**ADDENDUM 1**

**TALKS AND TESTIMONIES**

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**SATURDAY 25 OCTOBER 2014**

1. **ARCHBISHOP SLATTERY –“ Enlarge the space of your tent” - Belonging to Christ, committed for mission.**

**Highlights of Archbishop Slattery’s opening address**

1. ***The Joy of Gospel (EG, 120).***

By virtue of their baptism, all the members of the People of God have become missionary disciples (Mt 28:19) and are agents of evangelization whatever their position in the Church or their level of instruction in the faith. The document calls for personal involvement on the part of each of the baptized and being actively engaged in evangelization. The end of evangelization is encountering the love of God in Christ and proclaiming this love joyfully. “We are missionary disciples”.

1. ***Ecclesia in Africa/ The Church in Africa (EA)***

This document emerged from the first Synod for Africa that was held in Rome.

Among the exhortations from Pope John Paul II to the Synod fathers were:

* to send missionaries from Africa to other parts of the world; to take an active part in missionary zeal to other parts of the world. He reminded the bishops not to lose sight of the needs of the church globally. This was to be considered a priority. *… "No particular Church, not even the poorest, can ever be dispensed from the obligation of sharing its personnel as well as its spiritual and temporal resources with other particular Churches and with the universal Church.**The Synod Fathers acknowledged God's call to Africa to play its full part, at the world level, in his plan for the salvation of the human race* ***(EA 129).***
* *"In order that this missionary zeal may flourish among their native members, it is very fitting that the young Churches should participate as soon as possible in the universal missionary work of the Church. Let them send their own missionaries to proclaim the Gospel all over the world, even though they themselves are suffering from a shortage of clergy”.* ***(EA 130)***
* A demand for priests who are mature, … “*This will demand of them not only maturity in their vocation, but also an uncommon readiness to detach themselves from their own homeland, culture and family, and a special ability to adapt to other cultures, with understanding and respect for them"***.*(EA 133)*** able to die to themselves, their own culture and family.
* For institutes to engage new members – sons and daughters, “*young in faith”*, to be missionaries to the world. *“You are the hope of* *this two-thousand-year-old Church of ours*. The young in faith in Africa are called, like the first Christians, to reach out in love to all; to … *be a leaven of missionary spirit for the older Churches"*.***(EA136)***
* *"…The whole community needs to be trained, motivated and empowered for evangelization…* This includes clergy, members of various Institutes, Societies, …”*and all the lay faithful”. “The formation programme will especially include the training of the lay faithful, so that they will fully exercise their role of inspiring the temporal order – political, cultural, economic and social – with Christian principles…the specific task of the laity’s vocation in the world* ***(EA 75).***

1. ***The Joy of the Gospel***

* To remind missionaries that God, in Trinity, is community; that God is belonging, Father to Son, Son to Father, both in the Holy Spirit; that Jesus came among us to belong to us; that God is supreme good and goodness has to be shared and to be transcendent. The Eucharist the sacraments are the expression of the Church relating to the Risen Christ; we become missionaries to the world when we begin to experience and to concretize our baptism.

Archbishop Bishop Slattery expanded:

* Evangelization is not catechism. Catechism should **lead to** evangelization. Evangelization is about the personal encounter with Jesus Christ. The primary reason for evangelization is love of Jesus. Knowledge (knowing the catechism) is not enough. Having some understanding is not enough. The most important thing is **feeling the love of God**. The movement is from knowing, to understanding, to feeling.

*The primary reason for evangelizing is the love of Jesus which we have received, the experience of salvation which urges us to ever greater love of him…. Standing before him with open hearts, letting him look at us…. The best incentive for sharing the Gospel comes from contemplating it with love, lingering over its pages and reading it with the heart.****(EG 264)***

In Luke 5: 1 – 11 Jesus stands in the boat of a fisherman and preaches to the crowds. He instructs the fishermen to put out nets for a catch. The consequences are “impossible”: the fishermen encounter something beyond what they have known before. Peter’s response is to be overcome. The outcome: Peter is evangelized. He gazes into the face of Jesus. He loves Jesus. He is impacted upon by beauty. He moves from the head to the heart. The experience is a transformation within. The evangelized are led to feel compassion, empathy, belonging. They move deeper and deeper into relationship. St. Bernadine of Siena illustrated this with a story about the reactions of a man (a visitor) to an execution in a town square. The visitor could be given information, on enquiry, about the one who had been executed. He would be supplied with knowledge about him. If the executed man was from the visitor’s home village, the visitor’s knowledge would deepen into understanding. If the executed man was a family member or person closely associated with the visitor, the visitor’s feelings would be deeply engaged.

The transformation of the disciples took place at Pentecost. The movement towards mission is the work of the Holy Spirit (as in Acts of the Apostles).

* Another aspect of missionary spirit, inspired by the Holy Spirit, is willingness to suffer. A Poor Clare nun who lived for many years in poverty in an African monastery believed that the life of prayer was not enough. There had to be a willingness to suffer, to forgive, to live in community. There has to be a witness to fraternity. Not enough of that is seen.

1. Archbishop Slattery identified three characteristics for missionaries:
2. Interior encounter with Jesus. Feeling him, knowing him, belonging to him. Having an identity from within.
3. Sympathy for people
4. Recognizing the huge poverty that there is: materially - economic, illiteracy, social, loneliness, death, broken relationships, exclusion, discrimination. There is also Spiritual poverty, hopelessness, moral poverty and more.

The spirit of missionary work involves closeness to people, tenderness; to touch people in their misery with gentleness and reverence. When we learn to encounter another person, we learn something new about God. If we’re locked in our own comfort, it is slow suicide.

Reasons for being missionary are to share treasure and joy of the Gospel with others, a joy that fills the hearts of all.

1. Archbishop Slattery drew people’s attention to all that missionaries had done and brought to South Africa; to the fact that the Church has an unbelievable spirituality and a legacy inherited from early centuries (e.g. the Bible written by priests and monks; some of greatest minds of history). He posed the question “What kind of evangelizing is taking place in South Africa? / What kind of missionary activity is happening?” when what is seen is disappearance of post confirmandi; absence of men and women taking up missionary work? His belief is that this may be the outcome of lack of a strong Catholic identity with the centrality of Jesus.

Our witness has been compromised – most missionaries were white.

1. To become evangelized there needs to be a certain culturability. There needs to be recognition that Africa is very rich in cultural values and priceless human qualities, in spirituality, in the role of family.

*In our world, ordained ministers and other pastoral workers can make present the fragrance of Christ’s closeness and his personal gaze. The Church will have to initiate everyone – priests, religious and laity – into this “art of accompaniment” which teaches us to remove our sandals before the sacred ground of the other.* ***(EG 169).***

Missionaries need to become pilgrims, not drifters; allow themselves to be enriched by the culture in which they find themselves.

