Next bishops’ synod turns to secular world

BY JOHN THAYIS

Pope Benedict has chosen “new evangelisation in countries where Christ’s faith and practice have declined, and where people ‘have even moved away from the Church’.

Referring to the special Synod of Bishops for the Middle East in October, which focused on the pastoral challenges of the region, he said: “What was often evoked was the need for a new evangelisation for the Middle East as well. This was quite a widespread theme, especially in the countries where Christianity has ancient roots.”

The pope said he chose the next synod topic, “The new evangelisation for the transmission of the Christian faith”, after consulting with the world’s episcopate. He recently created the Pontifical Council for Promoting New Evangelisation, and has made re-evangelisation a main theme of his pontificate.

Pope Benedict has presided over two world synods, one on the Eucharist and one on Scripture, as well as regional synods for Africa and the Middle East. He streamlined the format of these encounters to allow for more exchange of opinion, and has sometimes joined in the discussions.

His apostolic letter on the synod on Scripture, published in 2008, is expected late this year.—CNS

Church: What’s needed for better education

BY CLAIRE MATHESON

Representatives of the Catholic Church met with the minister of Basic Education, Angie Motshekga, to discuss the challenges facing Catholic education and proposals for the improvement of the national education environment.


The delegation delivered a document tabling the challenges currently facing schools for the minister to consider.

Mr Potterton said the delegation represented a united call from both the education sector and the Church for society to re-evaluate the common perceptions of the teaching profession, and the urgent need to improve the status of teachers in the community.

Mr Potterton said Catholic education has been distinguished by the commitment of its educators, who see “their teaching as a mission and true calling”. It was hoped the department would strive to encourage the same dedication.

Sr Gaylor said that although the Church may not have financial resources at its disposal, “it brings a wealth of experience and skills to the table from which the education sector as a whole can benefit.”

Poverty and HIV/Aids were specific issues that the education department must address. The document said there is a need to find and provide “models for responding to the effects of HIV/AIDS in our education system and for community-based care and support of children who live with and are affected by HIV/AIDS.”

Mr Potterton said the Catholic Schools’ Network is actively engaged in this struggle, but more department involvement is needed.

He said the meeting included a discussion on the monitoring of schools. “Government has over time gathered sufficient data to monitor the performance of schools and can categorise them according to performance levels. We feel strongly that steadily performing schools should be acknowledged and given greater autonomy in managing their own affairs."

Mr Potterton said the argument that schools cannot be held accountable until they are properly resourced still needed to be addressed.

In addition to highlighting issues, the delegation offered solutions which included better fund management, accountable leaders, honest school appraisals, regular subsidies and further investment in teachers. The delegation felt the experience and knowledge found in Catholic education could be highly beneficial and could be tested in pilot projects operated by the department.

The CIE director pointed out that Catholic schools are not private initiatives but rather, “an expression of the reality of the Church”.

Continued on page 2
Prison chaplain spreads his ministry through Facebook

BY CLAIRE MATHIESON

W HATSOEVER its mission, the Church needs to use all resources available. This is the message from Fr Jordan Ngondo, prison chaplain for the Department of Correctional Services (DCS) at the Durban Centre. Fr Ngondo, who has taken his ministry to the digital age by setting up a website Facebook for prisoners, their families, correctional services officials and the community to interact.

“I’ve taken this ministry to attract and create awareness on prison ministry, to communicate with people using current technological means,” said Fr Ngondo, who has been a permanent prison chaplain for 15 years. He pointed out that Facebook is not only a means to communicate with those in his ministry, but also with others who use the website.

Fr Ngondo said he hopes to reach the youth because “there is a notable reduction in the number of youth congregate.”

As a chaplain, Fr Ngondo is the link between the DCS and the Church. He also manages faith activities and rehabilitation programs for DCS staff, prisoners, victims of crime and families of the victims.

“I do a lot of counselling, debriefing sessions and death notification, and I minister to the emergency staff,” Fr Ngondo said.

He said Facebook is just another outlet for his ministry and an option for people to communicate with the Church.

Facebook, Fr Ngondo said, is used by people from all walks of life, the young, the old and also priests. He added that the Church was not utilising the Internet to its fullest potential.

Fr Ngondo said Facebook could serve as a platform for debating and discussing spiritual and moral social issues.

