recordarmos a mensagem do Papa Francisco durante a covid-19, percebemos que a esperança está viva, porque Cristo é a nossa esperança. É Cristo quem nos oferece a promessa de que tudo ficará bem, uma promessa de Deus, revelada por meio de Jesus Cristo, sustentada pelo Espírito Santo. Esta é uma esperança que nunca falha, nunca decepciona. Para citar o texto completo de São Paulo em Romanos 5: “A esperança não decepciona, porque o amor de Deus foi derramado em nossos corações pelo Espírito Santo”.

Quero voltar ao cerne da minha mensagem: a esperança não é algo que conquistamos. Não podemos fabricá-la. A esperança é um dom. É uma graça que só Deus pode nos dar. Mas não é dada sozinha. É dada com o dom da fé: se não confiarmos, não podemos ter esperança. Santo

Agostinho, um dos grandes mestres da Igreja, nos lembra desta verdade contundente: “Fé, esperança e amor estão entrelaçados. Não se pode viver sem eles.” É simples assim. Se não tivermos fé em algo maior do que nós, não podemos seguir em frente. Como alguém disse, “a esperança requer fé e caridade para poder se tornar viva”.

A razão pela qual continuo insistindo na esperança como um dom é para enfatizar o fato de que ela não nos é dada para acumular, esconder ou guardar. É um dom para ser compartilhado. Não a possuímos, ela nos é dada para compartilhar, especialmente nos momentos de desespero em nosso mundo. Ela não deve permanecer dentro de nós; deve ser compartilhada, vivida, incorporada em nossas palavras e ações. A esperança é contagiosa. Nesse sentido, pode-se dizer que a esperança é uma virtude missionária. Mas não nos esqueçamos: não podemos dar o que não temos. Então, pense naqueles momentos ou lugares em que a esperança é necessária não apenas em nosso mundo, mas, talvez, em sua própria vida.

Vamos parar e refletir por um momento...



✚ Onde você precisa de esperança em sua vida hoje?



✚ Como religioso, onde você sente incerteza?



✚ Onde você sente que sua confiança está diminuindo? Onde você precisa que Cristo Ressuscitado seja a âncora de sua vida?

Pare e reflita por um momento e compartilhe seus pensamentos se você se sentir movido pelo Espírito...

A esperança é o fundamento da vocação religiosa

Ao pensar nisso, especialmente como religiosos africanos, a esperança é o fundamento da nossa vocação. Sei que isso pode surpreender alguns de vocês que estão pensando: "O amor não deveria ser o fundamento da nossa vocação?" Ou: "A fé não deveria ser o fundamento da nossa vocação?". É claro que o amor e a fé são importantes; eu não nego isso. Mas pensem no trabalho que fazemos como religiosos na África e em todos os ministérios com os quais nos envolvemos: os desafios, as dificuldades e a incerteza associados aos nossos ministérios... de cuidar dos doentes em hospitais e clínicas, às vezes em áreas rurais, onde lutamos para encontrar medicamentos, equipamentos e médicos e enfermeiros bem treinados; educar crianças em escolas, às vezes em aldeias remotas ou campos de refugiados, sem salas de aula, materiais escolares e professores qualificados; apoiar os pobres e marginalizados que dependem de nós para tudo, quando nós mesmos não temos o

suficiente para oferecer... A esperança diz respeito a essas situações. É preciso o dom da esperança para confiar na fé e o dom da esperança para agir com amor. O Papa Francisco chama isso de "sinais de esperança" em sua carta sobre a esperança. É por isso que o Papa Francisco nos lembra que não podemos separar fé, esperança e amor. Ele diz: "A esperança, juntamente com a fé e a caridade, compõe o tríptico das 'virtudes teologais' que expressam o coração do cristão". O que ele está dizendo é que fé, esperança e caridade são como um banco africano de três pernas. Ele nunca se equilibra sem as três pernas.

Em toda a África, como religiosos, servimos em comunidades que enfrentam pobreza, crises sociais e recursos limitados. No entanto, nos apegamos à esperança, acreditando que nossa fé e serviço trarão transformação, mudança e cura. É por isso que eu disse que a esperança é um dom de Deus. É o fundamento da nossa força; a esperança sustenta nossa missão; a esperança guia nossos passos todos os dias.

A esperança é uma peregrinação

Falando em passos, o Papa Francisco associa esperança à peregrinação. Essa imagem da esperança como peregrinação contém algumas lições profundas sobre o significado da esperança. Pense nisso: uma peregrinação é uma jornada que fazemos ao longo do tempo e com um propósito. Portanto, precisamos de preparação e paciência. Não chegamos ao nosso destino instantaneamente. É preciso paciência, tempo e esforço para chegar ao nosso destino. Isso requer confiança e perseverança, mesmo quando o caminho à frente não é claro. Em última análise, nossa jornada nos transforma. Não retornamos os mesmos ou para o mesmo eu. Acredito que, como experiência de peregrinação, a esperança nos lembra que o plano de Deus se desenrola no tempo de Deus, não no nosso. Podemos ainda não ver o quadro completo, mas sabemos que Deus é fiel. Este Ano Jubilar nos lembra que a esperança leva à renovação, à conversão, à transformação. Como peregrinos, caminhamos em direção a um lugar sagrado, carregamos a esperança dentro de nós, ou melhor, a esperança nos carrega. Para chegarmos ao nosso destino, precisamos do espaço interior do silêncio, onde possamos encontrar a presença de Deus que nunca nos deixa nem nos abandona.

No final de sua carta, o Papa Francisco cita um texto de Hebreus: “Que nós, que nos refugiamos em Cristo, sejamos fortemente encorajados a agarrar a esperança que nos é proposta. Temos esta esperança, âncora segura e firme da alma, esperança que penetra no santuário interior, atrás do véu, onde Jesus, nosso precursor, entrou” (Hb 6,18-20). O Papa Francisco comenta este texto,

dizendo: “A imagem da âncora é eloquente; ela nos ajuda a reconhecer a estabilidade e a segurança que temos em meio às águas turbulentas desta vida, desde que nos confiemos ao Senhor Jesus” (25). Este é um bom lugar para encerrar esta breve reflexão.

Portanto, para concluir, convido vocês novamente a dedicarem um tempo de reflexão:

- ✚ O que lhes dá estabilidade e segurança para continuar sua jornada como religiosos?
- ✚ Qual é a fonte da sua esperança em sua jornada pela vida religiosa?

Dediquem algum tempo à reflexão sobre essas questões e compartilhem seus pensamentos conforme o Espírito os move...

Por fim, gostaria de convidá-los a se juntarem a mim na recitação deste Hino da Esperança, inspirado na carta do Papa Francisco sobre a esperança. Vamos nos revezar na recitação de cada verso. Por favor, façam uma pausa após cada frase ou sentença:

- ✚ A esperança não decepciona
- ✚ A esperança habita nos sinais dos tempos que Cristo Ressuscitado nos dá
- ✚ A esperança é um sinal do nosso desejo de paz no mundo
- ✚ A esperança molda a nossa visão de futuro com entusiasmo pela vida e prontidão para compartilhá-la
- ✚ A esperança habita em nossos corações como o desejo e a expectativa de coisas boas que virão, apesar de não sabermos o que o futuro nos reserva
- ✚ A esperança nasce do amor e se baseia no amor que brota do coração trespassado de Jesus na cruz

No centro da nossa esperança está Jesus Cristo

- ✚ A esperança é a companheira constante que guia os nossos passos em direção à meta do nosso encontro com o Senhor Jesus
- ✚ A esperança dá direção interior e propósito à nossa vida de fé
- ✚ A esperança encontra o seu testemunho supremo em Maria, a Mãe de Deus e nossa mãe
- ✚ Somos peregrinos da esperança, caminhando juntos em direção às promessas de Deus

Final (Juntos)



Como portadores de esperança, que agora sejamos atraídos por esta esperança! Através do nosso testemunho, que a esperança se espalhe a todos aqueles que a buscam ansiosamente... Que a força da esperança preencha os nossos dias, enquanto aguardamos com confiança a vinda do Senhor Jesus Cristo, a quem sejam o louvor e a glória, agora e para sempre.

Amém!

Jubilé d'espérance : De la Bible à la vie de l'Eglise **Sœur Anne Arabome, SSS**

Résumé :

Dans ma présentation, je réfléchirai sur le thème de l'espérance dans le contexte de l'année jubilaire, en m'appuyant sur l'Ecriture, les réflexions du Pape François et les expériences vécues par les femmes religieuses africaines. En particulier, j'examinerai l'espérance comme un don plutôt que comme quelque chose que nous créons nous-mêmes, une vertu qui soutient notre foi et notre ministère, et une grâce qui appelle à la confiance, à la résilience et à la persévérance dans l'incertitude et les défis. Mon exposé comprendra des questions de réflexion, invitant les participants à s'engager profondément dans la manière dont l'espérance renforce leurs vocations et leurs ministères. En tant que pèlerins, nous reconnaissons que l'espérance n'est pas passive ; elle est vivante.

« Tout le monde sait ce que c'est que d'espérer. Dans le cœur de chaque personne, l'espérance réside comme le désir et l'attente de bonnes choses à venir, même si nous ne savons pas ce que l'avenir nous réserve ». (1).

C'est par ces mots que notre bien-aimé pape François commence sa lettre sur l'espérance, qu'il a intitulée « Spes non confudit », tirée de la lettre de saint Paul aux Romains, chapitre 5, verset 5.

J'ai écrit cet exposé avant le passage à la vie éternelle du pape François. Ce sont ses réflexions sur l'espérance qui ont inspiré ma pensée et ma réflexion lors de la préparation de cette conférence. Que l'Esprit du Christ ressuscité qu'il a incarné continue à nous animer de joie, de miséricorde et d'espérance. Prenons une minute pour nous arrêter et nous souvenir du cadeau que François a fait à l'Eglise et au monde....

Pour moi, et peut-être pour vous aussi, il peut sembler ironique que je fasse cette présentation sur l'espérance - le Jubilé de l'espérance. Qui d'entre nous ne connaît pas la signification de l'espérance ? Qui d'entre nous n'a pas fait l'expérience du pouvoir impressionnant de l'espérance ? Qui d'entre nous rencontre pour la première fois cette

réalité qu'est l'espérance ? Pour reprendre les mots du pape François, « tout le monde sait ce que c'est que d'espérer ».

Alors, qu'est-ce qu'espérer ? Avez-vous déjà réfléchi à cette question ? À quoi le Jubilé de l'Espérance nous interpelle -t-elle en tant que religieux, en particulier en tant que religieux d'Afrique ? Je crois que le pape François nous donne la manière la plus profonde non seulement de comprendre l'espérance, mais aussi, et surtout, de vivre dans l'espérance. Quelqu'un a récemment décrit le pape François comme « le prophète moderne de l'espérance ». C'est pourquoi, comme je l'ai dit, je vais m'inspirer de son enseignement sur l'espérance.

Je structurerai ma réflexion en quatre parties ou thèmes :

-  L'espérance est un don
-  L'espérance est la foi en action
-  L'espérance est le fondement de la vocation religieuse
-  L'espérance est un pèlerinage

L'espérance est un don

Pour moi, l'espérance est un don et un pouvoir qui nous est accordé. Nous ne le fabriquons pas, nous ne le possédons pas, il nous est donné d'espérer. En tant que don et pouvoir, l'espérance représente cette capacité intérieure qui nous permet de continuer à croire et à aller de l'avant lorsque tout ce qui nous entoure semble incertain et nous dit que cela n'en vaut pas la peine. Nous ne savons peut-être pas ce qui nous attend ou ce qui se trouve au coin de la rue, mais quelque chose nous dit de ne pas abandonner. Ce « quelque chose », c'est l'espérance ; ce « quelque chose », c'est la conviction que Dieu nous prépare quelque chose de bon. Nous ne le voyons peut-être pas ou, comme le dit Paul dans 1 Corinthiens 13,12, nous ne le voyons qu'obscurément, mais nous n'abandonnons pas. Nous tenons bon. Je me souviens que le pape François s'est adressé au monde entier lors de la crise du coronavirus et de la pandémie en mars 2020. Il a évoqué le pouvoir de l'espérance. Il a fait le lien entre l'espérance et Jésus-Christ. Il a dit :

« Nous avons une ancre : c'est par sa croix que nous avons été sauvés. Nous avons un gouvernail : par sa croix, nous avons été rachetés. Nous avons une espérance : par sa croix, nous avons été guéris et embrassés afin que rien ni personne ne puisse nous séparer de son amour rédempteur.... N'éteignons pas la flamme vacillante (cf. Is 42,3) qui ne faiblit jamais, et permettons à l'espérance de se rallumer.... Par sa croix, nous avons été sauvés pour accueillir l'espérance et la laisser renforcer et soutenir toutes les mesures et tous les moyens possibles pour nous aider à nous protéger et à protéger les autres. Embrasser le Seigneur pour embrasser l'espérance : telle est la force de la foi, qui nous libère de la peur et nous donne l'espérance ».

Ce que je trouve particulièrement significatif ici, c'est que le pape François associe l'espérance à la croix. Je pense que c'est important pour de nombreuses raisons. Tout d'abord, cela nous rappelle que l'espérance n'est pas bon marché : elle exige des sacrifices. Deuxièmement, l'espérance est un don du Christ ressuscité. Et troisièmement, comme pour la mort de Jésus, même si nous ne voyons pas la résurrection, nous savons que Dieu est fidèle. Mais Paul nous dit aussi que l'espérance grandit à travers la lutte. Il explique que la souffrance produit l'endurance, que l'endurance forge le caractère et que le caractère mène à l'espérance.

Arrêtons-nous un instant sur ce point : l'espérance ne supprime pas la souffrance. Au contraire, l'espérance transforme notre souffrance. Elle donne un sens à l'endurance, renforce le caractère et approfondit la foi. C'est pourquoi il est possible de traverser une expérience difficile et d'en ressortir plus fort et avec un nouveau courage dans la vallée de l'ombre de la douleur, de la souffrance et de la mort. C'est l'espérance en action. En ce sens, je trouve intéressant que le pape François pense que les meilleurs témoins et exemples de l'espérance sont les martyrs. Car, comme il le dit dans sa lettre, « inébranlables dans leur foi au Christ ressuscité, ils ont renoncé à la vie même ici-bas, plutôt que de trahir leur Seigneur » (20).

Je voudrais faire une pause et vous inviter à réfléchir tranquillement à ces questions :

- ✚ En tant que religieux, quand, dans votre vie, l'espérance vous a-t-elle permis de traverser une période difficile dans votre vocation ou dans votre ministère ?
- ✚ Comment avez-vous reconnu l'espérance et qu'est-ce qui vous a aidé à vous y accrocher ?
- ✚ Comment avez-vous été une source d'espérance pour les autres, en particulier pour les membres de votre communauté, alors qu'ils étaient confrontés à des défis et à l'incertitude ?

Quelqu'un souhaiterait-il partager brièvement avec nous le résultat de sa réflexion ?

L'Espérance est la Foi en Action

Pour poursuivre cette présentation, une autre chose que nous découvrons à propos de l'espérance, c'est qu'elle n'est pas passive. Nous ne nous contentons pas d'attendre et d'espérer que les choses s'améliorent. L'espérance est en fait active, car elle est cette réserve intérieure de force, de résilience ou de persévérance lorsque nous sommes tentés de désespérer. Si nous nous rappelons le message du pape François lors de la covid-19, nous nous rendons compte que l'espérance est vivante, parce que le Christ est notre espérance. C'est le Christ qui nous offre la promesse que tout ira bien, une promesse de Dieu, révélée par Jésus-Christ, soutenue par l'Esprit Saint. C'est une espérance qui ne manque jamais, qui ne déçoit jamais. Pour citer le texte intégral de Saint Paul en Romains 5, « *L'espérance ne déçoit pas, parce que l'amour de Dieu a été répandu dans nos cœurs par l'Esprit Saint* ».

Je voudrais revenir au cœur de mon message : l'espérance ne se mérite pas. Nous ne pouvons pas la fabriquer. L'espérance est un don. C'est une grâce que seul Dieu peut nous donner. Mais elle n'est pas donnée seule. Elle est donnée avec le don de la foi : si nous n'avons pas confiance, nous ne pouvons pas espérer. Saint Augustin, l'un des grands maîtres de l'Église, nous rappelle cette vérité incontournable : *“La foi, l'espérance et l'amour sont tissés ensemble. On ne peut pas vivre sans eux”*. C'est aussi simple que cela. Si nous n'avons pas foi en quelque chose de plus grand que nous, nous ne pouvons pas aller de l'avant. Comme l'a dit quelqu'un, « l'espérance a besoin de la foi et de la charité pour prendre vie ».