1. “Mission in South Africa is going to depend on the laity”.
2. *Where all seems to be dead, signs of the resurrection suddenly spring up. It is an irresistible force. Often it seems that God does not exist: all around us we see persistent injustice, evil, indifference and cruelty. But it is also true that in the midst of darkness something new always springs to life and sooner or later produces fruit. On razed land life breaks through, stubbornly yet invincibly. However dark things are, goodness always re-emerges and spreads. Values always tend to reappear under new guises, and human beings have arisen time after time from situations that seemed doomed. Such is the power of the resurrection, and all who evangelize are instruments of that power.* ***(EG 276)***

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1. **FR BARNEY MAC ALEER**

***“I wish to encourage the Christian faithful to embark on a new chapter of evangelization”* (Evangelii Gaudium, 1)**

These words are the third sentence in opening paragraph of Pope Francis’ exhortation, The Joy of the Gospel. In a sense they summarize the whole thrust and theme of the exhortation.

Pope Paul VI had spoken about the “new evangelization” in Haiti. He had used three key words to illustrate how evangelization had to be new: it had to be new in ardour, in methods and in expressions.

Fr. Barney pointed out: “If you do the same things in the same way, you get the same results!” The Holy Spirit has moved the Church. A new zeal and ardour were needed that must be seen and heard. The call is to move from a maintenance mode of Church to an evangelizing Church.

As background in a few words, Pope John Paul introduced the term ‘new Evangelization” as far back as 1983. It was a theme he developed over the years of his pontificate. Pope Benedict followed this concept and established the Pontifical Council for the Promotion of the new Evangelization and he set the new Evangelization as the theme for the October Synod of 2012. He resigned shortly afterwards and it was left to Pope Francis to publish the conclusions of that Synod which he did in November of last year, 2013. In doing so, he gave it his own unique up-beat style to which we have all become accustomed. Pope Francis approaches this subject from a spiritual and pastoral angle, not as an academic or intellectual exposition. Pope Paul’s view was that modern people listen more to the witness of people’s lives rather than to treatises and expositions. People are drawn to Jesus by the way a person lives, being solid in own faith.

The pope says he is aware that documents do not arouse much interest as they did in the past , nevertheless he says that what he is trying to express in this exhortation has “a programmatic significance and important consequences” (25). He has chosen seven topics from among others from the council conclusion which he feels are of importance for the Church in its pastoral orientation in the coming years, “guidelines which can encourage and guide the Church in a new phase of evangelization, one marked by enthusiasm and vitality”(17).

Reflecting on the opening quotation we note that the Holy Father directs his wish to all the Christian faithful. This is important and needs to be emphasized. Evangelization is not a project reserved to the hierarchy, the priests or religious. This call goes out to all the faithful, to the ordinary men and women who make up the community of faith. All baptized members of the Church are called into ministry, to witness to the presence of Jesus as Lord in their lives.

The Holy Father calls on all to witness to a new more vital, joyful, enthusiastic way of living our faith in daily life. He recognizes that we are rather staid in our living out of our faith. The individual, the parish, the Church as a whole is on “maintenance mode” rather than on a “dynamic” mode. In South African terms we are on the back foot instead of being on the front foot. It is time now at the beginning of the millennium to be a Church, a community, with a faith that is firm, a confidence that is unwavering and a joy that is contagious. Jesus is alive and he lives in each one of us.

Fr. Barney reminded the audience: “When much is given, more is expected” and posed the question, “You have so much. How much more do you need or have to receive before you give? You don’t need a course to be helpful, understanding, to witness to Jesus”. He encouraged all to “catch the spirit of evangelization”. It was not reserved for priests and deacons – “All baptized members of the Church are called to ministry; to witness to a personal relationship with Jesus, where welcome, support and loving compassion would be found”.

Fr. Barney remarked that a new missionary spirit had been empowering and moving in South Africa even before Pope Francis’s exhortation, through such things as “Renew Africa”.

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1. **SR. THANDI MOYO.**

***“Being a Christian is not the result of an ethical choice or a lofty idea but an encounter with an event, a person which gives a new horizon and a decisive direction” (EG 7).***

**HOW GOD LOVES US AS OUR CREATOR**

Throughout the Scriptures in the Old and New Testament we hear over and over again that our faith journey as human beings is a journey of a covenant with God, a deep relationship with our Creator. He invites each and every person to this relationship with him. Pope Francis reminds us about God’s determination to foster this relationship with the human race when he says: “**God has found a way to unite himself to every human being in every age” (EG#1130)**. Again in Paragraph 12 he emphasizes God’s love for human being … “**God by his sheer grace draws us to himself and makes us one with him” (EG #12).** God seeks us with unconditional love, mercy, compassion and patience, irrespective of who we are. To him we are the beloved that he has created out of love. Although as human beings we stray again and again from this relationship but the Creator Our God continuously seeks and never giving up on us. That is why he says in Jeremiah **“I have love you with an everlasting love … I am constant in my affection for you. (Jer. 31:3-4)**. Again God Jeremiah reminds us: **If you seek me with all your heart I will let you to find me (Jer. 29:13).** All these words show how serious God is with this covenant, this relationship with us because he is not taking it lightly.

**GOD TAKES OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH HIM SERIOUSLY**

God has a deep longing to unite with each one of us. Like any Lover God wishes that we are in constant relationship with him. He wishes that we are aware of his presence in our lives. That is why he has said: **“ You shall** l**ove the Lord your God with all your heart with all your soul, with all your strength ... you shall repeat these words whether at rest in your house or walking abroad, at your lying down or at your rest … you shall fasten them at your hand … on your forehead … (Deut 6:5-9). I repeat He takes this relationship very seriously. H**e is the one who always takes the first step to reach out to us, in order to build and restore this relationship. He took our human flesh in His begotten Son Jesus Christ: “**Yes, God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not be lost but may have eternal life (John 3:16).**

**DEEP LONGING FOR GOD WITHIN US**

God has planted a deep longing for him within our hearts so that we may seek him until we find him. But, we all know how often we drown this longing with many passing pleasures that do not last; and our lives become empty instead of being filled with the everlasting love and joy of God. St Augustine is one of the examples we can learn from when he discovered the true meaning of life after drowning himself in the passing pleasures and material things of life. In spite of all the experiences he had his life was still empty until he found God himself. That is why he writes: **Our Hearts are restless until they rest in you**. With us too we will not be satisfied until we meet God and have a relationship with Him.

**SEEKERS OF SPIRITUALITY**

Today there are so many people, Christians, people of other faiths, people without religion, rich and poor, educated and simple, going out of their way to seek a Spiritual life here and there because of deep longing for God in their hearts that cannot be satisfied by any pleasures or material things of this world. It only when one encounters and enters into an intimate relationship with God that one’s life starts to have direction and meaning. Many people we call saints today tell us that they discovered this journey and encountered Jesus in their lives and were able to have a vision and meaning in their lives.

**GDC OBJECTIVE AIM OF OUR FORMATION**

It is no wonder that the Church stresses this point of an encounter with Jesus as the main aim of Catechesis. It is not just any encounter but an intimate relationship with Him. The General Directory puts it this way: **The definitive aim of catechesis is to put people not only in touch, but also in communion and intimacy with Jesus Christ (GDC #80).**

**The GDC also stresses the adherence** to this relationship after the encounter with Christ. Christ must be our centre and the treasure of our lives. Once we meet the Master and Lord of our lives we will not want anything more because he will be our way our all in all. He will be the way, the truth and the life for us and we will need nothing more. He will give us the direction, meaning courage, strength, freshness and vigour to carry on in life.