“It’s a way to share thoughts and ideas and, in this way, it’s a means of education. I personally know of a prisoner who transformed his life through acquiring education. I have seen this man who was a criminal minder expand his intellect to pursue his studies in law.” Fr Ngondo said such stories could be shared online and given as an example of positive rehabilitation.

He said there was a need for more involvement in prison ministries.

“I am appealing to all the priests who have a prison in their parish to get involved.”

He said volunteers did a lot of the work in the prisons. While their work was “splendid”, he said, the importance of involvement from priests and other religious cannot be underestimated.

Fr Ngondo said he is trying to make it easier for all parties to communicate, and he hopes Facebook will be a valuable tool in his ministry.

Church and minister on education

Continued from page 1

Mr Potterton said Catholic schools fulfill a service of public usefulness.

“The bishops thanked and welcomed Catholic schools and the education system in the country. Ms Motshekga acknowledged the CIE and the SACBC in serving 355 Catholic students.”

In 1976, the Catholic Church led the way in opening what were then private schools for white children, to all race groups.

The CIE is supported by the SACBC in serving 355 Catholic schools in which 174543 students are educated.

The delegation took a united stance,committing to work with Department of Education officials to further improve ways of working together in the future.

The meeting sought a way forward for both Catholic schools and the education system in the country.

‘Spreading’ the friendship faith

BY CLAIRE MATHIESON

P ARISHIONERS of Our Lady of Lourdes in Rivonia, Johannesburg, have launched the Special Religious Development programme (Spred).

The programme encourages family members of students to get involved and share their faith with others, especially children. Ms Motshekga acknowledged the SACBC in serving 355 Catholic students.

The programme is designed to assist children, teenagers, young adults and adults with disability, for learning disabilities or mental limitations.

The programme’s Cheryl Brooke said that participants in Spred are called to learn more about and share their faith. As faith is a journey, more can always be both learned and shared.

Spred groups are formed according to chronological age, and sessions are held once every fortnight. Ms Brooke said volunteers must be committed to the programme because Spred is based on forming relationships with other people.

“Is it this faithfulness that speaks louder than words?”

Spred is a network of services designed to assist persons with developmental disabilities and/or learning problems to become integrated into parish assemblies of worship through the process of education in faith, said Ms Brooke.

The programme, which is open to all members of the church, even those who have never been to church before, has been piloted in Switzerland.

The programme was developed in the late 1950s from the “Vivre” method researched and written by Fr Jean Menny of Lyon. According to Ms Brooke, this work was enhanced by research and refined by personnel in the Church diocesan catechetical department.

The programme is educational, psychologically as well as theologically sound,” she said.

Each church that adopts the programme is given a basic outline from which a locally based program evolves—ensuring maximum relevance to the local Church, she added.

Rivonia parishioners are behind the programme in which groups of “friends” and trained volunteer helpers work in a one-to-one relationship.

Ms Brooke said the programme helps people with developmental disabilities on their faith journey and enables “these people to take their rightful place in the parish community.”

The concept of friendship is fundamental to the programme as it is taken from the Jesus’ words: “I call you friends.”

Ms Brooke said the programme holds that there is nothing more precious than a true friend—“one who is there for us”, which is precisely why the programme was developed.

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“If it is this faithfulness that speaks louder than words.”
New rules worry Zim refugees

BY BROOWNEN DACHS

No lives of unskilled Zimbabweans who have fled economic and political hardship may become easier immediately as South Africa’s latest requirements to remain in the country may be facing many who work with migrants.

Mariannhill Father Danisa Khumalo, who coordinates the Johannesburg archdiocese’s ministry to Zimbabwean refugees, welcomed the South African government’s efforts to regularise the status of Zimbabweans in South Africa. However, he said, many Zimbabweans “are worried about getting their documents in time” to avoid deportation.

The priest said he has seen people sleeping in the long queues outside Johannesburg’s Home Affairs offices.

Ending its moratorium on deportations, the South African government has given Zimbabweans a deadline of December 31 to submit documentation seeking permission to work and live in the country. To avoid deportation, they are being told to produce a passport, a letter from an employer, and proof that they are studying in South Africa.

“It’s an opportunity” that Zimbabweans “should take up and use for their benefit”, Fr Khumalo said.