Si j'insiste sur le fait que l'espérance est un cadeau, c'est pour souligner qu'il ne nous est pas donné pour que nous le thésaurisions, le cachions ou le retenions. C'est un cadeau à partager. Elle ne nous appartient pas, elle nous est donnée pour que nous le partagions, en particulier dans les moments de désespoir de notre monde. Elle n'est pas destinée à rester en nous ; Elle est destinée à être partagée, à être vécue, à être incarnée dans nos paroles et nos actions. L'Espérance est contagieuse. En ce sens, on pourrait dire que l'espérance est une vertu missionnaire. Mais n'oublions pas que nous ne pouvons pas donner ce que nous n'avons pas. Pensez donc à ces moments ou à ces lieux où l'espérance est nécessaire, non seulement dans notre monde, mais aussi, peut-être, dans votre propre vie.

Faisons une pause et réfléchissons un instant....

-  Où avez-vous besoin d'espérance dans votre vie aujourd'hui ?
-  En tant que religieux, où ressentez-vous de l'incertitude ?
-  Où avez-vous l'impression que votre confiance s'estompe ? Où avez-vous besoin que le Christ ressuscité soit l'ancre de votre vie ?

Faites une pause, réfléchissez un moment et partagez vos pensées si vous vous sentez poussé par l'Esprit....

L'Espérance est le fondement de la Vocation Religieuse

Quand j'y pense, surtout en tant que religieuse africaine, l'espérance est le fondement de notre vocation. Je sais que cela peut surprendre certains d'entre vous qui pensent : « L'amour ne devrait-il pas être le fondement de notre vocation ? » ou « La foi ne devrait-elle pas être le fondement de notre vocation ? ». Ou « La foi ne devrait-elle pas être le fondement de notre vocation ? ». Bien sûr, l'amour et la foi sont importants, je ne le nie pas. Mais pensez au travail que nous faisons en tant que religieux en Afrique et à tous les ministères dans lesquels nous nous engageons : les défis, les difficultés et l'incertitude associés à nos ministères ... soigner les malades dans les hôpitaux et les cliniques, parfois dans les zones rurales, où nous luttons pour trouver des médicaments, du matériel et des médecins et infirmières bien formés ; éduquer les enfants dans les écoles, parfois dans des villages isolés ou des camps de réfugiés, sans salles de classe, matériel scolaire et enseignants formés ; soutenir les pauvres et les marginalisés qui dépendent de nous pour tout, alors que nous n'avons pas nous-mêmes de quoi offrir..... L'espoir concerne ces

situations. Il faut le don de l'espérance pour faire confiance à la foi et le don de l'espérance pour agir dans l'amour. Le pape François appelle cela des « signes d'espérance » dans sa lettre sur l'espérance. C'est pourquoi le pape François nous rappelle que nous ne pouvons pas séparer la foi, l'espérance et l'amour. Il dit que « l'espérance, avec la foi et la charité, constitue le triptyque des “vertus théologiques” qui expriment le cœur du chrétien ». Ce qu'il dit, c'est que la foi, l'espérance et la charité sont comme un tabouret africain à trois pieds. Il n'est jamais équilibré sans les trois pieds.

Dans toute l'Afrique, en tant que religieux, nous servons des communautés confrontées à la pauvreté, à des crises sociales et à des ressources limitées. Pourtant, nous gardons l'espoir, persuadés que notre foi et notre service apporteront la transformation, le changement et la guérison. C'est pourquoi j'ai dit que l'espérance est un don de Dieu. C'est le fondement de notre force ; l'espérance soutient notre mission ; l'espérance guide nos pas chaque jour.

L'Espérance est un Pèlerinage

En parlant de pas, le pape François associe l'espérance au pèlerinage. Cette image de l'espérance comme pèlerinage contient quelques leçons profondes sur le sens de l'espérance. Pensez-y : un pèlerinage est un voyage que nous faisons dans le temps et dans un but précis. Nous avons donc besoin de préparation et de patience. Nous n'arrivons pas à notre destination instantanément. Il faut de la patience, du temps et des efforts pour arriver à destination. Cela demande de la confiance et de la persévérance, même lorsque le chemin à parcourir n'est pas clair.

En fin de compte, notre voyage nous transforme. Nous ne revenons pas les mêmes ou dans le même état. Je crois qu'en tant qu'expérience de pèlerinage, l'espérance nous rappelle que le plan de Dieu se déroule en son temps, pas au nôtre. Nous n'avons peut-être pas encore une vue d'ensemble, mais nous savons que Dieu est fidèle. Cette année jubilaire nous rappelle que l'espérance conduit au renouveau, à la conversion, à la transformation. Comme des pèlerins, nous voyageons vers un lieu sacré, nous portons l'espérance en nous ou, plutôt, l'espérance nous porte. Pour atteindre notre destination, nous avons besoin de l'espace intérieur du silence où nous pouvons rencontrer la présence de Dieu qui ne nous quitte jamais et ne nous abandonne jamais.

 Quelle est la source de votre espérance alors que vous traversez la vie en tant que religieux ?

Prenez le temps de réfléchir à ces questions et partagez vos réflexions au fur et à mesure que l'Esprit vous pousse....

Enfin, j'aimerais vous inviter à vous joindre à moi pour réciter cet **hymne à l'espérance**, inspiré de la lettre du pape François sur l'espérance. Récitons chaque ligne à tour de rôle. Veuillez faire une pause après chaque phrase :

 L'espérance ne déçoit pas

- ✚ L'espérance réside dans les signes des temps que le Christ ressuscité nous donne
- ✚ L'espérance est un signe de notre désir de paix dans notre monde
- ✚ L'espérance façonne notre vision de l'avenir avec un enthousiasme pour la vie et une volonté de la partager.
- ✚ L'espérance habite nos cœurs comme le désir et l'attente de bonnes choses à venir, bien que nous ne sachions pas ce que l'avenir nous réserve.
- ✚ L'espérance naît de l'amour et se fonde sur l'amour qui jaillit du cœur transpercé de Jésus sur la croix.
- ✚ Au centre de notre espérance se trouve Jésus-Christ
- ✚ L'espérance est le compagnon constant qui guide nos pas vers le but de notre rencontre avec le Seigneur Jésus.
- ✚ L'espérance donne une direction intérieure et un but à notre vie de foi.
- ✚ L'espérance trouve son témoignage suprême en Marie, la Mère de Dieu et notre mère.
- ✚ Nous sommes des pèlerins de l'espérance, marchant ensemble vers les promesses de Dieu.

Fin (ensemble)

Porteurs d'espérance, soyons attirés par cette espérance ! Par notre témoignage, que l'espérance s'étende à tous ceux qui la recherchent avec impatience.... Que la force de l'espérance remplisse nos journées, alors que nous attendons avec confiance la venue du Seigneur Jésus-Christ, à qui reviennent la louange et la gloire, maintenant et pour toujours.

Amen !



Titre : « Thème : Consacré-e-s, signes de l'espérance »

Résumé de ma communication :

Parler de l'espérance a pour préalable la connaissance de Dieu, la connaissance de sa vraie nature au-delà des concepts à travers lesquels théologiens et philosophes ont cherché et cherchent encore à le définir. Qui est le Dieu de l'espérance ? La réponse à cette question, si elle sacrifie à l'immense travail des théologiens, invite surtout chaque croyant, chaque âme consacrée à l'examen de son rapport à Celui en qui il a mis sa foi et sa confiance. Comme le Christ le demandait à ses disciples, il s'agit de donner une réponse individuelle qui engage l'existence personnelle. En cette année sainte, il lance un appel aux consacré-e-s en Afrique à se positionner en collaborateurs de l'esprit saint capables de rendre compte de l'espérance qu'ils portent en eux. Le devoir de la vie religieuse est de porter la responsabilité de l'espérance. C'est une mission à laquelle aucun consacré-e ne peut renoncer sans manquer à son identité propre. La vie consacrée est totalement de l'ordre de l'espérance. Elle en est la manifestation. Comment en effet tout quitter pour suivre le Christ si on ne porte pas en soi la promesse d'un bien plus grand à venir ?

Notice Biographique

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The African expectation of the Synod

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Introduction

Allow me to say a few words, born from our rich African tradition and wisdom, which remind us that we do not always understand what we name! Although Adam gave names to the beings created by God, and even to the woman, he understood nothing about the woman until the day she gave him the fruit and he ate it... Then he realized that he was naked!

In the papacy of Pope Francis, we too have received the duty to revisit the being of the Church, to seek to understand better its identity, and to make it come alive in our ecclesial pilgrimage on this earth. The Synod was lived and celebrated with the objective set by Pope Francis: to promote a more participatory, inclusive, and constantly renewed Church, through a process of dialogue and joint discernment. It is about creating a synodal lifestyle, where all members of the Church, including lay people, women, young people, and minorities, have a voice and are heard. The aim is to strengthen the communion, participation, and mission of the Church, making it more relevant and effective in the world.

The call at this time is to ask ourselves how we can receive all the richness born of this synodal journey and, more deeply, how we can continue to walk this path with increasing appropriation so that, thanks to the commitment of each one, the fruits may grow and produce a new vitality, as was the desire of our late Pope Francis.

As a continent, Africa must continue to offer the best it has for the growth of the Kingdom of God, offering its values and talents generously bequeathed by those who preceded us. The continent is called to allow itself the creativity that comes from the Spirit to live forms of synodality that speak to the current generation and allow for communion, participation, and the effective exercise of the mission of proclaiming the Gospel, Good News for all, with boldness and firmness.



Allow me to briefly share some of the general lines of what I believe to be Africa's expectations regarding the experience of the fruits of the Synod on Synodality.

The Church in Africa worked hard in preparing for the Synod and produced a document in which it presented the aspects that it considered to be priorities for the Church's Mission on the continent. These are not just statements, they are pertinent expectations for responding to the challenges facing the Church today:

1. In the light of the Final Document of the Synod, take seriously the ecclesial model adopted by the Church in Africa: Church as the Family of God and its consequences in the theological-pastoral field. One of the striking features of the Synod on Synodality is the desire to make a Church a reality where everyone feels at home, where everyone is called to communion, to participate in a common mission. Pope Saint John Paul II, in his post-synodal apostolic exhortation *Ecclesia in Africa*, made the image of the Church as the Family of God his own, describing it not only as the "main idea" of the Synod, but also as an appropriate expression of the nature of the Church, especially for Africa. For him, the metaphor of the family emphasizes "attention to others, solidarity, warmth in human relationships, acceptance, dialogue, and trust". It is a question of using this image, aware of its inability to exhaust the mystery it points to, of going beyond the diversity of family models and the historical and cultural variations of this image. Thus, the new form of evangelization aims to build the Church, the family of God on earth, since all humanity reflects in some way the family of God. This implies, therefore, that for the African, the notion of Church as communion takes on more meaning and is expressed concretely in the metaphor of the family of God. The nature of the Church understood as the family of God reflects the deep and existential search of Africans to live a Christianity that does not betray their cultural values and traditions. One of the aspects that must be worked on so that the Church is understood as the Family of God is the realization of the essence of the mission of the family, that is, the

humanization of its members. The humanizing function is manifested in the personalizing dynamism and its socializing force that the human family has. As expressed in number 35 of the DFS:

“It is above all within the family, which with the Council could be called the ‘domestic Church’ (LG 11), that the richness of relationships between people united in their diversity of character, sex, age, and function is experienced. Families are, therefore, a privileged place to learn and experience the essential practices of a synodal Church. Despite the fractures and suffering that families experience, they continue to be places where we learn to exchange the gift of love, trust, forgiveness, reconciliation, and understanding. It is in the family that we learn that we have the same dignity, that we are created for reciprocity, that we need to be heard and that we are capable of listening, of discerning and deciding together, of accepting and exercising an authority inspired by charity, of being co-responsible and of being accountable for our actions. The family humanizes people through the relationship of ‘we’ and, at the same time, promotes the legitimate differences of each person.”

Families are, therefore, a privileged place to learn and experience the essential practices of a synodal Church. Despite the fractures and suffering that families experience, they continue to be places where we learn to exchange the gift of love, trust, forgiveness, reconciliation, and understanding. It is in the family that we learn that we have the same dignity, that we are created for reciprocity, that we need to be heard and that we are capable of listening, of discerning and deciding together, of accepting and exercising an authority inspired by charity, of being co-responsible and of being accountable for our actions. The family humanizes people through the relationship of ‘we’ and, at the same time, promotes the legitimate differences of each person.”

The Final Document of the Synod in number 21 clearly states that “The name ‘Christian’ that we have the honor of bearing contains the grace that is the basis of our life and makes us walk together as brothers and sisters.”

⌘ Can we think of a Church that humanizes and socializes all who approach it? Can we build a Church that is open, welcoming, supportive, protective of life in all its forms, supportive, empathetic, and this in a concrete and tangible way? What paths can we take for a Church that cares for the family through the pastoral care of others?

2. Reflection on synodality must lead the Church to live social prophecy. (DFS 47)

Synodality, as social prophecy, implies a change of mentality and practice that challenges the structures of power and dominant social relations, promoting a path of dialogue, listening, and participation that contributes to the construction of a more just and inclusive society. It is a form of witness that calls for a culture of peace, justice, and care for our common home, inspired by the Social Doctrine of the Church. The Church must be a prophetic voice in today’s world, to be “a banner lifted up among the nations” (cf. Is 11:12). In a society marked by increasing inequality, growing disillusionment with traditional models of governance, disenchantment with the functioning of democracy, increasing autocratic and dictatorial tendencies, the predominance of the market model without taking into account the vulnerability of people and creation, and the temptation to resolve conflicts through force rather than dialogue, the Church must accept her prophetic ministry and offer the world a synodal spirituality that enables a culture capable of critical prophecy in the face of dominant thought. This means challenging the tendencies of polarization, exclusion, and violence towards those who are different, offering alternatives for dialogue, listening, and participation that promote the common good.

Synodality demands a conversion of heart and mind, moving from an individualistic and hierarchical attitude to one of mutual listening, participation, and responsibility for all. Synodality

manifests itself in concrete practices, such as processes of consultation, dialogue, discernment, and joint decision-making, involving all members of the Church and, by extension, of society.

- ❖ **Can we dream of a Church open to listening and participation by all? A Church that seeks harmony and processes of discernment, accountability, and transparency in common affairs? What conversion is necessary so that the participation of all is tangible? So that the poor and marginalized become subjects in our communities and not just recipients of our charitable action? How can we be a prophet for the world through management, through the way we govern, through the way we involve everyone?**

3. The process of synodality must lead to the revitalization of Christian communities

Christian communities are an ideal space for experiencing synodality in the Church, thanks to their communal and participatory nature. They are a privileged space for practicing synodality, since they promote reflection on faith, evangelizing action, and the transformation of society. They are the ideal space for forging leaders imbued with a synodal spirituality, valid for the Church and society, a favorable place for the formation of individuals and families marked by the way of acting of Christ's disciples. Spirit of Christ.

Christian communities, when they come together to reflect on the Word of God, live their faith in community and commit themselves to the transformation of society, are natural means of evangelization, formation, and pastoral action, where the faithful feel welcomed and responsible for the construction of the Church.

- ❖ **Can we offer baptized people opportunities for growth in faith and real commitment to their communities and society in general? The empowerment of these communities seems urgent and necessary! What paths can be taken?**

These three aspects can constitute a vast path to follow so that the fruits of the Synod on synodality become a reality in the daily life of the Church.

I thank you for your attention.

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A expectativa africana do Sínodo

Introdução

Permitam-me uma primeira palavra nascida da nossa rica tradição e sabedoria africana que nos lembra que nem sempre compreendemos o que nomeamos! Apesar de Adão ter dado o nome aos seres criados por Deus e até mesmo à mulher, ele nada entendia da mulher, até ao dia em que ela lhe deu do fruto e ele comeu...aí compreendeu que estava nu¹!

Também nós recebemos no papado do Papa Francisco o dever de revisitar o ser da Igreja, para buscar compreender melhor a sua identidade e torna-la vida em nossa peregrinação eclesial sobre esta terra. O sínodo foi vivido e celebrado com um objectivo traçado pelo Papa Francisco *de promover uma Igreja mais participativa, inclusiva e em constante renovação, através de um processo de diálogo e discernimento em conjunto*². Trata-se de *criar um estilo de vida sinodal, onde todos os membros da Igreja, incluindo leigos, mulheres, jovens e minorias, tenham voz e sejam ouvidos. O objetivo é fortalecer a comunhão, a participação e a missão da Igreja, tornando-a mais relevante e eficaz no mundo*³.