**Many people know about Christ**, they have studied about him, to some he is just one of the greatest man or prophet they have read about him but few have encountered him in their lives. Most have not experienced what he promised the full and abounding life as he said: **“I came that they may have life and have it to the full” (John 10:10).**

**THE EFFECTS OF THE ENCOUNTER**

If we meet and experience Christ in our lives we will be like the apostles who **“… never forgot the moment when Jesus touched their hearts: It was about four o’clock in the afternoon”(#13)** as Pope Francis reminds us**.** St Paul also never forgot the first encounter with Jesus as he again and again writes about his encounter with Jesus on his way to Damascus.

**This relationship has consequences for us as it had for the apostles. It is not just me and my God had.**

Their encounter with Jesus stayed and motivated the apostles to do the mission for Christ in the midst of trials, sorrows and persecutions. They took the mission of Jesus seriously when he said **“I will make you fishers of man”** They left everything and followed him not knowing where he was leading them to. They pursued that mission of spreading the Good News with enormous joy, zeal and passion even after his death. In the midst of confusion, doubts, trials, temptations, sorrow, fear of being persecuted they persevered with conviction. It is because in Jesus they found a reason to live for. They saw opportunities and chances to reach out to others as he gave them courage to stand with renewed strength no matter what as long as they were fulfilling the mission of the Master.

**WHO ARE THE PEOPLE HE CALLED**

**We are all called irrespective of our background, our past lives, our status. We are called out of God’s Love**

If we look at the apostles and Jesus disciples; they were not highly educated in the standard of their times? Most of them were simple fisher men who were surviving and trying to make ends meet for their own families. A person like Matthew was considered corrupt as he was a tax collector; so was Zacchaeus; but they were ready to change, ready to repent and attach themselves to Jesus for the rest of their lives. God does not want perfect people or look at the status one has. We are all welcome if we seek him sincerely with all our hearts; because we are made for him.

**WHAT HAPPENED TO THE APOSTLES TO BE SO ENTHUSIASTIC ABOUT THE MESSAGE OF CHRIST**

Let us look at the apostles again and all those who met Jesus in their lives. What did they do? They were full of joy in the midst of challenges in their lives and this joy was over flowing that they could not keep it to themselves. They took their commissioning by Jesus very seriously that all may hear about their encounter with him. They wanted all of us to know and believe that they have met God Our Creator in flesh on this earth and in the words of John the Apostle we hear:

**Something which has existed since the beginning, that we have heard, that we have seen with our own eyes; that we have watched, and touched with our hands: the Word, who is the life-this is our subject (1John1:1-2).**

John spells it explicitly as to what happened that they experienced him as they did and makes them excited to share this Good News with us, so that we may also experience Jesus and we may believe and be saved.

**HOW DID THE APOSTLES BECOME HIS DISCIPLES**

They stayed close to Christ, they listened to him, they touched him, they allowed him to love them, to teach them, to be the centre of their lives and be their Master and Lord. In short they experienced him and allowed themselves to be taught and transformed by him. They were committed to this relationship; they were truthful, sincere to their calling. It was a long journey for them to come that far; but it is reciprocal commitment and love that made them to persevere. Jesus gave them a purpose in life and they cannot stop telling others what he did for them. They gave up everything and used their gifts and talent to spread this Good News which hopefully we still hold onto with conviction and enjoy. If they would have kept the Good News to themselves; where would be today? We would still be captives in our sins, we would still be blind, we would still without hope.

**HOW ARE WE TO COME CLOSE TO CHRIST**

What are we to do to experience Jesus as the apostles and have the same enthusiasm of sharing our faith with others as they did?

We are also invited by God himself to come close to him by being united to him. If we do not we can do nothing. We are to be like branches on the vine (John 15).

We are encouraged to read and reflecting on the scriptures daily because in them we know who Jesus is as St Jerome says: **“Ignorance of Scriptures is ignorance of Christ”** We cannot serve the person we do not know or love. We have to experience his love in our daily life so that we can go out and give what we have experienced. We are called to have this intimate relationship with him so that we are shaped by his values daily. This is not a once of experience but a daily listening to him. He has to become the centre of our lives. Whatever we do has to be influenced by him. Every strata of our lives need to be transformed as Pope Paul VI (EN #18). Be it amongst friends, at school, work, society, at church, etc all our lives must be influenced by him. We are to be united with Christ all the time as the branches are united to the Vine **(John 15:15).** Our prayer life needs to improve from just saying prayers to an intimate conversation, dialogue and listening to the Lord and Master of our lives.

We are **not** to be **discouraged** but we need to have **discipline, trust and persevere** in entering into a relationship with him. The transformation of any person is not a once off event but an ongoing process for the rest of our lives.

**GUARD AGAINST COMPLACENCY**

We have to guard against an attitude of complacency or feeling we have arrived. If we are to be true evangelizers we are encouraged by the words addressed to the whole Church in Evangelii Nuntiandi when it says: “… ***a constant need of being evangelized if we wish to retain freshness, vigor and strength in order to proclaim the Gospel” (EN#15***). From this paragraph we realize that it is imperative to be ready for constant conversion. If we do not go this route of conversion we become stale and loose our vigor, freshness, focus, strength and courage to participate effectively in the mission of Christ. As Pope Francis says: “… ***If we do not, the message will run the risk of losing its freshness and will cease to have the fragrance of the Gospel” EG#39***.

**PARTICIPATE IN CHRIST MISSION**

By virtue of our baptism we are to participate in the priestly, prophetic and kingly mission of Christ. It is not for a certain group of people but all of us are invited to Go and make disciples. We are called also to “Go into the vineyard of the Lord”. Pope Francis asks each one of us as he did to the youth in last World Youth when he said: **Today too, as always, the Lord needs you, young people, for his Church. Today too, he is calling each of you to follow him in his Church and to be missionaries.**

**WE ALL HAVE TALENTS**

God He has given us talents, gifts, time and many opportunities where we could do this. All are invited and expected to be a disciple of Christ. The Pastoral Plan of Philippines dispels all our excuses when it reminds us that: “**There is no one is so poor that one cannot give anything and no one is so rich as not to receive anything”.**

**HEED THE CALL**

Then we will heed the call of Jesus through Pope when he said: **“Go and make disciples”** and preach the Good News when they were gathered in to the youth gathered in the last World Youth Day. We are also to remember that Jesus tells us that: **“I am with us always; to the end of time” (Matt 28**) this message should dispel all our fears. So let us go with courage, conviction and joy to make Disciples of Christ.

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1. **FR SAKHI MOFOKENG**

**Highlights from Fr. Sakhi’s talk**

***“Goodness tends to spread” (EG 9)***

* As it expands, goodness takes root and develops
* If we wish to live a dignified and fulfilling life, we have to reach out to others and seek their good
* The love of Christ urges us on (2 Cor: 5:14)
* Woe to me if I do not proclaim the Gospel (1Cor 9:16) ***[EG 9]***

God is good ALL THE TIME. You and I are precious before God. We have goodness within us. We should take it to other people. (Pope Francis)

How do we spread goodness, grow and develop?