Jurist Refugee Service gave a “cautionary welcome” to the new regulations after they were announced in September. In a statement, the agency said it was “pleased to see the South African government has recognised the necessity of providing assistance to vulnerable Zimbabweans” and that cross-border cooperation between the Zimbabwean and South African governments “promises a more effective and meaningful way to control migration flows between the two countries”.

The Johannesburg archdiocese is disseminating information about the new rules. Fr Khubalo said notiﬁcation that its ofﬁces in Braamfontein posted the Home Affairs requirements as a notice on its notice board and also reassured people that “after December, asylum permits and refugee documents will still be valid”.

Some people “are surprised that this is a trick from the South African government to get rid of undocumented Zimbabweans”, Fr Khumalo said. “They are waiting to see if those who have submitted their papers will get the permits”.

Despite a unity government formed in Zimbabwe in February 2009 by Prime Minister Morgan Tsvangirai and President Robert Mugabe, the influx of Zimbabweans into South Africa has not abated.

“Many Zimbabweans acknowledge that some change has taken place, although it is seen in a window dressing by many”, Fr Khumalo said.

“Many people think that it is not yet OK for them to go back to Zimbabwe as there are no employment opportunities there, and salaries are still ridiculously low” at about R1 000 monthly for most civil servants, Fr Khumalo said.

“Three-quarters of the people who come for assistance at our ofﬁces are unskilled, and their chances of getting jobs in Zimbabwe are slim”, Fr Khumalo said.

“They are not prepared to go back home because here they get the opportunity to do some [part-time] jobs, and with this they are able to sustain their families in Zimbabwe.”

The forced migration studies programme at the University of the Witwatersrand estimates that between one million and 1.5 million Zimbabweans are living in South Africa.

About 270 000 Zimbabweans were deported in the year leading up to the April 2009 moratorium. Sacred Heart Father Frank Galagher of Queen of Peace parish in Mahikeng in the diocese of Tzaneen fears the new regulations will lead to a cycle of deportations and desperate efforts to return.

“Unless things change dramatically in Zimbabwe, people will do all they can to stay here, especially with Zimbabwean elections scheduled for next year and reports of intimidation,” Fr Gallagher said.

Most of the approximately 100 000 Zimbabweans in a shelter that Fr Gallagher runs are unskilled and “battle to find work” in South Africa.

“They are stuck—they can’t go forward and they can’t go back,” he said, noting that the men, who are mostly 18-30, earn about R20 a day in short-term work they sometimes find, and that they send that money home to their families.

Fr Gallagher’s parish distributes soup and bread to Zimbabweans who sleep on a field at the side of the road. They are then taken to Johannesburg. He also runs a home for boys who, unaccompanied by adults, have tried Zimbabwe’s border into South Africa.

“If the deportations that the government is threatening to resume means that these boys are forced to go back to Zimbabwe, their education will be compromised and they will have nowhere to go,” Fr Gallagher said. The boys have been at school in Mahikeng since the start of the school year in January.

“Many people think that it is not yet OK for them to go back to Zimbabwe as there are no employment opportunities there, and salaries are still ridiculously low” at about R1 000 monthly for most civil servants, Fr Khumalo said.

“The time involved is enormous because of the sheer numbers of people seeking documentation,” he said. “There seems to be tremendous confusion about what is required” among the people lining up outside Home Affairs offices in Rustenburg.

But he commended the government on its efforts to regularise the status of Zimbabweans in the country.

“People want to make their stay here legal and sustainable. It’s not as though they are here through a choice between two good situations,” Bishop Dowling said, adding that the problems in Zimbabwe are “battering people”.

BETHLEHEM aims for ‘self-reliance’ and good governance

BY CLAIRE MATHIESON

Bethlehem’s biannual diocesan Pastoral Council (DPC) meeting was held with the theme “Good Governance”.

Fr Dicko Motofekeng said the participants, who met at the John Paul II Foundation Centre in Bethle- hem, included clergy, members of Religious orders and permanent deacons working in the diocese as well as mem- bers of parish pastoral councils and parish ﬁnancial councils from throughout the diocese.

Fr Mofokeng said the theme covered most of the essential issues in parish life, but focused especially on leadership.