O apelo neste momento é o de nos interrogarmos sobre o modo como podemos receber toda a riqueza nascida deste caminho sinodal e mais profundamente como continuar a trilhar este caminho em uma crescente apropriação para que graças ao empenho de todos e de cada um os frutos cresçam e produzam uma nova vitalidade tal como era o desejo do nosso saudoso Papa Francisco.

Enquanto continente, África, deve continuar a oferecer o que tem de melhor para o crescimento do Reino de Deus, oferecer os seus valores e talentos generosamente legados pelos que nos antecederam. O continente é chamado a se permitir a criatividade que vem do Espírito para viver formas de sinodalidade que falam à geração atual e permitem a comunhão, a participação e o

¹ Gen 3, 7

² Papa Francisco, 2018, *Discurso no início do Sínodo dedicado aos jovens, a 3 de Outubro*.

³ <https://www.vaticannews.va/pt/igreja/news/2023-10/>

exercício efetivo da missão do anúncio do Evangelho, Boa Nova para todos, com audácia e firmeza.

Permitam-me muito rapidamente, partilhar algumas das linhas gerais que me parecem ser as expectativas de África em relação à vivência dos frutos do Sínodo sobre a sinodalidade.

A Igreja em África trabalhou arduamente na preparação do Sínodo e produziu um documento no qual apresentava os aspectos que lhe pareciam ser prioridade para a Missão da Igreja no continente. Não são apenas enunciados, são expectativas pertinentes para responder aos desafios da Igreja no nosso hoje:

- 1. Á luz do Documento Final do Sínodo, tomar à sério o modelo esclesial adoptado pela Igreja em África: Igreja Família de Deus⁴ e suas consequências no campo teológico - pastoral.** Um dos traços marcantes do Sínodo sobre a sinodalidade é o desejo de tornar realidade uma Igreja onde todos se sentem em casa, onde todos são chamados à comunhão, à participação em uma missão comum. O Papa São João Paulo II, na sua exortação apostólica pós-sinodal *Ecclesia in Africa*, tornou a imagem Igreja família de Deus sua, descrevendo-a não apenas como a “ideia principal” do sínodo, mas também como uma expressão apropriada da natureza da Igreja, especialmente para a África. Para ele, a metáfora da família enfatiza “a atenção ao outro, a solidariedade, o calor nas relações humanas, a acolhida, o diálogo e a confiança”⁵. Trata-se de usar esta imagem, cientes da sua incapacidade de esgotar o mistério que ela aponta, de ir para além da diversidade de modelos familiares e para além das variações históricas e culturais desta imagem. Assim, a nova forma de evangelização visa construir a Igreja, a família de Deus na terra, uma vez que toda a humanidade reflete de alguma forma a família de Deus⁶. Isso implica, portanto, que para o africano a noção de Igreja como comunhão assume mais significado e se expressa concretamente na metáfora da família de Deus. A natureza da Igreja entendida

⁴ A metáfora eclesiológica da Família de Deus foi mantida como paradigma teológico da Igreja durante a Assembleia Especial do Sínodo dos Bispos para a África, realizado em Roma de 10 de abril a 8 de maio de 1994. É considerado o modelo mais adequado à Igreja em África em termos de missão evangelizadora e resposta aos desafios pastorais que a Igreja enfrenta no continente.

⁵ JOÃO PAULO II, Exortação pós-sinodal, *Ecclesia in Africa*, Roma, Libéria Editrice Vaticana 1995, 63

⁶ Idem 63

como família de Deus reflete a busca profunda e existencial dos africanos por viver um cristianismo que não traia seus valores e tradições culturais. Um dos aspectos que devem ser trabalhados para que a Igreja seja entendida como Família de Deus é a realização da essência da missão da família ou seja a humanização dos seus membros. A função humanizadora manifesta-se no dinamismo personalizador e na sua força socializadora que tem a família humana. Como está expresso no número 35 do DFS:

“É antes de mais no seio da família, que com o Concílio se poderia chamar “Igreja doméstica” (LG 11), que se vive a riqueza das relações entre pessoas unidas na sua diversidade de carácter, sexo, idade e função. Por isso as famílias são um lugar privilegiado para aprender e experimentar as práticas essenciais de uma Igreja sinodal. Apesar das fraturas e dos sofrimentos que as famílias experimentam, continuam a ser lugares onde se aprende a trocar o dom do amor, da confiança, do perdão, da reconciliação e da compreensão. É na família que aprendemos que temos a mesma dignidade, que 14 somos criados para a reciprocidade, que temos necessidade de ser ouvidos e que somos capazes de escutar, de discernir e decidir juntos, de aceitar e exercitar uma autoridade animada pela caridade, de ser corresponsáveis e de prestar contas dos nossos atos. A família humaniza as pessoas através da relação do ‘nós’ e, ao mesmo tempo, promove as legítimas diferenças de cada um”⁷.

A Igreja em África está enriquecida pelas conclusões do Sínodo sobre a Sinodalidade cuja recepção passa pela assumpção do seu dever de colaborar de modo original e profundo na construção do mundo, tornando possível uma vida verdadeiramente humana, em particular tornando-se guardiã das virtudes e dos valores e transmitindo-os. Como afirma o Concílio Vaticano II, no seio da família «as diferentes gerações se encontram, ajudando-se mutuamente a alcançar uma sabedoria superior e a harmonizar os direitos individuais com as outras exigências da vida social»⁸. A Igreja é família apenas em relação a Deus Pai, ao Filho e ao Espírito Santo, portanto uma família aberta ao universal.

⁷ Francisco, Discurso aos participantes na Plenária da Pontifícia Academia das Ciências Sociais, 29 de abril de 2022

⁸ GS52; SECAM, Igreja-Família de Deus, *Instrumentum Laboris*, Accra, 15 de agosto de 1998, 22-23

O Documento Final do Sínodo no número 21 diz claramente que “No nome “cristão” que temos a honra de ostentar está contida a graça que está na base da nossa vida e nos faz caminhar juntos como irmãos e irmãs”.

❖ **Podemos pensar numa Igreja que humaniza e socializa todos os que dela se aproximam? Podemos construir uma Igreja aberta, acolhedora, solidária, protetora da vida em todas as suas formas, solidária, empática e isso de maneira concreta e palpável? Que caminhos para uma Igreja que cuida da família por uma pastoral do cuidado do outro?**

2. A reflexão sobre a sinodalidade deve levar a Igreja a viver a profecia social. (DFS 47)

A sinodalidade, como profecia social, implica uma mudança de mentalidade e de prática, que desafia as estruturas de poder e as relações sociais dominantes, promovendo um caminho de diálogo, escuta e participação que contribui para a construção de uma sociedade mais justa e inclusiva. É uma forma de testemunho que apela a uma cultura de paz, justiça e cuidado da casa comum, inspirada na Doutrina Social da Igreja. A Igreja deve ser uma voz profética no mundo de hoje, deve ser “um estandarte erguido entre as nações (cf. Is 11,12)⁹. Numa sociedade marcada pelo aumento das desigualdades, pela crescente desilusão com os modelos tradicionais de governação, pelo desencanto com o funcionamento da democracia, pelo aumento das tendências autocráticas e ditatoriais, pelo predomínio do modelo de mercado sem ter em conta a vulnerabilidade das pessoas e da criação, e pela tentação de resolver os conflitos através da força e não do diálogo, a Igreja deve aceitar o seu ministério profético e oferecer ao mundo uma espiritualidade sinodal que permite uma cultura capaz de profecia crítica face ao pensamento dominante. Trata-se de desafiar as tendências de polarização, de exclusão e de violência face ao diferente, oferecendo alternativas de diálogo, escuta e participação que promovem o bem comum.

A sinodalidade exige uma conversão de coração e de mente, passando de uma atitude individualista e hierárquica para uma atitude de escuta mútua, participação e responsabilidade por todos. A sinodalidade se manifesta em práticas concretas, como

⁹ Francisco, Discurso por ocasião da comemoração do 50.º aniversário da instituição do Sínodo dos Bispos, 17 de outubro de 2015

processos de consulta, diálogo, discernimento e tomada de decisão em conjunto, envolvendo todos os membros da Igreja e, por extensão, da sociedade.

- ❖ **Podemos sonhar com uma Igreja aberta à escuta e à participação de todos? Uma Igreja que busca a harmonia e por processos de discernimento, prestação de contas e transparência na coisa comum? Que conversão é necessária para que a participação de todos seja palpável? Para que os pobres e marginalizados sejam sujeitos nas nossas comunidades e não apenas receptores da nossa ação caritativa? Como ser profecia para o mundo pela gestão, pela maneira de governar, de fazer participar a todos?**

3. O processo de sinodalidade deve levar à revitalização das comunidades cristãs

As comunidades cristãs são um espaço ideal para a vivência da sinodalidade na Igreja, graças à sua natureza comunitária e participativa. São um espaço privilegiado para a prática da sinodalidade, uma vez que promovem a reflexão sobre a fé, a ação evangelizadora e a transformação da sociedade. São o espaço ideal para forjar as lideranças imbuídas por uma espiritualidade sinodal, válidas para a Igreja e para sociedade, lugar favorável para a formação de indivíduos e famílias marcadas pelo modo de agir dos discípulos de Cristo. Espírito de Cristo. As Comunidades cristãs ao se reunirem para refletir sobre a Palavra de Deus, viver a fé em comunidade e se comprometer com a transformação da sociedade, são meios naturais de evangelização, formação e ação pastoral, onde os fiéis se sentem acolhidos e responsáveis pela construção da Igreja.

- ❖ **Podemos oferecer aos batizados espaços de crescimento na fé e de compromisso real em favor de suas comunidades e da sociedade em geral? O empoderamento destas comunidades parece urgente e necessários! Que caminhos se podem trilhar?**

Estes três aspectos podem constituir um vasto caminho a percorrer para que os frutos do Sinodo sobre a sinodalidade se tornem uma realidade no quotidiano da vida da Igreja.

Agradeço a atenção dispensada.

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Symposium on Consecrated Life in Africa

Theme: *Hope, Synodality, and Empowerment of Consecrated Life in Africa*

Date: May 23–25, 2025 | **Location:** Pretoria, South Africa

Presented by: Pan-African Catholic Theology and Pastoral Network (PACTPAN)

Introduction

Having recently celebrated the Synod on Synodality and now entering the Jubilee Year as “*pilgrims of hope*,” consecrated life in Africa finds itself at a significant crossroads, where deep-rooted traditions meet rapid social transformation.

The African proverb, “*A single bracelet does not jingle*,” eloquently reminds us that true strength and harmony emerge through unity. This wisdom captures the spirit of synodality “walking together” which remains vital for the renewal of consecrated life across the continent.

This symposium convenes distinguished leaders from the Confederation of Conferences of Major Superiors of Africa and Madagascar (COMSAM) to engage in a timely and collective prophetic witness. Anchored in the theme of Hope, Synodality, and Empowerment, it provides an invaluable forum to discern the future trajectory of consecrated life in Africa.

It is with great honor that I present on behalf of the Pan-African Catholic Theology and Pastoral Network (PACTPAN) at this pivotal moment of reflection, renewal, and transformation.

How can hope, synodality, and empowerment serve as transformative forces for consecrated life in Africa, enabling it to respond prophetically to contemporary social, economic, and spiritual challenges?

PACTPAN’s Vision and Mission: Transforming Consecrated Life in Africa

The Pan-African Catholic Theology and Pastoral Network (PACTPAN)

Motto: *Abundant Life for God’s People in Africa*

The Pan-African Catholic Theology and Pastoral Network (PACTPAN) is a community of African scholars and pastoral agents rooted in the Catholic tradition, alongside their ecumenical and inter-religious partners. Founded in 2019 during the Pan-African Catholic Congress in Enugu, Nigeria, PACTPAN is a vibrant network active across Africa and the diaspora. It bridges theology and pastoral action through research, advocacy, and grassroots mobilization. PACTPAN collaborates closely with Catholic universities across Africa and partners worldwide, maintaining strong relationships with dioceses, religious congregations, episcopal conferences, and the Holy See.



Vision: To bridge the gap between pastoral practice and multidisciplinary scholarly work across Africa by collaboratively listening to God and the people; inspiring hope and transformational faith; and promoting best practices to enrich the Church and society.

Mission: To advance justice, human dignity, and renewal by addressing critical issues such as human trafficking, abuse, ecological degradation, and governance within both Church and society.

This vision and mission reflect PACTPAN's commitment to fostering an inclusive and transformative Church in Africa, where consecrated life flourishes as a prophetic vocation.

PACTPAN Responding to the Theme: Hope, Synodality, and Empowerment

1. Hope: The Theological Virtue Rooted in Resilience

Hope in Christian theology is not mere optimism; it is a confident trust in God's promises, even in adversity. This virtue resonates deeply within African spirituality, which expresses hope through storytelling, communal rituals, songs, and ancestral memory.

As St. Paul teaches:

“We boast in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not put us to shame.” (Romans 5:3–5)

Pope Francis echoes this:

“Hope is the theological virtue that keeps us anchored in Christ... inspiring us to continue the journey with faith and courage.” (*Homily, 2013*)

In African contexts marked by poverty and struggle, consecrated persons embody hope by remaining faithful to their mission, offering spiritual depth, and being a steady presence in broken communities. Hope becomes their strength, anchoring them in Christ and enabling them to transform despair into new life.

2. Synodality: Walking Together in an African Key

Synodality, meaning “walking together,” deeply echoes Africa's indigenous values. The Ubuntu philosophy, “I am because we are,” parallels the synodal path by emphasizing shared leadership, listening, and mutual accountability. This is also reflected in the African Palaver tradition a communal dialogue process where community members gather to discuss, listen, and reach consensus together.

The Palaver embodies true synodality by fostering open conversation, mutual respect, and collective decision-making, reinforcing the importance of walking together in faith and mission.

As the 2024 Synod on Synodality declared:



“Synodality is the path God expects of the Church in the third millennium.” (*Final Document, 2024*)

Pope Francis affirms:

“Synodality means walking together, listening to one another, allowing oneself to be challenged by the Word of God.” (*General Audience, 2024*)

In African religious life, synodality is lived out through respect for elders, communal discernment, and joint pastoral action. It calls consecrated persons to collaborate across congregations, engage with the laity, and participate in broader social and ecclesial dialogue. Synodality honors the wisdom of African communal life while renewing the Church’s mission through inclusive and participatory structures.

3. Empowerment: A Call to Leadership and Transformation

Empowerment is critical for a thriving and sustainable consecrated life. It requires nurturing leaders who are grounded in African realities and capable of addressing systemic issues such as gender-based injustice, poverty, and marginalization. Such leadership must integrate deep spiritual rootedness with keen social awareness, ensuring that consecrated persons are not only spiritually formed but also equipped to respond to the pressing needs of their communities.

A key aspect of empowerment is forming leaders who embody this integration of spiritual depth and social consciousness. It also involves embracing African indigenous knowledge alongside Catholic teaching and the diverse charisms of religious congregations. This holistic approach fosters authenticity and relevance in both the formation and mission of consecrated life.

Many religious communities today face a pressing pastoral dilemma: how to live out evangelical poverty while maintaining the economic sustainability of their ministries. Addressing this challenge requires ethical stewardship, financial innovation, and formation processes that are faithful to the Gospel while drawing from the wisdom embedded in African traditions.

Empowerment, then, is not about exerting control or dominance; rather, it is about nurturing the inner capacity of individuals and communities to act with wisdom, compassion, and courage. It calls for a transformation of mindset and structures that hinder full participation and creative leadership within religious life.

Challenges in Consecrated Life Today

Consecrated life in Africa is navigating complex realities marked by rapid socio-cultural changes, which can lead to identity crises and generational gaps within communities. Economic vulnerability also poses a significant challenge, as many religious institutions struggle to sustain their missions and apostolates with limited resources. Additionally, prophetic voices within religious life especially those advocating for justice, equality, and reform—are often marginalized, stifling innovation and renewal.



Opportunities in Consecrated Life Today

Despite these challenges, there are profound opportunities for renewal. The ongoing synodal journey within the Church encourages a spirit of dialogue, participation, and collaborative leadership that aligns deeply with African communal values. The integration of African spiritualities and worldviews offers a fertile ground for reimagining consecrated life in culturally resonant ways. Furthermore, leadership rooted in justice, compassion, and indigenous wisdom is emerging as a powerful force for transformation. Growing advocacy efforts within and beyond the Church also present a strategic opening for systemic change, making consecrated persons bold agents of hope, unity, and empowerment in their communities.

