

Mumemo Declaration: A New Pentecost for Africa

1. We, 134 delegates from 46 countries, representing Caritas Africa and the SECAM¹ Justice, Peace and Development Department, other organisations from within the Catholic Church in Africa and representatives of Caritas Internationalis and its member agencies², CIDSE³ and its member agencies⁴ and Missio, met in Mumemo, Maputo, Mozambique from 23rd to 26th May 2010 to reflect upon and discuss the message and the propositions generated by the Second Special Assembly of the Synod of Bishops for Africa, held in Rome in October 2009. The theme of the Assembly was **“The Church in Africa in Service to Reconciliation, Justice and Peace – You are the Salt of the Earth, You are the Light of the World.”**

In anticipation of the Apostolic Exhortation of the Holy Father, the objectives of the gathering in Mumemo were:

- To take forward the outcomes of the Special Assembly through the identification of priority issues;
- To explore ways that the different arms of the Church can collaborate more closely together; and
- To develop and adopt a plan of action for the way forward for appropriate use by the Church departments in Africa.

2. We were honoured by the presence of His Eminence Peter Cardinal Turkson, President of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace in Rome, whose keynote address focused on the overall theme of the consultation: “The Synod of Bishops for Africa – a New Pentecost for Africa.” Also present were His Eminence Polycarp Cardinal Pengo, the President of SECAM and His Grace Archbishop Cyprian Kizito Lwanga, President of Caritas Africa.

Bearing in mind that this Second Special Assembly of Bishops for Africa was convened 15 years after the conclusion of the first, Cardinal Turkson referred to the two key messages in the Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation, **Ecclesia in Africa**⁵:

- Church Family of God was adopted as an ecclesial paradigm describing the identity and nature of the Church in Africa.
- Evangelisation in all aspects of the work of the Church, to help build the Church Family of God was affirmed as the pastoral priority.

Fifteen years later, the Cardinal continued, it was no longer enough to talk about the identity of the Church alone: the Second Special Assembly for Africa focused on the

¹ Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar

² Caritas Norway, Caritas Spain, Caritas Germany, Caritas France, Caritas Australia, CRS, CAFOD

³ An international alliance of 16 Catholic development organisations from Europe and North America

⁴ Misereor

⁵ Pope John-Paul II, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation, 1995

Church's **activity** and **mission** as "Salt of the Earth, Light of the World". While maintaining her identity as Church Family of God, the Church must become a more active servant of reconciliation, justice and peace and in so doing will herald the new Pentecost. Thus the two synods are inseparable: the Church is challenged to serve the reconciliation-needs, the justice-needs and the peace-needs of the people of the African continent, while maintaining her focus on her specific identity as family of God.

Ecclesia in Africa spoke of the Synod as an occasion of experiencing resurrection and hope. In the intervening 15 years the situation in Africa has considerably changed politically, economically and culturally. It was therefore imperative that a New Pentecost for Africa should lead to discovering new pathways of collaboration between the commissions of Caritas and Justice and Peace to serve their local Churches more harmoniously.

Africa is a continent of great opportunity; therefore it is part of the mission of the Church Family of God to help make this opportunity real for the people of the continent. And it is particularly pertinent that at a time when many countries of Africa are celebrating 50 years of independence that the Catholic Church celebrates a New Pentecost for Africa.

3. Responding to the challenges to the Church which were identified by the Cardinal, participants of the consultation made the following points:

- The Synod signifies a renewal of the Church – the New Pentecost – but the Church must move to be more active and not remain content with theory.
- A New Pentecost necessitates a change of attitude and priorities: the Church is not addressing the needs of modern society adequately and should reach out more to marginalised groups, especially women, young people, people living with disabilities and the poorest of the poor.
- Theological reflection must lead the Church to a pastoral approach in the fields of reconciliation, justice and peace. While retaining her pastoral dimension in the fields of reconciliation, justice and peace, she also has to challenge herself and ask how she is living the communion.
- Reconciliation, justice and peace must be high on the agendas of all dioceses; Justice and Peace Commissions are mandatory, not optional.
- The Church in Africa has been outstanding in the provision of social services, especially health and education. But education must be for life witness, not just for academic achievement.
- The Church must engage in political issues to bring real change, but should avoid being partisan.

4. Mindful that the 57 propositions submitted by the Synod Fathers to the Holy Father for consideration cover many contrasting aspects and issues confronting Africa and the lives of its people; appreciating the remarkable work that has been done by the Church in terms of provision of social services; aware that the recent global financial crisis, as well as environmental and ethical crises will have implications for the availability of resources for the work of the Church in Africa, we recognise that new and innovative ways of addressing these challenges must be found.

Across a continent as diverse as Africa, priority issues will differ according to local circumstances, but some principles must be followed by the Church everywhere:

- The work of the Church must be inspired by Gospel values, Catholic Social Teaching, the primacy of the common good, respect of human dignity, the option for the poor and the need to be united.
 - Inspired by the prayer of Jesus for unity (Jn 17, 31), the Church and her various pastoral instruments such as Caritas and Justice and Peace Commissions, must make the best possible use of the human, material, financial and spiritual resources available to it. These departments must work collaboratively and not competitively, as it is the nature of the Church to be one.
5. In order to move forward in the Spirit of the Second Africa Special Assembly and to enable the New Pentecost to become a reality to the people of Africa, we commit ourselves to the following actions:
- a. Where Justice and Peace and Caritas Commissions do not exist, these be established as a matter of priority at all levels.
 - b. SECAM, through the national and regional structures of Caritas and Justice and Peace, will hold discussions within a period of six months over possibilities of and opportunities for working more closely together. Within 12 months, each national and regional structure will have at least one joint programme agreed upon and being implemented.
 - c. Within six months, Caritas Africa and the Justice and Peace Commission of SECAM will have developed a joint plan for advocacy on strategic, critical issues such as governance, peace building, extractive industries and climate change.
 - d. Within 3 months, SECAM will create a task force to study the propositions of the Synod which relate specifically to women and make recommendations on how these can be applied affirmatively at all levels.
 - e. Within one year, SECAM will develop a plan for improving effectiveness of information sharing between the regions and across the continent, in order that the institutions of the Church may benefit from good practice in the pastoral work of the Church, wherever it occurs.

We hereby commend this Mumemo Declaration to the Church in Africa and her friends and collaborators around the world, through the intercession of Our Lady of Africa.

Mumemo, Mozambique

26th May 2010