Young people, sodalities and missionary groups all discussed problems and solutions with Fr Jan de Groef of Bethlehem said, led by Fr Urs Fischer of Loyola.

Another broadly discussed issue was transparency and accountability. The issue is not uncommon in civil society, but it was necessary for the “Church to be an example to others”.

Fr Mofokeng said discussions “were successful” and have given the diocese specific direction for the rest of the year.

On the third day of the meet- ing, an occasion to raise funds for the running of the diocese, was held for the ﬁrst time ever in this gathering. To the surprise of the participants, the target of R80 000 was reached.”

The funds will be used for various projects in the diocese. At the end of the DPC, Bishop Ian de Groef of Bethlehem said the diocese is “really getting the principle of the ‘self-reliant Church’.

The diocese has taken on the task made at last year’s second Synod of Bishops for Africa, which discussed how the Church on the continent could become a more effective agent of transformation and become self-sufﬁcient.

This year’s DPC meeting was attended by members of the diocesan council, taking note of the new leadership principle of the ‘self-reliant Church’. The diocese has taken on the task made at last year’s second Synod of Bishops for Africa, which discussed how the Church on the continent could become a more effective agent of transformation and become self-sufﬁcient.
Tariq Aziz will not be carried out, high court sentenced Aziz to death.

Lombardi SJ said after the Iraqi known, “spokesman Fr Federico Church on the death penalty is the Vatican spokesman. Prime minister Tariq Aziz, 74, said about their next moves.

Aziz has 30 days to appeal. His minister for then-Iraqi President Saddam Hussein, for persecution of Shia religious parties. Aziz is currently in prison and in poor health. He has been con- victed for his role in the 1992 execu- tion of more than three dozen merchants found guilty of profi- cution of more than three dozen

Tariq Aziz was invited by the Franciscan friars in Assisi, to pray at St Francis’ tomb. Many Italians complained that the Franciscans were being more active in Iraq than they had been the No 2 official of a regime that had opposed the US invasion of Iraq in 2003, as the Vatican engaged in a flurry of diplomatic activity to try to prevent the US-led invasion.

During the Vatican’s 2008 “voting out” Aziz was invited by the Franciscan friars in Assisi, to pray at St Francis’ tomb and is made up of wood brought over from Venice in the 1480s, he said. The leaking has caused damaged to pillars and mosaics in the church.

Over the centuries, piecemeal repairs have been made to the roof, the Franciscan said, and this will be the first comprehen- sive restoration on the church since it was completed in the fourth century.

“The some of the repairs have not been done properly,” he said, “we need to use modern technology,” said Fr Macora. “After the survey is completed we need to move to phase two and see what needs to be done. As it stands now the main object is to do restoration.”

During a visit to the site on October 26 by Palestinian Presi- dent Mahmoud Abbas, the Palestinian Authority announ- ced the plans for a major restoration of the church which is the Greek Orthodox and Armenian Ortho- dox.

The Palestinian Authority has said it expects the multi-year renovation project to cost mil- lions of dollars and has appealed in European governments abroad to help fund the project.

The Vatican tourism min- istry said the restoration work would not hinder pilgrims visit- ing the holy site.—CNS

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The survey, which is using sophisticated scanning technology to accurately evaluate the build- ing’s structural condition, began in September and is expected to be completed in this month, said Fr Macora. The main concern is the state of the roof, which is hundreds of years old, has been leaking, and is made up of wood brought over from Venice in the 1480s, he said. The leaking has caused damaged to pillars and mosaics in the church.

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‘Kidnapping brought me back to God’

BY ROSEMARY BERNTH

SURVIVING six months as a hostage in Colombia in 1997 turned Marino Restrepo back to the Catholic faith he had abandoned as a teenager.

Restrepo, 44, who delivered a series of talks in South Africa last year, was kidnapped by the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) during a visit home at Christmas. He has credited his release to “a miracle”.

Now a full-time missionary for the Church, he travels the world evangelising. Starting in the early 1980s, he spied for the Colombian government internationally as an entertainer.

Mr Restrepo said that faith is more than just believing in a religion. “Our homework is to learn how to love, how to forgive and how to give our possessions. Our heart is where the treasure is. We need to be sure the real treasure is the Lord and our priorities are not earthly but heavenly.”