Conclusion: Toward a Transformed and Prophetic Consecrated Life

The path forward for consecrated life in Africa is both challenging and filled with promise. Grounded in the theological virtue of **hope**, animated by the participatory spirit of **synodality**, and strengthened through **empowerment**, consecrated persons are well-positioned to lead the Church into a renewed future.

A call to Action

- A vibrant, inclusive Church reflecting African values and Gospel witness
- Renewed leadership among consecrated persons committed to justice and peace
- Integration of communal spirituality and synodal structures in religious life
- Strengthened capacity to address consecrated life, and sustainability

In closing, consecrated life in Africa stands at a crossroads, filled with both promise and challenge. By embodying hope, practicing synodality rooted in African spirituality, and empowering consecrated persons as agents of transformation, consecrated life in Africa will continue to shine as a beacon of renewal and mission.

“African Christianity is not a religion of isolation or withdrawal but a religion of community and dialogue.” - Laurenti Magesa

Let us walk together as one body, inspired by Christ’s call to abundant life for all God’s people in Africa.



AUTONOMISATION DES CONGREGATIONS EN AFRIQUE ET MADAGASCAR

Introduction

La question de l'autonomisation des congrégations en Afrique et Madagascar est d'actualité dans un contexte marqué par la croissance du nombre de consacrés, des appels missionnaires et la raréfaction des ressources financières pour la prise en charge des personnes et des œuvres. Cette réflexion tente de montrer que l'autonomisation est à comprendre comme un élément important de la maturation des communautés religieuses en Afrique. De ce fait, elle n'a pas seulement une connotation économique. Elle est aussi un processus d'enracinement, d'inculturation de la vie religieuse et de nos charismes en Afrique et une lecture prophétique de nos missions et des besoins pour la mission. Pareille lecture nous pousse à lire les signes des temps, pour faire une évaluation de nos missions et œuvres et ouvrir nos horizons à de nouvelles manières de penser, d'administrer, de faire des partenariats, pour fonder ou accompagner des œuvres qui soient à la fois des lieux de mission, et génératrice de revenus, pour une autonomie intégrale, dont l'aspect financier n'est qu'un élément.

1. Enracinement et inculturation :

Lorsque nous parlons d'autonomie des congrégations religieuses en Afrique, nous parlons exactement de quoi ? Il ne s'agit pas d'une revendication idéologique ou politique, accompagnant les approches souverainistes africaines à l'œuvre dans nos sociétés contemporaines. L'autonomie doit être comprise comme signe d'enracinement et de maturité des congrégations, prenant en main le défi de l'évangélisation de l'Afrique dans une perspective d'enracinement et d'inculturation des charismes pour aujourd'hui. Cette autonomie pourrait alors être pensée à travers deux axes complémentaires. Le premier est l'enracinement et l'inculturation de la vie religieuse en contexte africain. Le second consiste à assumer la dimension prophétique de la vie consacrée, en faisant une lecture pertinente des signes des temps, pour penser des œuvres qui soient à la fois des lieux de mission et d'évangélisation pertinente et d'autonomie financière, en vue du partage avec les plus pauvres. Les deux axes me semblent complémentaires. La première mission des consacrés est d'être des disciples du Christ enracinés dans leurs contextes, comme signes d'espérance. Cette tâche induit une mission d'inculturation. L'inculturation dans cette optique est un double processus. Processus d'incarnation. Laisser Dieu être Dieu en nous par le Christ, ne pas lui résister. Être ces hommes et ces femmes ajustés à la Parole de Dieu, et transformés par elles, vivant les charismes différents comme des dons de l'Esprit, non seulement pour faire mémoire du passé glorieux de nos ancêtres dans la vie religieuse, mais pour faire vivre le monde d'aujourd'hui. Inculture les charismes, c'est les enraciner en Christ, les laisser prendre chair dans notre vie et

nos missions d'aujourd'hui, être ouverts au dynamisme de l'Esprit qui les a suscités, et suivre la direction qu'il nous indique aujourd'hui. Ce premier processus doit être celui de l'accueil des éléments de l'humanisme africain, que la vie consacrée en Afrique ne doit pas assassiner, mais transfigurer par le don de l'Esprit Saint : la solidarité, la communion, le sens de l'autre non comme une altérité irréductible en face de nous, mais comme un frère une sœur, un don de la vie, dont il faut savoir prendre soin. L'homme est le remède de l'homme. Le second processus est celui d'une « culture », processus par lequel, ces cultures christifiées et révélées à elles-mêmes deviennent authentiquement chrétiennes et africaines. Si le contexte actuel est celui du multiculturalisme et de l'interculturalisme, force est de constater qu'il est aussi celui des retours aux traditionalismes et aux revendications identitaires. La mondialisation et ses conséquences, la présence de constantes universelles, n'ont jamais pu abolir les cultures plurielles, ni fonder une culture mondiale. En fait, le monde, tel qu'il fonctionne, même dans la mondialisation, est celui de l'affirmation forte des identités particulières. En Europe, l'identité européenne et les identités nationales sont en constantes confrontations, en face d'une identité américaine qui se veut universelle, pendant que la préférence nationale n'est plus simplement un concept, mais le socle idéologique qui donne son ancrage « particularismes étriés », dont l'émergence de partis nationalistes en Afrique comme ailleurs est le symptôme. L'arrivée au pouvoir des partis nationalistes, la montée du fascisme et la crise de la démocratie en Occident, constituent un tournant expressif de cette nouvelle donne. Les asiatiques, comme les arabes, affirment au cœur même de la modernité et de la postmodernité leurs spécificités identitaires et même l'imposent grâce au pétrole et à leur puissance technologique.

L'Afrique-Madagascar, quant à elle, est en perte de vitesse et les compositions culturelles fragmentées qui la caractérisent manquent de cohérence. Le continent noir ne semble pas trouver de valeurs culturelles assez fortes qui puissent être un point d'ancrage à partir duquel il puisse proposer un discours idéologique spécifique pertinent, dans la mondialisation à l'instar des autres grandes aires culturelles. C'est dans ce double processus que se déploie pleinement dans la dimension prophétique de la vie consacrée, la question de l'autonomie, comme un signe et une conséquence du processus de sa maturation de l'Eglise et de la vie consacrée en Afrique et Madagascar. Cette maturation, dans le contexte qui est le nôtre, demande une relecture de notre vœu de pauvreté et de l'option préférentielle pour les pauvres, dans la promotion d'œuvres de développement intégral qui relèvent l'homme et donnent les moyens de la mission.

Les consacrés sont appelés comme disciples vivant au cœur du monde et actualisant la vie même du Christ, Pauvre, chaste et obéissant. Dans la radicalité de la *sequela Christi*, ils se sanctifient eux-mêmes et sanctifient le monde en étant des signes d'espérance. Vécue par des

hommes et des femmes à des périodes variées et en contextes variés, la vie consacrée est toujours le lieu d'une double herméneutique, interprétation de la Parole de Dieu et de la geste de Dieu dont elle veut témoigner et relecture interprétative prophétique des signes des temps pour garder la posture de veilleurs, de passeurs.

2. L'Autonomie comme posture prophétique

Le prophète est celui qu'une Parole, celle de Dieu, a atteint jusqu'à le tenir en éveil. En éveil sur lui-même, sa vie avec Dieu, en éveil sur les questions de son temps et sur ce que l'Esprit lui dicte comme message et action pour son temps. « La parole me réveille chaque matin ; chaque matin, elle me réveille pour que j'écoute comme celui qui se laisse instruire » (Isaïe 50,40). Homme parmi les hommes, la proximité de Dieu et de sa parole le soulèvent jusqu'à le mettre à cette hauteur sans laquelle, l'homme ne peut percevoir les choses de Dieu. Au nom de Dieu, à cause de Dieu, le prophète est sur les remparts de la cité, pour que sa parole et son regard portent loin, pour que l'homme ne manque jamais de la parole de Dieu, tel que le rappelle (Isaïe 62, 6) « Sur tes remparts, Jérusalem, j'ai placé des veilleurs, ni de jour, ni de nuit, ils ne doivent se taire ». Le prophète est ainsi un interprète de l'histoire. Il donne à la lire et à la percevoir selon la perspective du projet de Dieu pour l'humanité, qui fait passer l'homme des ténèbres à la lumière, qui fait traverser les situations de crise. Dans le contexte africain, nous assistons à la maturation des congrégations autochtones, l'africanisation des congrégations dites internationales. Les entités africaines de ces dernières jouissant d'une autonomie de gouvernement, tandis que l'esprit fait naître de nouvelles intuitions d'engagement et de consécration dans des communautés dites nouvelles. Le processus de maturation et d'autonomisation doit être global, intégrant l'enracinement spirituel dans les charismes, la structuration, le gouvernement et l'autonomisation financière. Le piège serait de considérer l'autonomie dans sa seule dimension économique. Je connais des congrégations qui sont autonomes financièrement, mais qui sont en crises permanentes, marquées par de nombreux départs. Si l'autonomie financière n'est pas fondée dans un enracinement spirituel et une inculturation de la consécration doublée d'une organisation efficiente, elle donnera des congrégations riches et puissantes financièrement, mais seraient-elles pour autant plus apostoliques et missionnaires ? Vivraient-elles la pauvreté évangélique ? La pauvreté a mauvaise presse dans le contexte africain. Ne sommes-nous pas déjà pauvres, pouvons-nous être autonomes en demeurant pauvres ? Mais sommes-nous pauvres de tout ? L'autonomie financière, il me semble peut-être fondée sur une posture prophétique et évangélique concernant la pauvreté. Cette dernière pourrait alors être appréhendée non à partir de nos manques, mais de nos besoins. En effet, notre monde contemporain par la publicité, la saturation des sons et

des images, est multiplicateur de manque. La vraie question est de savoir de quoi avons-nous besoin pour nous-mêmes, notre mission et pour partager avec les plus pauvres. Ce qui nous manque sera toujours infini. Le partage avec les plus pauvres a toujours été la manière dont les consacrés ont vécu la charité au nom du Christ. Or, pour partager, il faut avoir de quoi partager. Le partage est à comprendre ici dans son sens évangélique, non mathématique, dans la dynamique de la multiplication des pains. La multiplication des pains est assez paradigmatique de nos situations actuelles où après avoir prêché, nous avons besoin de prendre soin et de nous nourrir nous-mêmes et de nourrir les pauvres que Dieu envoie vers nous, alors que nous n'avons rien ou peu de chose. C'est en ces moments que le Christ dit aux disciples « Donnez-leur vous-même à manger. » La multiplication des pains ne nous apprend pas à faire un partage égal, pour que chacun ait sa part. Elle nous apprend que quand Dieu partage, il ne divise pas, il multiplie la générosité de la mise en commun. Multiplier, c'est ouvrir son cœur pour faire du peu qu'on a une semence. Dans le désert, le Christ et les disciples font face à la dure réalité du manque, pour eux-mêmes et le peuple qui est venu les écouter. Et pourtant, le Christ ne demande pas ce qui leur manque, ni ne transforme les pierres du désert en pain. Il constate ce dont ils ont besoin, demande ce qu'ils ont et qu'ils sont prêts à fructifier en le partageant. Il les introduit ainsi dans la dimension prophétique où l'audace, le sens de la responsabilité et le partage, permettent de faire face aux besoins et de créer une abondance de biens pour le partage.

3. Prophétisme et audace : « Donnez-leur vous-mêmes à manger »

Le texte communément appelé celui de la multiplication veut montrer comment Jésus attend de ses disciples qu'ils participent à la dimension prophétique du royaume, en prenant soin de leurs propres besoins en même temps que de ceux existentiels des hommes, tout en creusant en eux la faim des nourritures célestes. Ceci, en comptant sur les ressources en leur possession et sur la dimension prophétique de leur vie. La double dimension eschatologique et existentielle des besoins inscrits au cœur des quêtes humaines, la dimension prophétique de notre vie consacrée, sont le lieu où s'inscrit notre quête d'une autonomie financière. Cette dernière ne cherche pas à faire de nous des hommes et femmes puissants, mais des apôtres cherchant de quoi nous prendre en charge et prendre en charge notre mission. Cela nous appelle à l'intériorité, la lucidité et l'engagement.

4. Intériorité lucidité et engagement :

Jésus, après avoir envoyé les apôtres en mission à l'extérieur, les reprend avec lui dans une communion intime qui s'établit dans la prière. Mais la pression de la foule l'en empêche. Et Jésus accepte d'être dérangé pour s'adonner à sa mission salvatrice, dont les guérisons sont des signes. Il apparaît comme si la priorité était donnée à l'action de charité sur la prière. Mais

il me semble plus juste de voir le lien entre les deux. L'acte prophétique de soin n'est pas de l'ordre de l'activisme, mais de la mise en œuvre du royaume de Dieu et du prolongement des signes du salut posés par le Christ lui-même. L'acte prophétique des disciples commence quand ils font une analyse réaliste des situations d'insécurité et d'instabilité. Ils ont une vision claire de la situation. Jésus leur demande d'aller au-delà du simple constat ou de la simple analyse des situations de manque et besoins. L'apôtre est un acteur ouvert au souffle de l'Esprit et non un spectateur. Il est un acteur de l'espérance. L'espérance, c'est lorsque l'homme ne se laisse pas décourager par ses propres limites et les contingences du moment et pose au nom de Dieu des signes de salut : s'organiser, réfléchir, semer une espérance.

L'annonce du royaume est une trajectoire en plusieurs mouvements. L'intimité avec le seigneur qui en la phase première, l'annonce à proprement parler et les services prophétiques qui appellent la collaboration et l'engagement des apôtres avec les personnes à qui ils annoncent le salut et avec qui ils partagent les mêmes bénéfices. En leur donnant à manger eux-mêmes, ils trouvent aussi de quoi manger, partager et il en reste encore. Ils sont à la fois acteurs et bénéficiaires de la générosité des hommes et de Dieu. Cette trajectoire est celle de la communion, qui met les hommes en relation avec Dieu et entre eux au nom et à cause de Dieu, de l'enrichissement mutuel. Jésus met en évidence la dimension prophétique du leadership des apôtres. Ainsi, il ne se range pas à leurs arguments uniquement rationnels. La dimension prophétique appelle à la responsabilité personnelle et collective. Il leur rappelle leur responsabilité. « Donnez-leur vous-mêmes à manger ». Les apôtres voulaient que la foule affamée se prenne elle-même en charge. Le Christ les pousse à voir la continuité entre la prédication et les différents de signes de salut comme la guérison et le don de la nourriture. Il nous interpelle aussi à voir le lien intrinsèque entre les œuvres d'autonomie existentielle et celles missionnaires. Les manques et contingences du moment doivent être pensés et résolus dans une perspective d'espérance qui permet de les dépasser. La spiritualité de communion est alors un des lieux privilégiés de l'autonomisation des communautés de vie consacrée en Afrique. Unis autour du Christ dans des communautés au-delà des ethnies et des nationalités, unis à ceux à qui nous annonçons la bonne nouvelle, nous pourrions alors vivre pleinement la dimension prophétique de notre engagement sans laquelle, notre quête d'autonomie ne sera qu'idéologique et politique. C'est la dimension prophétique qui donne densité et consistance à l'autonomie.

5. Lire les signes des temps :

Le temps de l'enracinement et de la maturation est en même temps marqué par une grande instabilité financière. Les lieux classiques de financement de nos œuvres sont en crise.

Cette crise, elle-même, est l'expression d'une économie mondiale plus complexe et de règles de gestions financières demandant de notre part des compétences qui n'étaient pas requises il y a quelque temps. Nos œuvres classiques étaient plus des lieux d'évangélisation destinées aux pauvres, que de financement des œuvres et de nos vies. S'il y a eu un glissement dans certaines parmi elles, dans l'enseignement par exemple où certaines de nos écoles sont rentables, la vie consacrée en Afrique compte beaucoup sur l'aide extérieure et traverse des moments difficiles. Face à cette situation, la dimension prophétique contenue dans la multiplication des pains nous interpelle à savoir faire le point non de ce qui nous manque, mais de ce que nous avons et nous demander que pouvons-nous faire avec ?

6. Qu'avons-nous et que pouvons-nous faire ?

Nous avons souvent des terres que nous gardons jalousement et finalement ne nous servent pas à grand-chose. Or, la terre, en elle-même, est une richesse qu'il faut savoir exploiter ou investir pour créer des œuvres capables de nourrir notre mission et promouvoir le développement humain intégral. Cela demande de diversifier aujourd'hui les partenaires techniques et financiers, qui peuvent nous apporter ce qui nous manque en expertise et en finances, sans pour autant manquer de vigilance.