We are the ones who have to respond and accept that we are good, and reach out to others.

Today’s Gospel, Lk 4: 18 – 19 “The Spirit of the Lord is on me…He has sent me to proclaim liberty to captives”… etc.

Hymn: “God’s Spirit is in my heart”.

Tell person next to you “God has sent me”.

Why did God send you?

* To reach others
* To express my love for you
* To see the best in everyone
* To evangelize by singing because to sing is to pray 2x.
* To receive the Good News from people around me
* To love one another and serve and to be a better person
* The mission of the Christian being sent by God is to bring good news of God.

How does the missionary do this?

By proclaiming the Gospel – speaking Jesus’ words; bringing people to God; speaking of God’s goodness; telling the world about God – the truth of God; proclaiming Christ.

Share what I have heard, what I have received

* What is the Word about?

Is 55:10 -11 says: “My word is like rain that waters crops and brings life. My word fulfils its own purpose”. God’s word is so powerful that we have to spread it.

How is the Word of god in my life?

It is being in close relationship. Know the Scriptures; be in touch with Christ. Be in a personal relationship with Christ

Be in touch with Scripture. God has sent me to love others. Once we are in touch with Scripture, we can evangelize.

Mt 28:16-20: I have sent you. GO!

We should be a church that goes out to people; that takes Christ into the world; a church that is on the move.

* Jn 10:10 “I have come to give life and give it abundantly.

Are you saved? Have you received Jesus? The Saviour I have received is the one I must take out to save others.

We are the people of the Bible. Proclaim the oneness of God. Jesus was sent by God to proclaim God, to save humanity, to save souls. We need to be aware of this.

* Mk1:16-20.

Jesus wanted the mission of God to continue. He went to fishermen and called them.

What were they doing? **Casting** their nets into the sea. **Mending** their nets. They were doing what they were supposed to be doing as fishermen. When Jesus called them, they were at work being fishermen.

It seems incredible that people, like fishermen would listen to a stranger calling them to follow him. Who is Jesus for me?

Would Jesus find you and me at work / on the mission proclaiming the Good News? Is this church on the mission? Are we reaching out to others really? What is it that we are doing for the mission? Our call is to spread goodness. We are so afraid.

When Jesus goes to the Sea of Galilee, he finds James and John preparing their nets to catch fish. How are we preparing ourselves for mission, for spreading the Gospel of God, to meet other people, to evangelize, to save souls? How are we preparing ourselves to proclaim liberty to captives, to enlarge the space of our tent?

The focus of the sacramental church is on the sacraments rather than on the missionary church. What happens after confirmation? Did we prepare the confimandi for mission or to receive the sacrament of confirmation?

I belong to Christ, and so doing, I have to be committed to evangelization, to proclamation of the Word.

* The Church of South Africa tends to be inward-looking. The Church invites us to go out of our family, to reach out to others, to speak about Christ. Do we share the message?
* To be a missionary, to be an evangelizer is not easy. It has its own pains:

**P – P** rayer for the mission to succeed.

**A – A** vailability. Be available. The Church is calling. Have time for God. Go out to preach

the Gospel

**I – I** nvitation. Invite others to experience what you have experienced – to meet Jesus.

**N – N** eighbourliness. This mission is not for me, but to reach out to people.

**S – S** hare the message. Share your experience of Jesus. By sharing you will be spreading

the goodness of God.

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1. **SR. EVA MARIA THUPATSOGONG**

***“The church, in her maternal concern, tries to help them experience a conversion which will restore the joy of faith to their hearts and inspire a commitment to the Gospel” (EG 15)***

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| MISSIONARY C0NGRESS – 2014  25TH – 26TH OCTOBER: ARCH DIOCESE OF JOHANNESBURG  “ENLARGE THE SPACE OF YOUR TENT!” (Oketsa/ atisa manno tlase ga motlagana wa gago...)  BELONGING TO CHRIST, COMMITTED FOR MISSION  Go nna wa ga Kereste, maitlamo a ‘tiro ya Bodisa’ |

* Allow me a quick, brief opportunity to go down ‘Memory lane’... When I grew up as a young person , I was brought up to believe and understand that being a Missionary was Not as simple as the idea being put forward at this Congress – EVERY CHRISTIAN IS A MISSIONARY. It was not for any ordinary person, it was a huge step to even think about it, leave alone, considering it... Being a Missionary; according to my own upbringing and in recalling the years passed: was something strange, or, the Idea was rather a far-fetched one... There were lots of funny ideas and expectations, as to what a ‘Missionary’ should look like and strange ideas as to how Missionaries must be...
* Often I have been confronted by people wanting to know answers; as to what I was about, Why this Life of Missionary? Why this? Why that...? Why, why??? After couple of attempts to responding to the questions at hand; which were in fact not making much sense to those seeking answers from me... I then took a shortcut ‘risk’ to say: I was a MISSIONARY and the first reaction to that response was like... “How dare You! call yourself a Missionary?? ?
* When I entered the Novitiate, a few years ago there was this Convent practice of name changing and words like these were used at the Reception ceremony: “... in the world You were known as ( B.M Thupatsogong – my home Names) and now in the convent you shall be called Sr. Eva Maria...” very strange!!! As if I were to leave the world and yet, the World and the Missionary work were connected to each other and as if the Mission of Christ was not needed in the World...Later I came to a realization that the two were linked, inter-connected and somehow influencing each other...
* These have been moments of Joy for me... that I was able to experience, ponder and reflect on my Faith Journey of Missionary Life... and turn them all into moments of gratefulness and Hope for the future...
* Most times I am told lots of very moving stories.../ memories are shared with me; of the good old days of Missionary life... and when you come to think about it, there have been some movement of change, a mentality shift, some progress and development in the old Missionary life and indeed these are real Joy experiences, perhaps to be treasured... because these are just a glimpse of real Joy... And
* It is in these movement of Change that We are able to recognize the Church, in her maternal concern, trying to assist us in experiencing a Conversion which will restore the JOY OF FAITH to our hearts and inspire COMMITMENT TO THE GOSPEL...
* We therefore continue to encourage, empower and uplift people whom we come in contact with, helping them to recognizing the importance and the seriousness of this Calling to be a Missionary by our Baptism... Called to service and to the Mission of Christ by the fact that we chose to be Christians... (Self-reliant and self-supportive Church...) = The involvement of all, day to day activities in works in various Ministries, in works of Mercy and combined efforts in projects with fellow Christians... In this way the Church is committed to transmitting her faith, THE JOY OF THE GOSPEL....
* In concluding, the best images coming to mind, in really trying to understand the maternal concern of the Church in this Missionary Calling for all Christians... is of the Eagle’s wings and a Door – A door of FAITH...

**………………………………………**

1. **FR. JEREMIAS MARTINS DOS SANTOS**

***We need to move from a pastoral ministry of mere conservatism to a decidedly missionary pastoral ministry: (EG 15)***

We **“cannot passively and calmly wait in our church buildings,”**

writes Pope Francis, saying that evangelizing is “a source of immense joy for the Church.”

“I am a mission on this earth; that is the reason why I am here in this world. We have to regard ourselves as sealed, even branded, by this mission of bringing light, blessing, enlivening, raising up, healing and freeing.”