He was one of several speakers who addressed thousands attending the conference, organised under the theme “From Doubt to Faith”. The gathering was aimed at enriching attendance “searching souls”.

Another speaker, Nigerian Cardinal Francis Arinze, retired prefect of the Vatican Congregation for Divine Worship and the Sacraments, said the conference promoted the ideal of putting Christ at the centre of everything.

The cardinal said most Catholics “have remained babies or dwarves in matters of religious knowledge”, yet are experts in society.

“They can navigate expertly on Internet, but they are unfamiliar with the contours of the Catholic Faith. Many young Catholics, in their looks, in their clothes, can name all the footballers in the different leagues together with their coaches. But they have quite a problem naming the 12 apostles.”

One book in particular Cardinal Arinze suggested his listeners read is the Catechism of the Catholic Church, which he considers a guidebook for parents to teach their children about the faith.

Cardinal Arinze also said time should be set aside for prayer because it helps with spiritual warfare. “In the battlefield that is our earthly pilgrimage, we need prayer in order to continue to win victory over the devil and our weaknesses.”

He said attending Sunday Mass and receiving the Eucharist was also a strong weapon of faith.

Matthew Kelly, an international Catholic speaker and author, told his conference audience that the Church is “a sleeping giant”.

The early Christians lived differently, loved differently and worked differently. As modern Catholics, we seem to blend in.”

Mr Kelly said Catholics today appear to be lost and compared the Catholic Church to a “sleeping giant”. “I think we’re failing to demonstrate the relevance of Catholicism in our modern life,” he said. “I think Catholicism is being rejected a lot because it’s old. It is old, but it’s like an old treasure map. A treasure map is valuable if it leads to treasure. If you find a treasure map, you don’t throw it away because it’s old.”

Blogs aghog over ‘Catholic Simpsons’

BY SARAH DELANEY

THE people at the Vatican newspaper weigh in on any number of serious issues, but they are now being challenged in the blogosphere after they claimed that Homer Simpson is one of their own, even if he doesn’t know it.

In an opinion piece perhaps intended to push some buttons, L’Osservatore Romano wrote: “Few know it, and he does his best to hide it, but it’s true: Homer J Simpson is Catholic.”

That assertion predictably provoked a flood of sarcastic reactions on blogs and websites. Including in the show’s executive producer, Al Jean, who wrote: “Enter- tainment Weekly. He said: ‘My first reaction is shock and awe, and I guess it makes up for me not going to church for 20 years.”

But, he is quoted as saying, “we’re pretty clearly showing that Homer is not Catholic. I really don’t think he could go without eating meat on Fridays—for even an hour.”

The KathDark Post wrote a blog, “Is the Dope Catholic? The Vatican newspaper bashes the Simpsons”, and asked: “So is L’Osservatore Romano truly so passionate about the Simpsons as it is seeking a cartoon conversion? Or is this just a way to connect through pop culture?”

The Kishkash Column, titled “Homer and Bart are Catholic”, referred to a nine-page “encyclical analysis of the cartoon in the October 16 issue of the Italian Jesuit weekly La Civiltà Cattolica. That article preserves the identity of the few television shows for kids in which the Christian faith, religious questions about

The Southern Cross, November 3 to November 9, 2010

5

INTERNATIONAL

The Simpsons, whom the Vatican newspaper called “Catholic”. PHOTO FROM FOX

riddiculous Rev Lovejoy, Fr O’Chetta said. The show lampoons certain religious figures, it shows the Simpsons are not how it is. Good and bad. “In that episode, the Catholic Church comes out looking good.”

Fr O’Chetta said that although the depiction of a Catholic nun in the episode is based on an outdated, negative stereotype.

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The Congregation of the Missionaries of Mariannhill, CMM, sprung from the Trappist Monastery of Mariannhill founded by Abbot Francis Pfanner in South Africa in 1882. We believe that: “Our missionary field is the Kingdom of God and that has no boundaries!” Faithful to the example of Abbot Francis Pfanner, the Mariannhill Brothers and Priests try to be of service to the local church through pastoral, social and development works. We make our contribution to the call for renewing, uplifting, developing and sustaining the human spirit, as our response to the signs and needs of the time. In our missionary life of Prayer and Work (Ora et Labora), we try to effectively proclaim the Good News to all people, especially to the poor and needy, so that there are “Better Fields, Better Houses, Better Hearts!”