Nous avons des savoir-faire ou des talents qui n'ont parfois l'air de rien, mais que nous pouvons multiplier pour générer des petites entreprises de transformation. Beaucoup de monastères dans le monde ont suivi cette voie et nous en donnent l'exemple.

La richesse la plus grande de la vie consacrée, ce sont les consacrés eux-mêmes. Leur formation me semble être un enjeu majeur aujourd'hui, pour vivre pleinement la dimension prophétique et l'autonomisation. Elle doit être religieuse, mais aussi technique et académique, pour comprendre le monde où nous évoluons d'une part, et d'autre part, avoir les compétences requises pour y tenir des œuvres à impact social et économique où témoigner de Jésus Chris

Comme des veilleurs, ne nous laissons pas surprendre par le tournant numérique du monde avec le relief que prend et continuera de prendre l'intelligence artificielle. L'intelligence artificielle ne reconfigure pas seulement le monde du point de vue technique, mais philosophique et anthropologique. Pour la première fois, l'homme a reproduit l'image de lui-même, capable d'imposer une vérité crédible, mais possiblement fausse, rendant tenue la distance entre le réel et la fiction, l'évidence et le virtuel. En plus, l'intelligence artificielle sera le lieu d'une nouvelle économie, qui déterminera les riches et les pauvres, et révolutionner la réalité et le sens du travail, le sens des besoins et des manques, de la connaissance et de l'ignorance. Le numérique sera le pilier économique du monde de demain. Nous devons nous préparer à ce nouveau monde, en formant des frères et sœurs capables de penser à l'intérieur de

cette économie la place des pauvres, de nous aider nous-mêmes à comprendre cette nouvelle écriture et connaissance au risque de devenir analphabètes.

La crise des institutions classiques qui finançaient nos œuvres est une chance à saisir pour envisager autrement les financements de nos œuvres et établir d'autres partenariats institutionnels en dehors de l'Eglise en gardant une vigilance, pour ne pas être abusés et ne pas y perdre notre âme. Il me semble aussi que le moment est venu, à l'échelle des conférences nationales ou internationales des supérieurs majeurs et des évêques, de penser des institutions financières comme des banques ou des sociétés d'investissement propres, capables de nous accompagner dans la création d'œuvres gardant une tension féconde et constructive entre le rapport économique, la rentabilité, la dimension pastorale de partage et de charité et l'accès des pauvres à l'investissement.

Pour que nos œuvres sociales, écoles hôpitaux et dispensaires ne soient pas seulement pour les riches, nous devons être audacieux et inventifs et créer autour d'elles des Fondations ou associations les soutenant et des activités génératrices de revenus.

Conclusion

La question de l'autonomie, en cette période de notre histoire et de la vie de l'Eglise, nous interpelle à nous ouvrir au souffle de l'Esprit et à ne pas l'éteindre. L'Esprit a une dynamique de lucidité, puisqu'il est Esprit de connaissance, mais il est Esprit de renouvellement, qui fait toutes choses nouvelles et donc pousse à l'audace. Chercher une autonomie enracinée dans la dimension prophétique de la vie consacrée, nous appelle aussi à relire la gouvernance et l'autorité aux pieds de la croix, comme service et don de vie en vue de la communion. Le don de vie caractéristique de l'amour, implique transparence et honnêteté. La dimension synodale, déjà à l'œuvre dans la philosophie africaine de l'arbre à palabres, doit inspirer les instances de décision, de contrôle et de veille sur le bien commun et favoriser la mise en commun des biens sans lesquels, on ne peut parler de vie religieuse et d'autonomie. Il apparaît ainsi, que la question de l'autonomie est transversale à tous les aspects de la vie religieuse et ouvre des chemins de réflexion et d'action, dont les instances continentales des religieux doivent être les leaders. La perspective prophétique a une dimension kénotique. Nous devons accepter parfois, que les institutions que l'Esprit nous inspire prennent un long temps de maturation, que ceux qui les ont inspirés soient persécutés comme tous les prophètes. Aucune œuvre humaine n'est parfaite. Mais, le prophète est un semeur d'espérance. La mystique du semeur nous apprend la patience, la foi et l'espérance qui ne déçoit jamais.

Frère Benjamin Sombel SARR.O.P.

- Coordonne les programmes pour les religieux et religieuses du Vicariat d'Adjumani, en mettant l'accent sur la collaboration et le renforcement de la communauté.

- Anime des ateliers de sensibilisation à la santé mentale et propose des séances éducatives sur le développement humain, les stratégies d'adaptation et la résilience aux candidats et aux postulants de diverses congrégations, en soulignant l'importance du bien-être mental dans la vie religieuse et en offrant un accompagnement psychologique aux religieux

Grâce à ses diverses expériences et formations, Sœur Linah Siabana continue d'être une défenseure engagée des populations vulnérables, dévouée à favoriser la guérison et l'autonomisation dans ses communautés.



Sœur Simona BRAMBILLA, Préfète de la Congrégation pour les Instituts de Vie
Consacrée et les Sociétés de Vie Apostolique (CIVCSVA)
Son Eminence, Fridolin AMBONGO, Cardinal Président du SCEAM
Son Excellence, Monseigneur Vusumuzi Mazibuko, Evêque chargé de la Vie
Consacrée en Afrique du Sud
Révérende Sister Zelná Oosthuizen, Présidente de la Conférence des Supérieurs
Majeurs en Afrique du Sud
Monsieur Frank Krauss et Mademoiselle Johanna Streit, Représentants de Missio
Sœur Agnès NJERI MBURU, Représentante de Hilton Foundation
Révérendes Supérieurs (es) Majeurs(es)
Chers Frères et Sœurs

C'est avec un immense sentiment de communion, de joie et de gratitude, que je vous souhaite la bienvenue à ce Symposium et Assemblée Générale de la COSMAM/COMSAM.

Venus de différents pays, de différentes communautés, avec des charismes et expériences variés, nous sommes rassemblés au nom du Christ pauvre, chaste et obéissant, lui qui ne cesse de nous inviter à marcher à sa suite, pour témoigner de l'espérance qui nous habite.

Au-delà des traditions de rencontres triennales de la COSMAM/COMSAM, notre rencontre ici à Prétoria, revêt un caractère spécial. En effet, nous sommes dans une année Jubilaire. Au cœur de ce Jubilé, le Pape François, nous a indiqué le chemin de l'Espérance en rejoignant la maison du Père. La COSMAM/COMSAM, rend grâce à Dieu qui, après le Pape François, a choisi un consacré, le Pape Léon XIV, digne Fils de Saint Augustin d'Hippone l'Africain, pour conduire l'Eglise. Les Consacrés d'Afrique et Madagascar, assurent le Pape Léon XIV, de leur obéissance, de leur soutien et surtout de leurs humbles prières.

Dans le même sens, nous accueillons avec Joie, la présence de la Préfète de la Congrégation des Instituts de Vie Consacrée et Sociétés de Vie Apostolique, (CIVCSVA), Sœur Simona BRAMBILLA, avec son équipe, que je demande d'applaudir pour cette belle proximité.

Chère Sœur Simona, nous Religieuses et Religieux en Afrique, sommes profondément reconnaissants pour votre présence effective à cette Assemblée de la COSMAM/COMSAM. Merci de vous être déplacée vers la périphérie. Merci d'être venue « sentir l'odeur de vos brebis », dans une Afrique, à la fois belle et souffrante. Merci de tout cœur.

Son Eminence, le Cardinal Fridolin AMBONGO, Président du SCEAM, nous rejoint demain dans la matinée. Nous accueillons avec joie et gratitude immense sa présence parmi nous et sa proximité paternelle qui veille avec sollicitude sur notre Eglise continentale. Sa présence à notre Assemblée au Togo, nous a été d'un grand réconfort, et il continue de veiller sur l'avancée de la vie consacrée en Afrique et Madagascar. Merci, Eminence, pour votre attention sans faille et l'oreille attentive que vous portez aux franges les plus fragiles de votre Eglise. Merci infiniment.

Je salue avec déférence l'Archevêque de Prétoria, tous les Evêques de la Conférence épiscopale, les prêtres et toute l'Eglise Sud-africaine, pour leur accueil chaleureux. Nos remerciements à son Excellence, Monseigneur Vusumuzi Mazibuko, chargé de la Vie Consacrée, qui a bien voulu présider cette Eucharistie d'ouverture. Merci à toute l'Eglise de l'Afrique du Sud, nous vous sommes reconnaissants.

J'adresse un merci particulier à Sœur Zelna Oosthuizen et aux Religieuses, religieux de Prétoria, Johannesburg, de l'Afrique du Sud, et de la Région pour leur implication active dans l'organisation de ces Assises. Mille Merci à vous, Chers Sœurs et Frères Consacrés.

J'ai un sentiment de vive gratitude envers les Supérieurs Majeurs venus de tous horizons. Merci à nos invités, nos collaborateurs, et à vous tous qui êtes ici présents, pour fêter la Vie Consacrée avec nous, en Eglise. Merci.

J'exprime ma profonde gratitude, A notre Grand Partenaire, MISSIO, sans lequel, il nous aurait été difficile d'organiser matériellement cette rencontre. Je salue la présence de Monsieur Frank KRAUSS et de Madame Johanna STREIT, représentants MISSIO. Merci pour ce que vous faites pour nous et avec nous. Ensemble, nous continuerons à relever les défis qui nous attendent en Afrique et dans le monde. Merci de tout Cœur.

Dans la même foulée, j'ai une pensée de vive reconnaissance, envers notre Deuxième Partenaire, HILTON FOUNDATION, qui nous a accompagné depuis deux ans, pour la formation des Sœurs en Afrique et qui continuera de marcher avec nous. Nous sommes heureux de la présence de Sœur Agnès Njeri Mburu, et saluons ici, leur travail efficace à nos côtés. Je vous remercie sincèrement.

Notre rencontre se situe au Cœur du Jubilé de l'Espérance, mais aussi dans le contexte ecclésial du Synode sur la Synodalité. Ce contexte pluriel, nous a profondément inspiré dans le choix du thème du Symposium et de l'Assemblée Générale : Espérance, Synodalité et autonomisation des Congrégations en Afrique et Madagascar.

Ce thème guidera nos réflexions, méditations et échanges durant ces Assises de la COSMAM/COMSAM, ici à Prétoria, pour un renouvellement de la Vie Consacrée en Afrique.

En effet, en introduisant l'Eglise dans la synodalité, le Pape François, voulait un nouveau style de vie. Il invitait l'Eglise à entrer dans un nouveau souffle que l'Esprit Saint est en train de créer. Il s'agit d'emprunter un chemin synodal, qui n'est pas seulement un changement de structures, mais une transformation de notre façon d'être en Eglise. C'est ainsi que la Synodalité ne va pas sans l'Espérance.

L'Espérance est le moteur qui nous pousse à marcher ensemble, à croire que l'Esprit nous guide, même dans les incertitudes. Il faut croire qu'il est possible d'écouter les autres, de discerner ensemble, de changer son regard. Sans espérance, nous pouvons tomber dans le découragement et l'individualisme. Une Eglise synodale est un signe d'espérance pour le monde, car c'est une Eglise qui écoute, qui marche avec les plus démunis, les blessés de la vie, qui cherche la vérité dans l'amour et la communion. « L'espérance nous apprend que même dans nos désaccords, Dieu est à l'œuvre ». *(Pape François, discours pour l'ouverture du synode 2021).*

Pour nous Personnes Consacrées, appelées à être des experts en communion, il nous incombe plus que jamais d'indiquer au monde, le chemin de la Synodalité et de l'Espérance.

Dans une Afrique marquée par sa belle jeunesse, mais aussi par les crises-sociales, écologiques et économiques, qui poussent au repliement, à la dispersion et au découragement, nous avons la noble mission d'indiquer le chemin du Vivre et Travailler Ensemble, de l'écoute mutuelle, de l'Espérance en Christ, qui ne déçoit pas. Ainsi, que nos Congrégations pourront atteindre leur autonomie, non d'une façon isolée et égoïste, mais ensemble, en Eglise, Famille de Dieu.

Je souhaite que ce Symposium qui sera suivi de l'Assemblée Générale des Supérieurs Majeurs de la COSMAM, porte les fruits escomptés, pour une Afrique qui marche ensemble sur les chemins de l'écoute, de l'espérance, du développement et de la paix véritable, en disciples du Christ Ressuscité. Pour que la Vie Consacrée en Afrique, guidée par l'Esprit Saint et les Orientations de ce Symposium et Assemblée, en indique le chemin ! Je vous remercie.

Mère Marie DIOUF (fscm)
Présidente de la COSMAM/COMSAM



Sister Simona BRAMBILLA, Prefect of the Congregation for Institutes of Consecrated
Life and Societies of Apostolic Life (CIVCSVA)
His Eminence, Fridolin AMBONGO, Cardinal President of SECAM
His Excellency, Monsignor Vusumuzi Mazibuko , Bishop responsible for Consecrated
Life in South Africa
Reverend Sister Zelna Oosthuizen , President of the Conference of Major Superiors in
South Africa
Mr. Frank Krauss and Miss Johanna Streit , Representatives of Missio
Sister Agnes NJERI MBURU, Representative of Hilton Foundation
Reverend Major Superiors
Dear Brothers and Sisters

It is with an immense feeling of communion, joy and gratitude that I welcome you to
this Symposium and General Assembly of COSMAM/COMSAM.

Coming from different countries, from different communities, with varied charisms
and experiences, we are gathered in the name of the poor, chaste and obedient Christ, who
never ceases to invite us to follow him, to bear witness to the hope that dwells within us.

Beyond the traditions of triennial meetings of COSMAM/COMSAM, our meeting here
in Pretoria has a special character. Indeed, we are in a Jubilee year. At the heart of this Jubilee,
Pope Francis has shown us the path of Hope by joining the Father's house.
COSMAM/COMSAM gives thanks to God who, after Pope Francis, chose a consecrated person,
Pope Leo XIV, worthy Son of Saint Augustine of Hippo Africanus, to lead the Church. The
Consecrated Persons of Africa and Madagascar assure Pope Leo XIV of their obedience, their
support and above all their humble prayers.

In the same vein, we welcome with joy the presence of the Prefect of the Congregation
of Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life (CIVCSVA), Sister Simona
BAMBILLA, with her team, whom I ask to applaud for this beautiful proximity.

Dear Sister Simona, we Religious in Africa are deeply grateful for your effective
presence at this COSMAM/COMSAM Assembly. Thank you for traveling to the periphery.
Thank you for coming to "smell the scent of your sheep" in an Africa that is both beautiful and
suffering. Thank you from the bottom of our hearts.

His Eminence, Cardinal Fridolin ABONGO, President of SECAM, will join us tomorrow
morning. We welcome with joy and immense gratitude his presence among us and his fatherly
closeness, which solicitously watches over our continental Church. His presence at our
Assembly in Togo was a great comfort to us, and he continues to watch over the advancement
of consecrated life in Africa and Madagascar. Thank you, Eminence, for your unfailing
attention and the attentive ear you give to the most vulnerable segments of your Church.
Thank you very much.

I respectfully greet the Archbishop of Pretoria , all the Bishops of the Episcopal Conference,
the priests and the entire South African Church, for their warm welcome. Our thanks to His
Excellency, Monsignor Vusumuzi Mazibuko , in charge of Consecrated Life, who kindly agreed

to preside over this opening Eucharist. Thank you to the entire Church of South Africa, we are grateful to you.

I extend a special thank you to Sister Zelna Oosthuizen and the Religious of Pretoria , Johannesburg , South Africa, and the Region for their active involvement in organizing these meetings. Many thanks to you, dear Consecrated Sisters and Brothers.

I feel a deep sense of gratitude to the Major Superiors who have come from all walks of life. Thank you to our guests, our colleagues, and to all of you who are here to celebrate Consecrated Life with us in the Church. Thank you.

I express my deep gratitude to our major partner, MISSIO, without whom it would have been difficult for us to physically organize this meeting. I welcome the presence of Mr. Frank Krauss and Mrs. Johanna Streit, MISSIO representatives. Thank you for what you do for us and with us. Together, we will continue to meet the challenges that await us in Africa and around the world. Thank you from the bottom of my heart.

At the same time, I have a thought of deep gratitude for our Second Partner, HILTON FOUNDATION, who has accompanied us for two years, for the training of the Sisters in Africa and who will continue to walk with us. We are happy to have Sister Agn  s present Njeri Mburu , and we salute here their effective work alongside us. I sincerely thank you.