1. **God’s Mission:** God is family and his plan for humanity is to bring together into one family the whole of human race. With this purpose, God the Father, out of love, sent the Son to our world. The Son of God, in Jesus, becomes one like us to bring us back to the Father: *“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He anointed me; to bring good news to the poor He sent me, to heal the broken - hearted, to proclaim to the captives release, and sight to the blind" (Luke 4:18). And again: "The Son of Man has come to seek and to save what was lost" (Luke 19:10).*

**Before giving his life for the world, Jesus chose the Apostles and sent the Holy Spirit upon them. The Spirit** anticipates the Apostles' acting, accompanies and directs them in different ways (cf. AG 4). Mission flows from the love of God the Father, the Son and Holy Spirit. Our God is neither a lonely God nor a static or passive God. He is family and he is always in movement out of Himself towards the world, towards humanity.

1. **The Mission of the Church doesn’t come from herself, but is rooted and nourished in the mission of God and continues the mission of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit:** “The pilgrim Church is missionary by her very nature, since it is from the mission of the Son and the mission of the Holy Spirit that she draws her origin, in accordance with the plan of God the Father” (AG 2).
2. The mission of the Church is carried out in three principal settings:

* **ordinary pastoral ministry** is directed to “the faithful who regularly take part in community worship and gather on the Lord’s day to be nourished by his word and by the bread of eternal life”. Ordinary pastoral ministry seeks to help believers to grow spiritually, so that they can respond to God’s love ever more fully in their lives.
* **“the baptized whose lives do not reflect the demands of Baptism”,** who lack a meaningful relationship to the Church and no longer experience the consolation born of faith.
* **Those who do not know Jesus Christ** or who have always rejected him. This is what Evangelization is, first and foremost! (Joy of the Gospel #15).

Christians have the duty to proclaim the Gospel without excluding anyone. We should appear as people who wish to share their joy; who point to a horizon of beauty; who invite others to a delicious banquet.

We are called to evangelize “by attraction”. It means that people seeing us talking, acting, relating to others, should ask themselves: “Why do they behave like this? Why do they talk like this? And they should be enticed by this way of acting.

1. **Going to the Peripheries: we can talk about two movements: Inside Out and Outside In.**

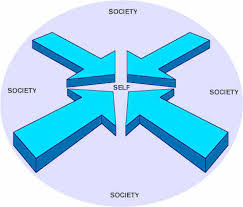
**We can speak of two ways of living:** towards death and towards life. We can speak of two paths: the one that leads to destruction of self and others and the other that leads to abundant life for oneself and for others. Looking at Jesus while living among us we see him going out, moving from Nazareth to Jerusalem, to the “other side,” stretching his compassionate hand to those who suffer, and listening to the cry of the poor, the sick and marginalized... He is always moving outside of himself towards others.

**Like him, we are called to move outside ourselves towards the peripheries of the world, inside our country and also outside it, going to other countries, other cultures, other peoples.**

Many people left their own countries, families, friends, material goods and came to South Africa to share the Good News of Jesus: think of Abbot Pfanner, Joseph Gerard, the missionaries of different cultures, races and languages that are still living among us, in our parishes, in our schools and hospitals.

Now the time is ripe for the Church of South Africa to go out. Going out into the world we carry our culture, our language, our beauty, our joy of being Christians. On the other side, in contact with others, we allow ourselves to be evangelized and enriched by their faith, their culture, their joy. This implies a risk, because we step into the unknown. However, we trust in the presence of the Spirit of God who inspires us, precedes us, accompanies us and makes our work bear fruit (AG 4).

As said above, there are **two possible movements:** one towards others and one towards oneself.



“Inside out” represents the movement of God. Jesus is a man for others. The Holy Spirit acts in the world.

“Outside in” represents a movement like that of a child looking for protection. The child sees itself as the centre of the world.

When I think only about myself, I become the centre of the world, looking for reward and self- satisfaction, I am geared to death. When I am able to go towards others, to share their worries, their hopes and dreams, **I become a source of life for myself and for others**. I become like Jesus: **a man/woman for others, a blessing for humanity**.

1. **Mission outside the borders of South Africa**

**A**lthough every disciple of Christ is called to be a missionary, Christ chooses some among his disciples, to leave their country, their family, their friends, their culture, their comfort and to go out to the world sharing the joy of encountering Christ*. “He inspires the missionary vocation in the hearts of individuals, and at the same time raises up in the Church certain institutes which take, as their own special task, the duty of preaching the Gospel, a duty belonging to the whole Church”* (AG 23). This is a journey of death to ourselves and a journey of life for others.

**Those chosen to be missionaries follow the footsteps of Christ who left the glory he had with the Father and became one of us, to make humanity a sharer of the beauty and goodness of God and to enjoy his loving presence now and in the hereafter.**

**Mission is not only about giving, but also about receiving**

*“How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news, who proclaim peace, who bring good tidings, who proclaim salvation, who say to Zion, “Your God reigns”* (Is. 52:7).

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**SUNDAY 26 OCTOBER 2014**

1. **FR. BARNEY MAC ALEER**

**History of the Diocese of Johannesburg.**

We have been speaking yesterday about our Catholic identity. Like any identity we get it from our parents, grandparents, those who went before us. In the same way our catholic identity, not simply given to us by baptism and our parents but handed on by those in faith who have gone before us and whose legacy of faith have we inherited. In this sense we are the children of the men and women who founded, built and developed and Catholic Church in the diocese of Johannesburg. It is important that we know the story, remember the people, and are proud of what they did. Every parish should have the history of the parish and diocese taught to the children to give them a sense of identity, of continuity with the parish and their parents and grandparents. Knowing the story gives their catholic roots locally. We are part of an on-going historical story.

It is only a few years ago since the city Johannesburg celebrated its first centenary, recalling the year that George Harrison discovered gold in widow Oosthuizen’s farm in Mayfair. 1886. In that year Johannesburg was born. Within two weeks of the gold being discovered thousand formed a tent town in what is known as Ferreirastown. At that time Pretoria was already the main city in the Transvaal. In the same year the Vicariate of the Transvaal was established. The following year the first Church was opened in Pretoria by Bishop Jolivet.

The first mass was said on the 19 Feb 1887, in the camp at Ferreirastown by Fr. Leopold Trabaud who came over from Pretoria, one year after the beginning of the city. It was said in a reed hut which was the bakery and owned by a Mr. Whelan whose grandson, became an Oblate, Fr. Victor Whelan. Very soon Fr. Odilon Monginoux became resident in Johannesburg and he was helped by a family called Hampson and eventually bought a plot of land which was in an area now bordered by Fox Street, Smal Street, Main Street and von Wielligh Street. He also got accommodation for the Holy Family Sisters who had arrived from Natal, 6 weeks by mules, to open a small school. This was the first private school on the Witwatersrand and began with 47 pupils. End Street school followed in 1895 followed by Yeoville in 1914. The Holy Family recently celebrated 150 years of missionary work in Johannesburg. At that time Johannesburg was really a tent town, first year in existence. In 1893 it was estimated that there were 2,500 Catholics in Johannesburg.