To know more about us contact:
Director of Vocations
PO Box 11363, Mariannhill, 3601
or PO Box 83, Umzimkhulu, 5099
Sudan at the crossroads

The mostly Christian South of Sudan is standing at a crossroads: in January its people will vote on the option of secession from the mostly Muslim North. The mostly Muslim North. Fr. VICTOR PHALANA of Pretoria visited the region, and heard about Catholic hopes and fears.

The South of Sudan, populated predominantly by Christians in a mostly Muslim country, will decide in a referendum scheduled for January 21, 2011, whether to secede from Africa’s largest country. In September, I visited Sudan. I had an opportunity to con-celebrate English Mass with the community of St Theresa’s in the southern capital of Juba, and attended the Arabic Mass. I interacted with the people and listened to some of their fears and concerns.

I met with the clergy of the archdiocese of Juba, some of whom had travelled long distances to be there. Our encounter was very rich and very fruitful. I also met with the clergy of the archdiocese of Juba, some of whom had travelled long distances to be there. Our encounter was very rich and very fruitful. They believe that if the GOSS is not given an opportunity to govern, it will bring changes and deliver services to the people with greater speed and urgency. But the priests I spoke with are concerned that the referendum will bring religious tension among officials.

The greatest fear of the priests is that the referendum might be postponed. They believe, will be the cause of much frustration and disappointment. The referendum was part of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, which was signed five years ago and brought to an end the 21-year civil war that claimed more than two million lives and displaced about seven million people. The problem in Sudan is that the referendum is reasonable because the process of border demarcations has been finalised, and the voter registration process has not yet started. During the United Nations’ Peace Day celebrations, attended by thousands of people, including the archbishop and his priests, we heard one of the leaders saying that the people of the South must go and register. “After registering,” he said, “go to vote and, when you do vote, remember that we have only one choice: separation!”

People are living in fear. On the day of my departure, I witnessed troops movements. Battle tanks belonging to the Sudan People’s Liberation Army were being transported nearer to Juba. Anti-aircraft guns and rocket launchers were transported to various points.

Are people afraid that if the South votes for a secession, the North might come and attack and start a new war. 

The Catholic Bishops’ Conference and the Government of South Sudan are in agreement that no matter what, war is not an option. They intend to do every-thing in their power to avert war. The bishops’ conference has issued a pastoral letter, guiding their flock and the people of Sudan concerning the referendum. South Sudanese are concerned that the world’s attention is more on Darfur, in Western Sudan. The world has taken its eyes off South Sudan just as it is facing a very crucial time in its history.

We must listen to the voice of the people of South Sudan and be interested in their cause. We need to lobby our governments to support the referendum and give moral and logistical support.

We must also continue our material, spiritual and financial support to the people of South Sudan until they can rise up and enjoy their freedom.

Support must also go to the process of interreligious dialogue taking place in the South, where Christians and Muslims are working together, trying to find a way of peaceful coexistence in South Sudan.

We might investigate starting an “Adopt-a-Priest” campaign. Most of the priests earn about R2000 per month and find the living conditions unbearable.

I have learnt a lot from my trip, and the testimonies of these priests and their humility have touched my heart.

During the time of apartheid, the universal Church supported us. The pastoral letters of the Sudanese Bishops’ conference were read all over. Our bishops were invited to address our Catholic brothers and sisters all over the world. I returned to South Africa with a bit of malaria, but also with a sense of hope and anxiety for what will happen in the next three months.

Read the pastoral letter “Message of Hope!” issued by the Sudan Catholic Bishops’ Conference at www.america.org/downloads/unique.pdf

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Women prepare a plot of land for planting vegetables as part of a group food security project in Yei, Southern Sudan. There is a fear that the referendum on independence scheduled for January 2011 will be postponed. PHOTO: PAUL JEFFREY, CNS
Church and Judaism

The history of persecution of Jews in the name of the Catholic faith is one of the most disturbing chapters in our history. Popes created the first ghettos, and over almost two millennia much Christian protest was mounting, including that by Catholics, fertilised the fields of pogroms and ultimately the Holocaust would be harvested. We may never forget that awful history. The Second Vatican Council in its document Nostra Acta took a huge step in acknowledging that guilt and in healing the deep wounds, a process that continues today. In 2000, Pope John Paul II most unequivocally apologised to the Jewish people for the injustices perpetrated by Catholics against their ancestors—many of them recent.