Our meeting takes place at the heart of the Jubilee of Hope, but also in the ecclesial context of the Synod on Synodality . This plural context has deeply inspired us in the choice of the theme of the Symposium and the General Assembly: Hope, Synodality and the Empowerment of Congregations in Africa and Madagascar.

This theme will guide our reflections, meditations and discussions during these COSMAM/COMSAM Conferences, here in Pretoria , for a renewal of Consecrated Life in Africa.

Indeed, by introducing the Church into synodality , Pope Francis wanted a new way of life. He invited the Church to enter into a new breath that the Holy Spirit is creating. It is about taking a synodal path, which is not only a change of structures, but a transformation of our way of being in the Church. This is how Synodality does not exist without Hope.

Hope is the driving force that drives us to walk together, to believe that the Spirit guides us, even in uncertainties. We must believe that it is possible to listen to others, to discern together, to change our outlook. Without hope, we can fall into discouragement and individualism. A synodal Church is a sign of hope for the world, because it is a Church that listens, that walks with the most deprived, the wounded of life, that seeks the truth in love and communion. "Hope teaches us that even in our disagreements, God is at work." (*Pope Francis, speech for the opening of the 2021 Synod*).

For us Consecrated Persons, called to be experts in communion, it is more than ever our responsibility to show the world the path of Synodality and Hope.

In an Africa marked by its beautiful youth, but also by social, ecological and economic crises, which lead to withdrawal, dispersion and discouragement, we have the noble mission of

showing the way of Living and Working Together, of mutual listening, of Hope in Christ, which does not disappoint. Thus, our Congregations will be able to achieve their autonomy, not in an isolated and selfish way , but together, as the Church, the Family of God.

this Symposium , which will be followed by the General Assembly of the Major Superiors of COSMAM, will bear the expected fruits, for an Africa that walks together on the paths of listening, hope, development and true peace, as disciples of the Risen Christ. May Consecrated Life in Africa, guided by the Holy Spirit and the Orientations of this Symposium and Assembly, show the way! Thank you.

Mother Marie DIOUF (fscm)
President of COSMAM/COMSAM



Confédération des conférences des supérieurs majeurs d'Afrique et de Madagascar

LA VIE CONSACRÉE ET L'ÉGLISE EN AFRIQUE FACE AUX ABUS SEXUELS

24 MAI 2025

JOHANNESBURG, AFRIQUE DU SUD

Sœur Linah Siabana (MSOLA)

INTRODUCTION

Les abus sexuels constituent un manquement profond et déchirant à la protection des membres les plus vulnérables de nos communautés – ces personnes, souvent des enfants et des personnes marginalisées, que nous avons solennellement promis de défendre et d'accompagner. Non seulement ces violations infligent de profonds préjudices émotionnels, psychologiques et physiques aux victimes, mais elles compromettent aussi considérablement l'intégrité, la confiance et la crédibilité de nos instituts et congrégations religieuses. Chaque incident porte atteinte aux principes fondamentaux de compassion et d'attention sur lesquels ces institutions reposent.

En tant que gardiens de la dignité humaine, nous avons la responsabilité collective de veiller à ce que notre conduite préserve systématiquement les droits et le bien-être des personnes qui nous sont confiées. Cela implique de mettre en œuvre des politiques de protection rigoureuses, de dispenser une formation complète à tous les membres et de favoriser des canaux de communication ouverts et transparents pour signaler les abus. Ce faisant, nous affirmons notre engagement à défendre les droits humains universellement, en créant un environnement où chacun se sent en sécurité, valorisé et respecté, à l'abri de toute menace de violence ou d'exploitation.

Comprendre les abus sexuels

L'abus sexuel englobe un ensemble d'actes qui contraignent ou poussent une personne à se livrer à des activités sexuelles non désirées. Cela peut prendre diverses formes, notamment la violence physique, la manipulation émotionnelle ou l'exploitation de rapports de force qui entravent la capacité d'une personne à donner un consentement éclairé. Les tactiques utilisées peuvent inclure l'intimidation, les menaces ou des comportements de manipulation qui compliquent encore davantage la capacité de la victime à résister ou à signaler l'abus.

Comprendre les particularités des abus sexuels est essentiel pour identifier les vulnérabilités spécifiques auxquelles sont confrontés différents groupes démographiques, notamment les femmes et les enfants. Ces groupes sont souvent exposés à des risques accrus en raison de facteurs sociaux, économiques et culturels qui peuvent aggraver leur situation, tant au sein du foyer qu'en milieu institutionnel. En reconnaissant ces complexités, nous pouvons œuvrer à



l'élaboration de stratégies de prévention, d'intervention et de soutien plus efficaces, répondant aux besoins spécifiques de chaque survivant.

Le contexte des abus sexuels en Afrique chez les consacrés

Bien que l'Église catholique mondiale constate une augmentation alarmante des cas signalés d'abus sexuels sur mineurs, la situation en Afrique présente des défis bien différents. Actuellement, les données concernant spécifiquement les abus sexuels sur les personnes consacrées, en particulier les religieuses et les laïques, restent remarquablement rares. Bien que des enquêtes isolées aient été menées, les données exhaustives et systématiques relatant les expériences et les témoignages des victimes d'agressions sexuelles dans ce contexte font cruellement défaut.

De nombreux facteurs compliquent et entravent la recherche approfondie sur cette question sensible. Les stigmates culturels associés aux abus sexuels empêchent souvent les discussions ouvertes ; les survivantes craignent souvent des représailles ou l'ostracisme au sein de leur communauté. De plus, un profond sentiment de loyauté envers l'Église et ses dirigeants peut dissuader les individus de se manifester. Contrairement à la couverture médiatique et aux actions de sensibilisation importantes observées en Europe et en Amérique, où les abus sur mineurs ont suscité une prise de conscience sociétale plus large, les abus sexuels subis par les femmes religieuses en Afrique restent souvent cachés et passés sous silence.

Les preuves historiques éclairent les abus systémiques subis par les religieuses, notamment de la part d'ecclésiastiques masculins, tout au long des XIXe et XXe siècles. Des rapports révèlent que nombre de ces femmes ont subi des violences psychologiques, physiques ou sexuelles, mais ces récits manquent souvent de preuves corroborantes et de documentation rigoureuse, nécessaires à une compréhension complète de l'ampleur du problème. Les procédures internes de l'Église privilégient généralement la réputation de l'institution au bien-être des personnes concernées, ce qui conduit à minimiser la gravité de ces problèmes et à privilégier le maintien de l'intégrité de l'Église au détriment des besoins des victimes. Par conséquent, la culture du silence omniprésente autour de ce sujet continue d'entraver la justice et la guérison des personnes touchées.

Dynamique du pouvoir et culture institutionnelle

La structure complexe du pouvoir au sein des institutions religieuses complique considérablement la réponse aux allégations d'abus sexuels. La nature hiérarchique profondément ancrée de l'Église favorise un environnement où une loyauté indéfectible envers l'autorité institutionnelle prime souvent sur le besoin crucial de responsabilité et de transparence. Cette loyauté recadre fréquemment les récits d'abus, les présentant comme des atteintes à la moralité de l'Église plutôt

que comme des signalements graves et légitimes de mauvaise conduite. Par conséquent, les survivants d'abus peuvent ressentir une forte pression pour garder le silence, accablés par la peur des représailles, l'incrédulité ou l'ostracisme au sein de leur communauté. Ce silence est souvent aggravé par une culture qui privilégie la protection de l'institution au bien-être des individus, laissant de nombreuses victimes avec le sentiment d'être isolées et ignorées.

LES DÉFIS DU SIGNALEMENT DES ABUS

De nombreux facteurs contribuent à la dissimulation et à la répression persistantes des cas d'abus sexuels chez les religieuses. Parmi ceux-ci, on peut citer :

1. **Biais des médias** : la couverture médiatique se concentre souvent sur les aspects sensationnels, ignorant les réalités nuancées et les voix des victimes, ce qui conduit à une sensibilisation et à une défense du public inadéquates.
2. **Normes de genre** : Les attentes sociétales concernant la féminité et le rôle des femmes dans la vie religieuse découragent les victimes de se manifester, car elles peuvent craindre d'être blâmées ou stigmatisées.
3. **Manque de défense des droits** : De nombreuses femmes religieuses n'ont pas accès à des ressources juridiques et de défense externes, ce qui les rend vulnérables à la manipulation des autorités cléricales, ce qui conduit souvent à l'incrédulité ou au rejet de leurs expériences.

CAUSES DES ABUS RELIGIEUX

La perpétuation des abus dans les contextes religieux peut souvent être attribuée à des facteurs systémiques et culturels spécifiques :

- **Privilège et pouvoir** : les clercs peuvent exploiter leur position pour commettre des abus, créant une dynamique de peur et d'intimidation parmi ceux qui sont sous leurs ordres.
- **Besoins et orientation spirituelle** : Les sœurs, dans la plupart des cas, recherchent une direction spirituelle auprès des prêtres, et elles partagent ce qu'elles vivent, exposant leur vulnérabilité
- **Culture de discrimination** : les préjugés à l'égard des femmes rendent souvent leurs expériences moins crédibles ou moins dignes d'attention.

- **Instabilité financière** : les pressions financières au sein des congrégations peuvent faire taire les victimes, qui peuvent craindre de perdre leurs moyens de subsistance ou le soutien de la communauté.

- **Conspiration du silence** : un accord tacite visant à ignorer ou à supprimer les allégations d'abus peut aggraver davantage le problème au sein des réseaux de responsabilité.

- **Recrutement des candidats** : par des congrégations qui n'ont pas une présence suffisante dans le pays. Parfois, les prêtres contribuent à ce recrutement actif .

CONSÉQUENCES DES ABUS

Les conséquences des abus sexuels vont bien au-delà du traumatisme immédiat subi par les victimes. Elles englobent des répercussions émotionnelles et psychologiques qui touchent des individus et des communautés entières. Les victimes peuvent être confrontées à :

- **Problèmes de santé mentale** : l'anxiété, la dépression et le trouble de stress post-traumatique sont courants chez les survivants.

- **Perte de confiance** : les communautés de survivants développent souvent une méfiance envers les autorités de l'Église, ce qui peut fracturer les relations communautaires et entraver la guérison.

- **Stigmatisation** : les victimes peuvent être confrontées à l'ostracisme ou à la marginalisation au sein de leurs communautés, ce qui exacerbe les sentiments d'isolement et de honte.

RECOMMANDATIONS

Pour combattre et traiter efficacement les problèmes liés aux abus sexuels, nous devons mettre en œuvre plusieurs recommandations essentielles :

1. **Créer des mécanismes de signalement robustes** : Établir des voies indépendantes et accessibles permettant aux victimes de signaler les abus sans crainte de représailles.

2. **Promouvoir l'éducation et la formation** : Offrir une formation complète sur les questions de consentement, d'aide personnelle et de dynamique du pouvoir dans les contextes religieux.

3. **Favoriser une culture d'ouverture** : encourager la transparence au sein des institutions religieuses qui privilégient le bien-être des victimes plutôt que la réputation institutionnelle.

4. **Mettre en œuvre une surveillance par des tiers** : faire appel à des groupes de défense externes pour garantir que les enquêtes sur les allégations sont traitées de manière impartiale et approfondie.

5. Mettre l'accent sur les systèmes de soutien : développer des ressources en matière de santé mentale et des réseaux de soutien spécifiquement adaptés aux victimes d'abus.

En reconnaissant la complexité multiforme des abus sexuels dans les contextes religieux, notamment en Afrique, nous pouvons engager des discussions essentielles qui ouvriront la voie à la création d'environnements plus sûrs pour tous. Cette reconnaissance implique de reconnaître les facteurs culturels, sociaux et systémiques qui contribuent au silence et à la stigmatisation qui entourent souvent ces questions. Il est essentiel de confronter ces dures réalités de manière constructive, en veillant à ce que chaque voix, et notamment celle des survivants, soit entendue et que chaque histoire soit valorisée. En favorisant un dialogue ouvert et en promouvant des initiatives éducatives au sein des communautés religieuses, nous pouvons donner aux individus les moyens d'obtenir justice et soutien, transformant ainsi le discours sur les abus et renforçant la protection des populations vulnérables.



SYMPOSIUM OF COMSAM - 23-25 May 2025 – South Africa

St Dominic's Catholic School, Boksburg

THEME: 'Hope, Synodality and the Empowerment of Consecrated Life in Africa'.

FRIDAY 23rd MAY

WHEN	WHAT	WHO
08h00-09h00	<i>Breakfast</i>	
09h00-10h00	Final Registrations Mass preparations	Sr Zonke & team
10h00-11h30	Opening Mass (planned by South Africa)	Archbishop Slattery
11h30-12h00	<i>Tea Break</i>	
12h00-12h15	Welcome Remarks - LCCLSA President	Sr Zelna Oosthuizen
12h15-12h30	Purpose of meeting & Introductions – Vice-President of Regional Conference of Major Superiors of S'n Africa (RCMSSA)	Sr Laurentina Motseki introduced by Sr Jacintha Rantsho
12h30-12h45	Background & Opening address – President of COMSAM	Sr Marie Diouf introduced by Sr Sidonie Oyembo
12h45-	Keynote address – Prefect: Dicastery for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life (CIVCSVA)	Sr Simona Brambilla MC intro: Sr Marie Douf
-13h30	... followed by interaction	Led by Facilitators*
13h30-15h00	<i>Lunch</i>	
	H O P E	
15h00-15h30	Jubilee of Hope: from the Bible to the life of the Church.	Sr Anne Arabome (Nigeria/Namibia) introduced by Sr Ottilie Endjala
15h30-16h00	How can Africa receive and enjoy the Jubilee of Hope?	Sr Christine Baka (Ivory Coast) intro. by Sr Aimee Raharivololonirin
16h00-16h15	<i>Break</i>	
16h15-16h45	Discussion at tables	Led by Facilitators
16h45-17h00	Closing comments and prayer	Facilitators
17h00	<i>Supper</i>	

* Facilitators: Sr Mary Tuck OP and brother Michael Burke CFC

SATURDAY 24th MAY

08h00-09h00	<i>Breakfast</i>	
09h00-09h15	Morning prayer & reflection and review of previous day.	Led by Facilitators
	SYNODALITY	
09h15-09h45	Synthesis of the Synod.	Cardinal Fridolin Ambongo (SECAM) introduced by Sr Rita Yamba
09h45-10h15	"Fostering Unity, Prophetic Witness, and Renewal through the Spirit of Synodality"	Sr Jane Waruguru Kimathi intro. by Sr Bridgita Samba Mwawasi
10h15-10h45	African expectations of the Synod.	Sr Ester Lucas José Maria (Moz.) introduced by Fr Rafael Simbine Junior
10h45-11h15	Discussion	Led by Facilitators
11h15-11h45	<i>Tea</i>	
11h45-12h10	An analysis of the economic trends in Africa and its impact/implications for Consecrated Life in Africa: how to be Pilgrims of Hope in the current economic context of Africa.	Professor Horman Chitonge (University of Western Cape, S. Africa) introduced by Fr Kenneth Macharaga
12h10-12h25	... followed by interaction.	Led by Facilitators.
12h30-13h30	Mass (planned by French Speakers)	Cardinal Ambongo OFM Cap
13h30-14h45	<i>Lunch</i>	

(Saturday afternoon)

14h30-14h50	Africa and the Global Economy.	Fr Charles Chilufya SJ introduced by Fr Jules Kipuju
14h55-15h15	The autonomy of Congregations in Africa: risks and challenges.	P. Benjamin Sombell (Senegal) introduced by Fr Muhatili Celestin
15h15-15h30	Discussion	Led by Facilitators.
15h30-15h45	<i>Break</i>	
15h45-16h15	CHURCH & ABUSE Consecrated Life and the Church in Africa in the face of sexual abuse: how to be pilgrims of hope with that kind of scourge ?	Sr Linah Siabana (Zambia/Uganda) introduced by Sr Grace Kyomugisha
16h15-16h30	Discussion	Led by Facilitators
16h30-17h00	Panel of partners	SECAM: Fr Rafael Simbine Junior SACBC: Fr Hugh O'Connor IMBISA: Fr Rafael Sapato Pactpan: Sr Jane Waruguru Kimathi Missio: Frank Kraus / Joana Streit
17h00-17h15	Fruits of the Symposium: recommendations that have arisen.	Facilitators.
17h15-17h30	Vote of thanks	Sr Zelna & Sr Laurentina
17h30-17h45	Closing of Symposium, & Prayer – President of COMSAM	Sr Marie Diouf
17h45	<i>Supper</i>	

SUNDAY 25th MAY

07h00-07h30	<i>Collect packed breakfast & get on buses</i>	
07h30-08h45	Buses travel to Soweto.	Transport co-ordinated by Brother John Bwanali FMS.
09h00	Mass at Regina Mundi Catholic Church in Soweto.	Main Celebrant: Cardinal Ambongo And Archbishop Tlhagale All who have brought flags use them in the entrance procession, with one group leading. These will be placed on the altar steps. Readings in French, Portuguese, and Zulu Offertory procession : symbols to express the two Jubilees: ▪ Jubilee logo ▪ COMSAM placard. and a bowl of vegetables & fruit – representatives from each region carry the gifts.
±11h00	<i>Refreshments after Mass.</i>	
12h00-14h00	Excursion: Regina Mundi, Mandela's House and Hector Peterson Museum.	
14h00-15h00	Buses return to St Dominic's, Boksburg.	Brother John Bwanali FMS
15h00-16h00	Refreshments served.	
16h00	Cultural evening...	ALL invited to contribute items.
	<i>with 'braai' supper.</i>	
19h00	Departure.	