In 1948, the year the Nationalist Government was formed the Apostolic Vicariate of Johannesburg was established and in 1951 the Diocese of Johannesburg was erected.. and became an archdiocese in 2007 with Archbishop Buti Tlhagale being the first Archbishop. Previous bishops in the Diocese will be remembered by some, Bishop David O’Leary who died in 1950, Bishop Patrick Whelan, Bishop Hugh Boyle, Bishop Fitzgerald and Bishop Orsmond. And Johannesburg has provided three Bishops, Peter Buthelezi, Patrick Mvemve and Graham Rose. We are a very young diocese.

Two years later, 1889 the Marist Brothers opened their school in Koch Street. When I was stationed at the cathedral in the 1960’s, we had to go to regularly to Koch Street for the first Friday confessions . It closed shortly after that and transferred to Linmeyer in the South of the city where it is at present.

From that small beginning Johannesburg today estimates to have 850 000 Catholics in a population of 7 million.. There are over 110 listed parishes, in the region of 200 priests, twenty different congregation of sisters and numerous schools and lay organizations. We have come a long way in 126 years. It is a tribute to all the priests and religious who over the past century gave their life, time and talents in building up the presence of the Catholic Church here. We await the contribution of the next generation.

It is interesting to read and know the history of each individual parish or school or even hospital. The Holy Family sisters took over the running of the first hospital in Johannesburg, known as the General Hospital in 1890. After 27 years there they gave it over to the authorities and concentrated on their own private hospital which they had opened in 1905. That was closed in 1968 and a more modern hospital was open in Parktown called the Kenridge.

Fr. Anton Paulsen was one of the great missionaries of the last century. He was an Oblate and came to South Africa in 1928 from Germany and began his ministry in the diocese of Kimberley. He came up to Pretoria in 1933 as chaplain to the German workers who were constructing Iscor at the time. In 1939 he was posted to Vereeniging and when the Second World War broke out he was made a military chaplain. Because he was in the county so long, 11 years, he was not interned like many other Germans. In the 1940’s he moved up to Benoni and built the three churches in Daveyton. He was also instrumental in getting the mission of St. Teresa’s going in Edenvale and helped the arrival of the Holy Rosary Sisters in 1940 who began their school there.

In 1947 he founded the mission of Moroka in Soweto. He used to say mass under a tree and Fr. Ngwenya’s great grandmother used to bring a chair and table for mass..

He built the first church there, St. Matthew’s which later became Regina Mundi, built by Fr. Coleman and opened in 1965. He also enlarged the Church of Emdeni. He was a great missionary. He only died in 1987.

There are so many stories that can be told of the Church in this diocese, the Bishops, the Priests, the sisters, the teachers, the mission schools, the struggle with the authorities especially after 1948 and the Nationalist government coming to power. The story of the great mission of Village Main opened in 1945 and the wonderful training College run by the Dominican sisters and closed due to the M2 highway.

Each parish is a story in itself. For example the founding of the mission of St. James in Magaliesburg in 1933 by the Oakford Dominicans then the establishment of Boys Town in 1956 by the Sisters and Bishop Orsmond.

The Nazareth Sisters started in Johannesburg in 1894 and are still going strong in Yeoville. The Paulist Fathers, Americans came to Malvern parish in 1938 and went Braamfontein in 1966 and back to America in 1968.

Many of the churches in the diocese were built in the 1930s and 1940s which were times of great difficulty. The second World War broke out in 1939 and money was scarce. How did they do it.

This College St. Benedict’s was opened in 1957 by the Oblates. Bishop Eddie Risi did his metric here. Many of the religious congregations have already published their own history and can make it available.

And what of all the lay men and women who had a hand in the story of the Church in Johannesburg like the Hamptons to helped Fr. Monginoux in 1887.

Who are the women of the Catholic Women’s league, of the Catholic Adoption society, the men of the of the St. Vincent de Paul. Where did the Knights of Da Game begin. What woman started the Charismatic movement in Johannesburg? Who brought the Alpha programme to Johannesburg. What about the Legion of Mary, the St. Anna’s the Sacred Heart. The story of the lay men and women of this diocese has still to be told.

This is the legacy they have left behind. This is who we are, children of the men and women from all corners of South Africa and the world who came to Johannesburg to find a job, rear their children and here we are. What legacy of faith will we leave our children.

All this and more in the course of 126 years. What a wonderful story and who knows what is still to come in the new millennium.

(cf. Brain, J.B. The Catholic Church in the Transvaal. 1991. Oblates Fathers).

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1. **SR. MARIA DE LURDES (c.f. pdf file in attached email)**
2. **MRS BEATRICE NKUNA (c.f. SUNDAY Addendum 3, Pg ……)**

**Orphans, HIV/AIDS**

Working with special children is my testimony.

A Calling from God

In confirming my calling, to open my house to the public and give life to the abandoned children whom I find needy in my society, to give them hope, love and a second chance in life, it was important for me to first examine my heart and motivation (Jer: 17:9). Do I truly feel this call is from God, or Beatrice? Is it a personal desire? Or is it an attempt to live up to someone else’s expectation of me? Is the motivation pride or people-pleasing? Am A feeling “called” because I think that in order to be “the best Christian”, I must work in a distinct “Christian” ministry? Christians are the fragrance of Christ (2Cor 2:15) no matter where I serve. I can be light and salt and “do ministry” outside the church or in a secular job just as well as I can within the church or in a specific vocation.

After a year I was certain that my heart was rightly motivated, considering my natural and spiritual gifts and strengths. Do these seem to fit with the vocation or ministry I was considering? Yes, God is seen strong in my weaknesses and calls me to serve out of His strength rather than my own. But He also gave me gifts and talents to use for Him. I have been called because I have the desire to do God’s will and help in this great work. I have been called because I have faith and charity in my heart and I want Gods glory, not seeking my own.

God calls me to set aside personal ambitions in order to be a witness of the Gospel. Like Isaiah, a missionary, gladly responded, “Here am I. Send me!” (Is 6:8). Often God sends a missionary to a particular people or group, as Paul was sent to the unreached Gentiles and Peter to the Jews (Gal 2:8). Every Christian has the mission to make disciples; mine was to take care of the children who need love in this world especially in my own community of South Hills. For me I can also say my missionary work was to bring Jesus’ love and compassion to the lost children of the nation, especially those who have been abandoned, to give them hope and love them without expectation. As a Christian at home I should be missionary in my own community, doing personal evangelism. My goals are to be accomplished in a variety of ways: to be a witness of Christ Jesus, to build self-esteem and confidence in the abandoned, abused, neglected and orphaned children whom the world passes with blind eyes, but are special souls to the eyes of the Lord and dear to my heart. I see Jesus himself in each one of them: “Whatsoever you do to the least of these little ones, you do unto me” (Mt 25: 40).

I accept to serve the children rather than seek personal gain. I want to witness and bring glory to God by honouring Christ’s righteous life and sacrificial death. I chose to be with them and share their pain, their sorrow and their happiness. The beautiful thing about my missionary work is that I am doing God’s work and so I am just the labourer in the vineyard. I work with hope of the promises of God! Among the multitude of blessings promised to his missionaries (I assume that I am faithful) my job is to qualify for these blessings and to help others to feel the power of the Spirit so they can be taught to assist in our Heavenly Father’s work by first learning the truth for ourselves and then helping others to do the same.