SYMPOSIUM DE COMSAM - 23-25 mai 2025 – Afrique du Sud
Saint Dominique catholique École , Boksburg

THÈME : « Espérance, synodalité et autonomisation de la vie consacrée en Afrique ».

VENDREDI 23 MAI

QUAND	QUOI	OMS
08h00-09h00	<i>Petit-déjeuner</i>	
09h00-10h00	Inscriptions définitives Préparatifs de messe	Sr Zonke et son équipe
10h00-11h30	Ouverture Messe (prévue par l'Afrique du Sud)	Bishop Slattery
11h30-12h00	<i>Pause thé</i>	
12h00-12h15	Accueillir Remarques - Président de la LCCLSA	Sœur Zelna Oosthuizen
12h15-12h30	Objet de la réunion et présentations – Vice-président de Conférence régionale de Supérieurs Majeurs de l'Afrique du Sud (RCMSSA)	Sœur Laurentina Motseki présenté par Sr Jacintha Rantsho
12h30-12h45	Contexte et ouverture adresse - Président de la COMSAM	Sœur Marie Diouf introduit par Sr Sr Sidonie Oyembo
12h45-	Discours d'ouverture – Préfet : Dicastère pour les Instituts de Vie Consacrée et Sociétés de vie apostolique (CIVCSVA)	Sœur Simona Brambilla MC intro : Sr Marie Douf
-13h30	... suivi d'une interaction	Animé par des facilitateurs*
13h30-15h00	<i>Déjeuner</i>	
15h00-15h30	ESPOIR Jubilé de l' espoir : de la Bible à la vie de l'Église.	Sr Anne Arabome (Nigeria/Namibie) présenté par Sr Ottilie Endjala
15h30-16h00	Comment l'Afrique peut- elle recevoir et profiter le Jubilé de l'espoir ?	Sr Christine Baka (Côte d'Ivoire) introduction . par Sr Aimee Raharivololonirine
16h00-16h15	<i>Casser</i>	
16h15-16h45	Discussion aux tables	Animé par des facilitateurs
16h45-17h00	Commentaires de clôture et prière	Animateurs
17h00	<i>Souper</i>	

* Animateurs : Sr Mary Tuck OP et frère Michael Burke CFC

SAMEDI 24 MAI

08h00-09h00	<i>Petit-déjeuner</i>	
09h00-09h15	Prière du matin et réflexion et examen des précédents jour .	Animé par des facilitateurs
09h15-09h45	SYNODALITE Synthèse du Synode .	Cardinal Fridolin Ambongo (SECAM) présenté par Sr Rita Yamba
09h45-10h15	La contribution de l'Afrique palabre à Participation africaine au Synode .	Sœur Jane Waruguru Kimathi introduction. par Sœur Bridgita Samba Mwawasi
10h15-10h45	africaines du Synode .	Sr Ester Lucas José Maria (Moz .) présenté par le Père Rafael Simbine Junior
10h45-11h15	Discussion	Animé par des facilitateurs
11h15-11h45	<i>Thé</i>	

11h45-12h10	Une analyse des tendances économiques en L'Afrique et son impact/implications pour La vie consacrée en Afrique : comment être Pèlerins de l'espoir dans le présent économique contexte de l'Afrique.	Professeur Horman Chitonge (Université du Cap-Occidental, Afrique du Sud) présenté par le Père Kenneth Macharaga
12h10-12h25	... suivi d'une interaction.	Animé par des facilitateurs .
12h30-13h30	Messe (organisée par des francophones)	du Cardinal Ambongo OFM
13h30-14h45	<i>Déjeuner</i>	

(Samedi après-midi)

14h30-14h50	L'Afrique et l'économie mondiale.	Père Charles Chilufya SJ présenté par le Père Jules Kipuju
14h55-15h15	L' autonomie des Congrégations en Afrique: risques et défis.	P. Benjamin Sombell (Sénégal) présenté par le Père Muhatili Célestin
15h15-15h30	Discussion	Animé par des facilitateurs .
15h30-15h45	<i>Casser</i>	
15h45-16h15	ÉGLISE ET ABUS consacrée et l'Église en L'Afrique face à la violence sexuelle abus: comment être pèlerins de l'espoir avec que une sorte de fléau ?	Sœur Linah Siabana (Zambie /Ouganda) présenté par Sr Grace Kyomugisha
16h15-16h30	Discussion	Animé par des facilitateurs
16h30-17h00	Panel de partenaires	SECAM : Père Rafael Simbine Junior SACBC : Père Hugh O'Connor CHÈVRE: Père Raphaël Sapato Pacte : Sœur Jane Waruguru Kimathi Mission : Frank Kraus / Joana Streit
17h00-17h15	Fruits du Symposium : recommandations qui ont surgi .	Animateurs .
17h15-17h30	Vote de remerciements	Sœur Zelna et Sœur Laurentina
17h30-17h45	Clôture du Symposium et Prière – Président de la COMSAM	Sœur Marie Diouf
17h45	<i>Souper</i>	

DIMANCHE 25 MAI

07h00-07h30	<i>Collecter petit-déjeuner à emporter et monter dans les bus</i>	
07h30-08h45	Les bus se rendent à Soweto.	Transport coordonné par Frère John Bwanali FMS.
09h00	Messe à l'église catholique Regina Mundi à Soweto.	Célébrant principal : Cardinal Ambongo Tous ceux qui ont apporté des drapeaux utilisent eux dans le cortège d'entrée, avec un groupe en tête . Ceux-ci volonté être placé sur l' autel étapes . Lectures en français, portugais ,

		et zoulou d'offrande : symboles à exprimer les deux Jubilés : ▪ Logo du Jubilé ▪ Plaque COMSAM . et un bol de légumes et de fruits – représentants depuis chaque région porter les cadeaux.
± 11h00	<i>Rafraîchissements après la messe.</i>	
12h00-14h00	Excursion : Regina Mundi, Mandela Maison et musée Hector Peterson.	
14h00-15h00	Les bus reviennent à St Dominic's , Boksburg.	Frère John Bwanali FMS
15h00-16h00	Rafraîchissements servi .	
16h00	Soirée culturelle ...	TOUS sont invités à contribuer avec des articles.
	<i>avec un souper « braai » .</i>	
19h00	Départ .	



Simpósio da COMSAM - 23-25 de Maio de 2025 – Africa do Sul

St Dominic's Escola Católica, Boksburg

Tema: 'Esperança, Sinodalidade e capacitação da Vida Consagrada em África'.

Sexta-feira, 23 de maio

QUANDO	QUE	QUEM
08h00-09h00	<i>Pequeno-almoço</i>	
09h00-10h00	Últimas Inscrições Preparação para missa	Ir. Zonke & Equipa
10h00-11h30	Missa de abertura (planeada pela Africa do Sul)	Bispo Slattery
11h30-12h00	<i>Café</i>	
12h00-12h15	Palavras de boas-vindas - Presidente da LCCLSA	Ir. Zelna Oosthuizen
12h15-12h30	Objectivo do encontro & Apresentações Vice-Presidente da Conferência Regional dos Superiores Maiores da Africa Austral (RCMSSA)	Ir. Laurentina Motseki Apresentada pela Ir. Jacintha Rantsho
12h30-12h45	Proposito & Palavra de abertura – Presidente da COMSAM	Ir. Marie Diouf Apresentada pela Ir. Sidonie Oyembo
12h45-	Palestra – Prefeito do Dicasterio para os Institutos da vida Consagrada e Sociedades da Vida Apostolica (CIVCSVA)	Ir. Simona Brambilla MC Apresentada pela Ir. Marie Douf
-13h30	... Seguido por interação	Orientada pelos moderadores
13h30-15h00	<i>Almoço</i>	
15h00-15h30	ESPERANÇA Jubileu de esperança: da biblia á vida da Igreja	Ir. Anne Arabome (Nigeria/Namibia) Apresentada pela Ir Ottilie Endjala
15h30-16h00	Como Africa pode receber e vivenciar o Jubileu da Esperança ?	Ir. Christine Baka (Ivory Coast) Apres. pela Ir Aimee Raharivololonirin
16h00-16h15	<i>Intervalo</i>	
16h15-16h45	Discussão a mesa redonda	Orientada pelos Moderadores
16h45-17h00	Comentários e oração final	Moderadores
17h00	<i>Jantar</i>	

* Moderadores: Ir. Mary Tuck OP e Irmão Michael Burke CFC

Sábado, 24 de maio

08h00-09h00	<i>Pequeno-almoço</i>	
09h00-09h15	Oração da manhã & reflexão e revisão do dia anterior	Orientada pelos Moderadores
09h15-09h45	Sinodalidade Síntese do Sinodo	Cardinal Fridolin Ambongo (SECAM) Apresentado pela Ir Rita Yamba
09h45-10h15	A contribuição Africana na participação ao Sinodo	Ir. Jane Waruguru Kimathi apres. pela Ir Bridgita Samba Mwawasi
10h15-10h45	Expectativa Africana do Sinodo	Ir Ester Lucas José Maria (Moz.) Apres. pelo Pe. Rafael Simbine Junior
10h45-11h15	Debate	Orientado pelos Moderadores
11h15-11h45	<i>Lanche</i>	
11h45-12h10	Uma análise das tendências económicas na África e seu impacto/implicações para a Vida Consagrada na África: como ser	Professor Horman Chitonge (University of Western Cape, S. Africa) introduced by Fr Kenneth Macharaga

	Peregrinos da Esperança na atual contexto económico de África.	
12h10-12h25	... Seguido de reações	Orientada pelos Moderadores
12h30-13h30	Missa (preparada pelos Francófonos	Cardinal Ambongo OFM Cap
13h30-14h45	<i>Almoço</i>	

(Sábado á tarde)

14h30-14h50	África e a economia mundial.	Pe. Charles Chilufya SJ introduced by Fr Jules Kipuju
14h55-15h15	Autonomia das Congregações em África : riscos e desafios.	Pe. Benjamin Sombell (Senegal) Apres. Pelo Pe. Muhatili Celestin
15h15-15h30	Debate	Orientado pelos Moderadores
15h30-15h45	<i>Break</i>	
15h45-16h15	IGREJA & A B U S O S A Vida Consagrada e a Igreja na África diante do abuso sexual: como ser peregrinos da esperança diante desse tipo de flagelo?	Ir. Linah Siabana (Zambia/Uganda) Apres. by Ir Grace Kyomugisha
16h15-16h30	Debate	Orientado pelos Moderadores
16h30-17h00	Panel dos Parceiros	SECAM: Pe Rafael Simbine Junior SACBC: Pe Hugh O'Connor IMBISA: Pe Rafael Sapato Pactpan: Ir Jane Waruguru Kimathi Missio: Frank Kraus / Joana Streit
17h00-17h15	Frutos do Simposio : Recomendações levantadas	Moderadores.
17h15-17h30	Palavras de agradecimento	Ir Zelna & Ir Laurentina
17h30-17h45	Final do Simposio, & Oração – Presidente da COMSAM	Ir Marie Diouf
17h45	<i>Jantar</i>	

Domingo, 25 de Maio

07h00-07h30	<i>Pegar o Pequeno-almoço e subir no autocarro</i>	
07h30-08h45	Partida para Soweto.	Cordenação de transporte pelo Irmão John Bwanali FMS.
09h00	Mass at Regina Mundi Catholic Church in Soweto.	Presidente da celebração: Cardinal Ambongo. Todos que trouxeram bandeiras usaram na procissão de entrada com orientação de um grupo. Serão colocadas no presbitério. Leituras em Francês, Português e Zulu Procissão do ofertório: Simbolos para expressar os dois jubileus: ▪ loogotipo do jubileu ▪ Cartaz da COMSAM . E um cesto de verduras & frutas – Representante de cada região levará um presente
±11h00	<i>Refresco depois da missa</i>	

12h00-14h00	Excursão : Regina Mundi, Casa de Mandela e Hector Peterson Museum.	
14h00-15h00	Regresso a St Dominic's, Boksburg.	Irmão John Bwanali FMS
15h00-16h00	Refresco	
16h00	Noite cultural...	Todos são convidados a contribuir algo.
	<i>Com 'braai' Jantar</i>	
19h00	Partida	



**CONFEDERATION OF CONFERENCES OF MAJOR SUPERIORS IN AFRICA AND
MADAGASCAR**

CONSECRATED LIFE AND THE CHURCH IN AFRICA IN THE FACE OF SEXUAL ABUSE

24TH MAY 2025

JOHANNESBURG, SOUTH AFRICA

SR. LINAH SIABANA (MSOLA)

INTRODUCTION

Sexual abuse represents a profound and harrowing failure to protect the most vulnerable members of our communities—those individuals, often children and marginalized persons, whom we have solemnly vowed to defend and nurture. This violation not only inflicts deep emotional, psychological, and physical harm on the victims but also significantly jeopardizes the integrity, trust, and credibility of our religious institutes and congregations. Each incident undermines the foundational principles of compassion and care that these institutions are built upon.

As stewards of human dignity, we bear a collective responsibility to ensure that our conduct consistently safeguards the rights and well-being of those entrusted to our care. This includes implementing rigorous safeguarding policies, providing comprehensive training for all members, and fostering open, transparent communication channels for reporting abuse. In doing so, we affirm our commitment to uphold human rights universally, creating an environment where individuals feel safe, valued, and respected, free from the threat of violence or exploitation.

Understanding Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse encompasses a range of actions that coerce or pressure individuals into engaging in unwanted sexual activity. This can manifest in various forms, including physical violence, emotional manipulation, or leveraging power dynamics that inhibit a person's capacity to give informed consent. The tactics used may involve intimidation, threats, or grooming behaviors that further complicate the victim's ability to resist or report the abuse.

Understanding the peculiarities of sexual abuse is crucial for recognizing the specific vulnerabilities that different demographics face, particularly women and children. These groups often experience heightened risks due to social, economic, and cultural factors that can exacerbate their situations within both domestic and institutional settings. By acknowledging these complexities, we can work towards more effective prevention, intervention, and support strategies that address the unique needs of all survivors.

The Context of Sexual Abuse in Africa among the Consecrated

Despite the global Catholic Church witnessing an alarming increase in reported cases of child sexual abuse, the situation in Africa presents a distinctly different set of challenges. Currently, data specifically addressing sexual abuse among consecrated individuals, particularly religious sisters and laywomen, remains remarkably sparse. While isolated investigations have been conducted, comprehensive and systematic data capturing the experiences and voices of victims of sexual assault in this context is severely lacking.

Multiple factors complicate and obstruct thorough research into this sensitive issue. Cultural stigmas associated with sexual abuse often prevent open discussions; survivors frequently fear retaliation or ostracism within their communities. Additionally, a deeply ingrained sense of loyalty to the Church and its leaders can deter individuals from coming forward. Unlike the extensive media coverage and advocacy seen in Europe and America, where the abuse of minors has catalyzed a broader societal reckoning, the sexual abuses endured by women in religious life in Africa frequently remain hidden and silenced.

Historical evidence provides insight into the systemic abuse faced by women religious, particularly at the hands of male clerics, throughout the 19th and 20th centuries. Reports reveal that many of these women suffered emotional, physical, or sexual abuse, but such accounts often lack the extensive corroborative evidence and rigorous documentation necessary for a complete understanding of the scope of the problem. Internal Church procedures typically prioritize the institution's reputation over the welfare of the affected individuals, leading to a minimization of the gravity of these issues and a focus on maintaining the Church's integrity rather than addressing the needs of victims. As a result, the pervasive culture of silence surrounding this topic continues to hinder justice and healing for those impacted.

Power Dynamics and Institutional Culture

The intricate structure of power within religious institutions significantly complicates the response to sexual abuse allegations. The deeply entrenched hierarchical nature of the Church fosters an environment where an unwavering loyalty to institutional authority often takes precedence over the critical need for accountability and transparency. This loyalty frequently reframes narratives of abuse, casting them as challenges to the Church's moral standing rather than recognizing them as serious and legitimate reports of misconduct. Consequently, survivors of abuse may feel a profound pressure to remain silent, burdened by the fear of retaliation, disbelief, or ostracism within their communities. This silence is often compounded by a culture that prioritizes the protection of the institution over the welfare of individuals, leaving many victims feeling isolated and unheard.

CHALLENGES TO REPORTING ABUSE

A myriad of factors contribute to the continued concealment and suppression of instances of sexual abuse among women religious. These include:

1. **Media Bias:** Coverage often focuses on sensational aspects, disregarding the nuanced realities and the voices of the victims, leading to inadequate public awareness and advocacy.
2. **Gender Norms:** Societal expectations surrounding femininity and the roles of women in religious life discourage victims from coming forward, as they may fear being blamed or stigmatized.
3. **Lack of Advocacy:** Many religious women lack access to external legal and advocacy resources, leaving them vulnerable to manipulation by clerical authorities, often leading to disbelief or dismissal of their experiences.

CAUSES OF RELIGIOUS ABUSE

The perpetuation of abuse in religious settings can often be traced to specific systemic and cultural factors:

- **Privilege and Power:** Clerics may exploit their positions to perpetrate abuse, creating a dynamic of fear and intimidation among those beneath them.
- **Spiritual needs and guidance:** The sisters, in most cases, seek spiritual direction from the priests, and they share what they go through, exposing their vulnerability
- **Culture of Discrimination:** Prejudices against women often render their experiences as less credible or deserving of attention.
- **Financial Instability:** Financial pressures within congregations can silence victims, who may fear losing their livelihoods or community support.
- **Conspiracy of Silence:** An unspoken agreement to overlook or suppress abuse claims can further entrench the problem within networks of accountability.
- **Recruitment of Candidates:** by Congregations who do not have a sufficient presence in the country. Sometimes, priests help in this active recruitment.

CONSEQUENCES OF ABUSE

The ramifications of sexual abuse extend far beyond the immediate trauma experienced by victims. They encompass emotional and psychological repercussions affecting individuals and entire communities. Victims may struggle with:

- **Mental Health Issues:** Anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder are common among survivors.
- **Loss of Trust:** Survivor communities often develop mistrust towards Church authorities, which can fracture communal relationships and hinder healing.
- **Stigmatization:** Victims may face ostracism or marginalization within their communities, exacerbating feelings of isolation and shame.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To combat and address the issues surrounding sexual abuse effectively, we must implement several critical recommendations:

1. **Create Robust Reporting Mechanisms:** Establish independent, accessible avenues for victims to report abuse without fear of retaliation.
2. **Promote Education and Training:** Provide comprehensive training on issues of consent, personal help, and the dynamics of power within religious contexts.
3. **Foster a Culture of Openness:** Encourage transparency within religious institutions that prioritizes the welfare of victims over institutional reputation.
4. **Implement Third-Party Oversight:** Engage external advocacy groups to ensure investigations of allegations are handled impartially and thoroughly.
5. **Focus on Support Systems:** Develop mental health resources and support networks specifically tailored for victims of abuse.

By acknowledging the multifaceted complexities surrounding sexual abuse within religious settings, particularly in the African context, we can initiate vital discussions that pave the way for creating safer environments for all individuals. This acknowledgment involves recognizing the cultural, social, and systemic factors that contribute to the silence and stigma often surrounding these issues. It is essential for us to confront these harsh realities in meaningful ways, ensuring that every voice especially those of survivors is heard and every story is valued. By fostering open dialogues and promoting educational initiatives within religious communities, we can empower individuals to seek justice and support, ultimately transforming the narrative surrounding abuse and enhancing the protection of vulnerable populations.

WELCOME SPEECH By Sr Laurentina Motseki

Good morning, Bonjour, Bom dia, esteemed guests, dear brothers and sisters in Consecrated Life,

It is with deep joy and heartfelt gratitude that I welcome you all to this historic gathering, where consecrated men and women from across Africa and Madagascar have come together—under one roof—for the very first time here in South Africa. We gather in celebration of the Jubilee Year of Consecrated Life, under the powerful and timely theme: “Hope, Synodality, and the Empowerment of Consecrated Life in Africa.”

I am Sr. L. Motseki, a Sister of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary (SNJM) from the Lesotho Province, and I serve as Vice President of the Regional Conference of Major Superiors of Southern Africa. I stand before you today on behalf of the President of our Regional Conference, Fr. José Joaquim, a Comboni Missionary, who unfortunately could not join us. It is a great pleasure—and indeed an honour—for our Regional Conference to host such a distinguished and spirit-filled assembly. When COMSAM approached us with the idea of entrusting this gathering to “the newest baby on the block,” we humbly embraced the opportunity. South Africa was seen as the ideal choice—and we are grateful that the Leadership Conference of Consecrated Life in South Africa (LCCLSA) graciously accepted the task of hosting this milestone event. We thank them most sincerely for their generous spirit and hard work.

The fruits of this Symposium will surely be many. For our young conference, it is a unique opportunity for formation, collaboration, visibility, and solidarity. It allows us to deepen relationships with continental and global partners, strengthen our identity, and learn from the rich diversity of charisms and experiences represented here.

We are especially honoured to welcome Sr. Marie Diouf, President of COMSAM; His Eminence Cardinal Fridolin Ambongo, President of SECAM; and in a truly historic moment, Sr. Simona Brambilla, Prefect of the Dicastery for Institutes of Consecrated Life and Societies of Apostolic Life—the first woman ever to be appointed to this position in the Vatican. Your presence gives us encouragement, inspiration, and hope for a more synodal and inclusive Church.

We also gratefully acknowledge our valued partners and supporters: the Hilton Foundation, Missio, and PACTPAN. Your faithful accompaniment and support continue to strengthen Consecrated Life across the continent.

Dear sisters and brothers, the vibrant presence of so many religious here today is a powerful sign of the life, hope, and missionary dynamism that the Church in Africa embodies. We are pilgrims of hope on the way of peace, called together to listen, discern, and empower one another in the service of God’s people.

Let us fully and joyfully participate in this sacred time. May it be a space of communion, renewal, and deepened commitment.

Let us rejoice and be glad!

Thank you!

Merci beaucoup!

Obrigado!

CONFEDERAÇÃO DAS CONFERÊNCIAS DOS SUPERIORES MAIORES DA ÁFRICA E DE MADAGASCAR

A VIDA CONSAGRADA E A IGREJA NA ÁFRICA DIANTE DO ABUSO SEXUAL
24 DE MAIO DE 2025
JOANESBURGO, ÁFRICA DO SUL

IRMÃ LINAH SIABANA (MSOLA)

INTRODUÇÃO

O abuso sexual representa uma falha profunda e angustiante na proteção dos membros mais vulneráveis de nossas comunidades — aqueles indivíduos, frequentemente crianças e pessoas marginalizadas, que juramos solenemente defender e cuidar. Essa violação não apenas inflige profundos danos emocionais, psicológicos e físicos às vítimas, mas também compromete significativamente a integridade, a confiança e a credibilidade de nossas instituições e congregações religiosas. Cada incidente mina os princípios fundamentais de compaixão e cuidado sobre os quais essas instituições se baseiam.

Como guardiões da dignidade humana, temos a responsabilidade coletiva de garantir que nossa conduta proteja consistentemente os direitos e o bem-estar daqueles que estão sob nossos cuidados. Isso inclui implementar políticas rigorosas de proteção, oferecer treinamento abrangente a todos os membros e promover canais de comunicação abertos e transparentes para denúncias de abusos. Ao fazê-lo, afirmamos nosso compromisso de defender os direitos humanos universalmente, criando um ambiente onde os indivíduos se sintam seguros, valorizados e respeitados, livres da ameaça de violência ou exploração.

Compreendendo o Abuso Sexual



O abuso sexual abrange uma série de ações que coagem ou pressionam indivíduos a se envolverem em atividades sexuais indesejadas. Isso pode se manifestar de várias formas, incluindo violência física, manipulação emocional ou alavancagem de dinâmicas de poder que inibem a capacidade da pessoa de dar consentimento informado. As táticas utilizadas podem envolver intimidação, ameaças ou comportamentos de aliciamento que complicam ainda mais a capacidade da vítima de resistir ou denunciar o abuso.

Compreender as peculiaridades do abuso sexual é crucial para reconhecer as vulnerabilidades específicas que diferentes grupos demográficos enfrentam, especialmente mulheres e crianças. Esses grupos frequentemente enfrentam riscos elevados devido a fatores sociais, econômicos e culturais que podem agravar suas situações, tanto em ambientes domésticos quanto institucionais. Ao reconhecer essas complexidades, podemos trabalhar em prol de estratégias de prevenção, intervenção e apoio mais eficazes que atendam às necessidades únicas de todas as sobreviventes.

O Contexto do Abuso Sexual na África entre Consagrados

Apesar de a Igreja Católica global testemunhar um aumento alarmante nos casos relatados de abuso sexual infantil, a situação na África apresenta um conjunto de desafios distintamente diferente. Atualmente, os dados que abordam especificamente o abuso sexual entre pessoas consagradas, particularmente religiosas e leigas, permanecem notavelmente escassos. Embora investigações isoladas tenham sido conduzidas, dados abrangentes e sistemáticos que captem as experiências e as vozes das vítimas de agressão sexual nesse contexto são extremamente escassos.

Múltiplos fatores complicam e obstruem a pesquisa aprofundada sobre esta questão sensível. Estigmas culturais associados ao abuso sexual frequentemente impedem discussões abertas; sobreviventes frequentemente temem retaliação ou ostracismo dentro de suas comunidades. Além disso, um profundo senso de lealdade à Igreja e seus líderes pode dissuadir indivíduos de se

apresentarem. Ao contrário da ampla cobertura da mídia e da defesa de direitos vista na Europa e nos Estados Unidos, onde o abuso de menores catalisou uma avaliação social mais ampla, os abusos sexuais sofridos por mulheres na vida religiosa na África frequentemente permanecem ocultos e silenciados.

Evidências históricas fornecem insights sobre o abuso sistêmico enfrentado por religiosas, particularmente nas mãos de clérigos homens, ao longo dos séculos XIX e XX. Relatos revelam que muitas dessas mulheres sofreram abuso emocional, físico ou sexual, mas tais relatos frequentemente carecem de amplas evidências corroborativas e da documentação rigorosa necessária para uma compreensão completa da extensão do problema. Os procedimentos internos da Igreja geralmente priorizam a reputação da instituição em detrimento do bem-estar dos indivíduos afetados, levando à minimização da gravidade dessas questões e a um foco na manutenção da integridade da Igreja em vez de atender às necessidades das vítimas. Como resultado, a cultura de silêncio generalizada em torno desse tema continua a dificultar a justiça e a recuperação para as vítimas.

Dinâmica de Poder e Cultura Institucional

A intrincada estrutura de poder dentro das instituições religiosas complica significativamente a resposta a alegações de abuso sexual. A natureza hierárquica profundamente arraigada da Igreja promove um ambiente em que uma lealdade inabalável à autoridade institucional frequentemente prevalece sobre a necessidade crucial de responsabilização e transparência. Essa lealdade frequentemente reformula narrativas de abuso, apresentando-as como desafios à posição moral da Igreja, em vez de reconhecê-las como relatos sérios e legítimos de má conduta. Consequentemente, sobreviventes de abuso podem sentir uma profunda pressão para permanecer em silêncio, sobrecarregados pelo medo de retaliação, descrença ou ostracismo dentro de suas comunidades.

Esse silêncio é frequentemente agravado por uma cultura que prioriza a proteção da instituição em detrimento do bem-estar dos indivíduos, fazendo com que muitas vítimas se sintam isoladas e ignoradas.

DESAFIOS PARA A DENUNCIAR ABUSO

Inumeráveis fatores contribuem para a ocultação e a supressão contínuas de casos de abuso sexual entre religiosas. Estes incluem:

1. preconceito da mídia: A cobertura frequentemente se concentra em aspectos sensacionalistas, desconsiderando as realidades diferenciadas e as vozes das vítimas, levando a uma conscientização e defesas públicas inadequadas.
2. Normas de gênero: As expectativas sociais em torno da feminilidade e dos papéis das mulheres na vida religiosa desencorajam as vítimas a se manifestarem, pois podem temer serem culpabilizadas ou estigmatizadas.
3. Falta de defesa: Muitas religiosas não têm acesso a recursos jurídicos e de defesa externas, o que as deixa vulneráveis à manipulação por autoridades clericais, o que muitas vezes leva à descrença ou à desconsideração de suas experiências.

CAUSAS DO ABUSO RELIGIOSO

A perpetuação do abuso em ambientes religiosos pode frequentemente ser atribuída a fatores sistêmicos e culturais específicos:

- Privilégio e Poder: Clérigos podem explorar suas posições para perpetrar abusos, criando uma dinâmica de medo e intimidação entre aqueles abaixo deles.
- Necessidades e orientação espiritual: As irmãs, na maioria dos casos, buscam orientação espiritual dos padres e compartilham suas experiências, expondo sua vulnerabilidade.
- Cultura de Discriminação: Preconceitos contra mulheres frequentemente tornam suas experiências menos críveis ou merecedoras de atenção.
- Instabilidade Financeira: Pressões financeiras dentro das congregações podem silenciar as vítimas, que podem temer perder seus meios de subsistência ou o apoio da comunidade.
- Conspiração do Silêncio: Um acordo tácito para ignorar ou suprimir denúncias de abuso pode aprofundar ainda mais o problema nas redes de responsabilização.
- Recrutamento de Candidatas: por Congregações que não têm uma presença suficiente no país. Às vezes, padres ajudam nesse recrutamento ativo.

CONSEQUÊNCIAS DO ABUSO

As ramificações do abuso sexual vão muito além do trauma imediato vivenciado pelas vítimas. Elas abrangem repercussões emocionais e psicológicas que afetam indivíduos e comunidades inteiras. As vítimas podem enfrentar:

- Problemas de saúde mental: Ansiedade, depressão e transtorno de estresse pós-traumático são comuns entre os sobreviventes.

- Perda de confiança: As comunidades de sobreviventes frequentemente desenvolvem desconfiança em relação às autoridades da Igreja, o que pode romper os relacionamentos comunitários e dificultar a recuperação.
- Estigmatização: As vítimas podem enfrentar ostracismo ou marginalização em suas comunidades, exacerbando sentimentos de isolamento e vergonha.

RECOMENDAÇÕES

Para combater e abordar as questões que envolvem o abuso sexual de forma eficaz, precisamos implementar várias recomendações cruciais:

1. Criar mecanismos robustos de denúncia: Estabelecer canais independentes e acessíveis para que as vítimas denunciem o abuso sem medo de retaliação.
2. Promover educação e treinamento: Oferecer treinamento abrangente sobre questões de consentimento, ajuda pessoal e a dinâmica de poder em contextos religiosos.
3. Promover uma cultura de abertura: Incentivar a transparência dentro das instituições religiosas que priorizem o bem-estar das vítimas em detrimento da reputação institucional.
4. Implementar supervisão terceirizada: Envolver grupos externos de defesa para garantir que as investigações de alegações sejam conduzidas de forma imparcial e completa.

5. Focar em sistemas de apoio: Desenvolver recursos de saúde mental e redes de apoio especificamente adaptadas para vítimas de abuso.

Ao reconhecer as complexidades multifacetadas que cercam o abuso sexual em contextos religiosos, particularmente no contexto africano, podemos iniciar discussões vitais que abram caminho para a criação de ambientes mais seguros para todos os indivíduos. Esse reconhecimento envolve a compreensão dos fatores culturais, sociais e sistêmicos que contribuem para o silêncio e o estigma que frequentemente cercam essas questões. Precisamos confrontar essas duras realidades de maneiras significativas, garantindo que todas as vozes, especialmente as das sobreviventes, sejam ouvidas e que todas as histórias sejam valorizadas. Ao fomentar diálogos abertos e promover iniciativas educacionais dentro das comunidades religiosas, podemos capacitar os indivíduos a buscar justiça e apoio, transformando, em última análise, a narrativa em torno do abuso e fortalecendo a proteção das populações vulneráveis.