When determining whether or not we are called to any ministry, consider what it will entail: to be courageous, and to trust God. If God has called you, He will equip you and fill you so that you may be poured out for others (Mt 6:33; Heb 13:20 -21; Eph 3:20; Ps 37:23 and Is 30:21). It is important to keep moving. We sometimes refuse to move until we are certain of the call. But it is easier to redirect something already in motion than to get something moving. ***Beginning something new is always more difficult*.**When we step out in faith – even if our step is not quite in the right direction – God is faithful to guide us. However, honest feedback from those who love you should help confirm your calling. There is joy in living out our calling. Paul is a great example of this. He suffered greatly for his ministry, yet he was always content and joyful in Christ (see especially Paul’s letter to the Philippians).

Many of us picture a missionary as a middle-aged man who leaves his job to evangelize and plant churches in Africa. But that is just a fancy thought. Today, for me it is to leave everything, even my career: to take care of the needy both in their physical and spiritual needs. All of these are missionary works.

Jesus assured us that missionaries will face trials and suffering. Missionaries leave friends behind, experience future shock and rejection (Mt 10:16-31). But instead of falling into self-pity or pride, they learn to delight in serving God. Rather than being a burden, obeying His call brings joy and reward in heaven. Therefore, as I reach out to my children, I serve not out of duty but out of love (2Cor 5:14-21).

Every person has a unique calling from God. The call to a special ministry, however, is particularly public, and those in public ministry are often both highly regarded and highly criticized. James 3:1 says, “Not many of you should presume to be teachers, my brothers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly”.

Missionary work is the work of the Lord and is the work of our Heavenly Father as well. We have been called and prepared, from before the world was, to share these blessings with His children. We have been blessed with a testimony and we know that there is only one way to return to the Father in Heaven and to find the promises of peace and hoy in this life – and that is through the gospel of Jesus Christ. We need to share the gospel in order to help others to understand these truths and to help them find these blessings.

There are thousands of organizations committed to serving others and who get rich by it (many NGO’s for example). I accept my special call, not for gain but to bring love and transformation to the most neglected, abandoned, abused and orphaned children who I know have a very special place in the heart of God.

Please pray for me and my children. Thank you, and may God bless you!

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1. **MR. DILLON NAICKER**

**Family in South Africa** **(Couples for Christ and its Family Ministries)**

**CFC tent pitched in South Africa**

Couples for Christ (CFC) began in 1981 when a group of 16 couples recognized the need for the family to covert to Christ and truly become a domestic church. These spouses met in a private home on a weekly basis where they were brought to a living relationship with Jesus Christ and a renewal in the power of the Holy Spirit through a series of faith sharing sessions and discussions of the Gospel in a social environment.

Beginning from the first 16 couples, CFC became a Christian family life renewal, which was later made available to parishes and groups of married couples who wished to live out their Christian life in an active supportive relationship with one another.

To make a very long story very short, CFC, by God’s overflowing grace, has spread to over 150 countries worldwide. In 1996, CFC was approved by the Catholic Bishop's Conference of the Philippines as a national private association of lay faithful.  In 2000, CFC was recognized by the Holy See (Vatican) as a private international association of the lay faithful of pontifical right. That was the very same year that it landed in our beloved South Africa.

Starting in Mafikeng, Randburg and Benoni, CFC has spread into six of our nine South African provinces and three neighbouring countries (Botswana, Zimbabwe and Namibia). Couples for Christ and its five (5) family ministries (Singles for Christ, Youth for Christ, Kids for Christ, Servants of the Lord & Handmaids of the Lord) has transformed families in Southern Africa for the last 14 years.

**“A disciple is made”**

In 2007, two Philippino CFC missionaries named Errol and Miggie Martinez came to my home parish, St. Martin de Porres, Geluksdal in the Far East Rand of Johannesburg. Here CFC was accepted by many married couples and it could never have been predicted that it would become the “lifeline” of our parish. Today almost half of our parishioners belong to the six different ministries of CFC among which *Youth for Christ* has proved to be the most vibrant.

Among these youth, a certain young man, the new youth leader at the time and a performing artist by profession, was especially attracted to the life of these two missionaries and grew very close to them. This youth had very recently had his conversion to Christ. After five years of active CFC ministry in Geluksdal, Errol and Miggie introduced YFC to this him and his fellow leaders. A few months later the parish youth graduated the YFC Youth Camp and became official Youth for Christ members. This young man, inspired by God’s Spirit, became a volunteer missionary for YFC South Africa and even though a test was set before him when he landed a role in SA’s famous soap opera, Isidingo, his heart remained firm in its desire to be a servant of God. This young man, after months of prayer and discernment, received a prophecy from God that He will be a missionary like these missionaries he had been so attracted to in the latter months of his life. He left his career and rise to stardom to pursue his true career, his heart’s desire. At the advent of 2013 he travelled to Manila, Philippines for his Applicant Immersion Program in YFC and is now a full-time lay missionary for the last year and a half. This young man is me. God is gracious.

**Now…”go make disciples” (Enlarge the space of your tent)**

Since the beginning of full-time ministry, I have evangelised hundreds of youth in South Africa and neighbouring country, Botswana – my first foreign mission area apart from that in the Philippines during my training. I find that upon one’s conversion, the acceptance of Christ as personal Lord and Saviour, the total giving of oneself to God in embracing His great love, it is almost inevitable that this overflowing grace must be passed on. I have a durable desire for others to know how I fell in love with God and how I continue to do so every day. I desire to convince others that this grace, this same love is theirs for the taking. I desire to build God’s Kingdom and make disciples of many. I desire to be a “fisher of men”. It makes me wonder where South Africa falls short. What is it about Catholics in South Africa that hinders this passing on of the Good News? If “every Christian is a missionary”, are we truly Christians? Are we indeed in need of the ‘New Evangelisation’? If catholic South Africans truly possess the life of Christ within them, why are the fruits not showing? Why is Christ not being passed on?

We encounter this very same problem within the ministry of CFC. There is a great dependence on missionaries from abroad with myself being the one and only local missionary. There are of course always those that aspire to be, but it stops right there.

The moment missionaries attempt to move on to other communities (which they should) the community they leave behind, in most cases, falter. Fortunately there are a select few leaders in various areas who have become volunteers and have committed themselves to form the governance team of CFC South Africa. Among these are youth. These MV’s (mission volunteers) very often accompany the full-time missionaries to various mission areas and even foreign countries to assist in the mission. They also lead their home communities in the continuation of pastoral formation and further evangelisation in and around local parish communities.

**The mission and vision of CFC and its Family Ministries**

***Vision****: “Moved by the Holy Spirit, one with the Catholic Church, blessed to witness to Christ’s love and service, Couples for Christ is a united global community of family evangelizers that sets the world on fire with the fullness of God’s transforming love.”*

***Mission****: We are Couples for Christ. We are committed to live in God’s righteousness and holiness, evangelizing people through a life of love and service; we shall work for the renewal of families that will serve God and build generations of Christian leaders; and, we shall pursue Total Christian Liberation through social justice, respect for life, and work with the poor.*

**Family Ministries, Mission/vision**:

**Kids for Christ:** *To bring kids to the Lord and build a bright new world*

**Youth for Christ:** *Young people being and bringing Christ wherever they are.*

**Singles for Christ:** *Every single man and woman all over the world experiencing Christ.*

**The CFC Handmaids of the Lord** is a community of Christian women actively involved in helping other women renew and live to the fullest their Christian faith. It provides women, who are single parents, separated or divorced, widows, unmarried mature women and married women wanting to be part of a women's Christian faith community.

**CFC Servants of the Lord:** A Ministry for the Empowerment of Men For them to be Holy, Fulfilled and Productive

Those of us who have committed to the life and mission of Couples for Christ have recognized it as a ministry inspired and driven by God Himself. He has used it with its thousands of committed servants to change the lives of millions across all continents and has multiplied it abundantly. Such a movement, in my view, can only be from God.

The growth of CFC stemmed from its heart for mission and evangelisation and its commitment to sharing God's love with others, beginning from the basic unit - the family. It is no secret that the family as a domestic church is under grave attack. The Devil knows that “It starts at home”.

It is a personal hope of mine to see many more lay South Africans who will fight back and develop hearts for God and His people – His family. I hope to see South African families evangelising other South African families and beyond. I have come to recognize God’s influential presence in the ministry of CFC and especially in my specialized field, YFC. I firmly believe that this ministry will continue to be the salvation of millions. Families need to open the doors of their homes to Christ again. He is absent in a shocking majority of homes. If we don’t take a stand to evangelise South African families we must ask ourselves where this nation is headed.

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1. **FR. SEAN O’LEARY**

**Situation of Sudan – South Sudan**

**History**

As Sudan prepared to gain independence from joint British and Egyptian rule in 1956, southern leaders accused the new authorities in Khartoum of backing out of promises to create a federal system, and of trying to impose an Islamic and Arabic identity.

In 1955, southern army officers mutinied, sparking off a civil war between the south, led by the Anya Nya guerrilla movement, and the Sudanese government. The conflict only ended when the Addis Ababa peace agreement of 1972 accorded the south a measure of autonomy.

Oil was found on the border between N and S. Sudan, with France backing the north and America backing the south.

In 1983, the south, led by the Sudan People’s Liberation Movement Army (SPLA), again rose in rebellion when the Sudanese government cancelled the autonomy arrangements. At least 1.5 million people are thought to have lost their lives and more than four million were displaced in the ensuing 22 years of guerrilla warfare. Large numbers of South Sudanese fled the fighting, either to the north or to neighbouring countries where many remain.

The conflict finally ended with the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement, under which the south was granted regional autonomy along with guaranteed representation in a national power-sharing government. The agreement also provided for a referendum in the south on independence in 2011, in which 99% of southern Sudanese voted to split from Sudan. Between 2005 and 2011 fighting factions had been pulled together so as to work towards a referendum for independence.

In 2013, South Sudan became the 193rd independent country in the world. The tragedy was that though the country achieved independence, there was no agreement on how to govern the country. An army general became the first president and all of the cabinet members who were appointed were ex-military personnel. There is much violence in the country. South Sudan was plunged into civil war over oil that had been found on the border between N and S Sudan. None of the political leaders have control over the people.

**Role of the Churches**

The churches have been playing a leading role in efforts to negotiate peace. They have credibility, constituency and capacity. The ecumenical churches in S. Sudan have leadership. Religious leaders got together in Rome to come up with ideas on how to help S. Sudan (that is mainly Christian and animist), the country that has suffered the most in all the conflict. Funds have been raised, medical people sent, pastoral help given. The SACBC is helping S. Sudan to start up a Bishops Conference. Assistance is being given to establish health and education facilities.

There are 10 dioceses in S. Sudan, 2 in N. Sudan. The N. Sudanese government (arab and Muslim) is slowly ousting missionaries. When visas expire, they do not renew them. The aim of N. Sudan is to rid Sudan of Catholic missionaries because Catholics supported the referendum.

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1. **BISHOP JAN DE GROEF’S HOMILY**

**Highlights of Bishop de Groef’s homily**

* Bishop de Groef posed 2 questions:

1. Why does ‘Mission’ still remain important today?
2. How can we respond to our missionary calling and participate in missionary outreach to the Church?

Pope Francis has specified that missionary activity is the greatest challenge for the church today. Jesus founded a church to evangelize. The missionary task of the church is to move from conservation to being pastoral. Pope Francis’ dream is a missionary impulse capable of transforming everything; channelled for evangelization rather than for self-preservation.

* The SACBC is looking to restructuring, to transforming the church into an evangelizing church, truer to Christ’s mission. It starts with the heart, from the ground up, not from the top down. Structures do not bring life.

Bishop de Groef expressed the hope that the Missionary Congress has been a way to bring the message of transformation.

* The Acts of the Apostles witnessed to the value and necessity of mission. After Pentecost the apostles went out and started proclaiming the good news. The women, with Mary and Stephen were examples of ways of serving. When persecution started with the martyrdom of Stephen, people moved out of Jerusalem to neighbouring countries. Christianity even reached Africa through Philip’s encounter with the Ethiopian who was thirsting to find the meaning of the scriptures. Philip helped him to understand the Suffering Servant. The Ethiopian immediately wanted baptism to share full in the new life.

The Bishop pointed out how the church becomes more vibrant though suffering and persecution.

* The Bishop shared something of his own vocation becoming a missionary.
* It is important that we announce the Gospel TOGETHER. Together become witnesses.
* God is the source who gives us life, providing and sending. We must share to be truly alive. We cannot exclude anyone.
* “I must become nothing, giving room to others. Be the first to love even one’s enemies who were created, too, by God.
* Among the first disciples were women, e.g. Mary Magdalen was the first to be sent to Jesus’ companions with the Good News of his resurrection. Why her? She was one touched and freed by Jesus from slavery. Her mind and heart were more open than the minds and hearts of the disciples, who were still locked up in mourning. The disciples did not believe her – she was only a woman. Jesus reproached them for their obstinacy. Yet Jesus gave them a mandate. He sent out those who were so slow to believe and so frightened to witness to their belief.

These stories give all of us consolation. It is not in strength but in weakness and poverty that we are sent. God is the one sending us and we go out in the power of the Holy Spirit.

* **How do we respond to our missionary calling?**

Pope Francis stresses dialogue on different levels. Share rather than impose.

Evangelization means witness and personal life style: witness of love and mercy. “It is not by proselytizing that the church grows, but ‘by attraction’.” (Missionary Congress booklet, Pg. 30). Generosity and joy are called for; joy from the encounter with Jesus. Joy will endure even through darkness. We are infinitely loved so we can remain full of hope even in hopeless circumstances. How can we fail to share God’s love with others. All must be touched.

* Missionary work is not about giving only, but also of receiving.
* Bishop de Groef called on all to support the project in S. Sudan.
* Conclusion

Express deep joy borne from the awareness of the presence of God in our midst.

How will we respond to the missionary mandate given by Jesus when we go back to our parishes?