The Synod of Bishops for the Middle East in October emphatically reasserted the Catholic condemnation of anti-Semitism and anti-Judaism, acclaimed the Church’s desire of dialogue with Judaism, and affirmed the right of the state of Israel to exist at peace within its internationally recognised borders. However, the synod also condemned injustices suffered by people at the hands of Israel. It pointed, among others, to the closures, checkpoints which disem­­powered Palestinians, but arguably politically.

The synod’s criticism—and a slice of the teachings of the Church—has been missed by Palestinians, but not for all.

And for which did he die?

Let many others refer the “translation of ‘pro vos et multis’ to be ‘for you and for all’”, “for you and for many”, which sounds selective, as if Catholics are the only ones. If Jesus died “for you and for all”, it is not for all.

Jesus problem is that Latin has no definitive article, no equivalent of “the”. If “pro vos et multis” were translated as “for you and the many”, it would not select­­ive, it would be “for you and for the many and all others”. For me that would mean, “for you and everybody else.”

Monica Giles, Cape Town

Carnage is king

Since 2003 the traffic authorities have blocked all requests to adjust our speed limits in line with Australia and New Zealand, which would cut deaths on our roads in half overnight.

In South Africa carnage is king. Where is the public outcry? Where is the outcry of the media?

Richard Benson, Road Safety Action Campaign, Cape Town

Faith vs religion

KIEVIE Vlok’s letter “Enough is enough” (October 20) is something of a travesty of the Christian faith.

It infers that Catholics takeutos mame against the Church, rather than against the call for charity in all things, and it judges others as being less than perfect—definitely a clear in­­juc­­tion by Jesus not to judge others.

Mr Vlok is apparently confusing “judging” and “judgement”. Our Church is in jeopardy by some “bad­­mouthing or railing against the Church”, then it is simply a failure of the Christian faith, or the same “upholders” of religion.

Rosemary Gravenor, Durban
R ECENTLY I did something quite unusual: I participated in a "Bosman weekend" in a South African Afrikaner church.

I was mistakenly under the impression that everyone in South Africa knew who Bosman was, but I discovered that many people are not aware of this talented writer who captured the soul of the Afrikaner people of the bushveld so well in his stories—written in English.

I was initially briefly stationed in Groot Marico, as a school teacher in the 1920s, he wrote what are now the in-the-ribs type humour and compassion, as if he had lived there. I found intimate knowledge of the people and their way of life.

Listening to dramatisations of some of the stories was certainly a joy. A shared experience of the culture, food, jerego and mammoor added to the enjoyment. Other blessings of that weekend were making new like-minded friends, thus discovering the "eye" of a river, the Groot Marico river.

Although I had known a little of him, during the course of the weekend I became intrigued by this talented writer who captured the soul of the Afrikaner people. He was, in fact, quite an unsavoury character, a con-man. Repeated from a death sentence for shooting his step-brother, he served a prison sentence and had other life with his children into law-abiding, socially adept Afrikaner people. This is certainly a joy. A shared experience of the real Dalmanutha site at Taibha, near the mouth of the Multitudes.

**Photo: Günther Simmermacher**

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**The morning St Peter got a new name and job**

**Günther Simmermacher**

**The Pilgrim's Trek**

**Surveying** the area around the ancient Lake of Gennesaret, one cannot help but marvel at the lake and the surrounding mountains. The Sea of Galilee, with its glistening blue-green waters, is truly a most pastoral oasis of tranquillity amid the rush of a pilgrim traffic. It is a most pastoral oasis of tranquillity amid the rush of a pilgrim traffic.

As the sea was known to be very deep, a story was told about the Apostle Peter who was standing on the deck of a ship fishing. His feet were not far from the edge of the vessel. Peter was about to jump into the water, rapidly making a fish braai for breakfast. As the ship hunters, fishing by boat, fishing, he was standing on the deck of a boat, fishing, and he was about to jump into the water, rapidly making a fish braai for breakfast.

That morning when Simon, son of John, received a new name—Peter—he was standing on the deck of a fishing boat, fishing. How many of us realize how much our life would soon change.

He was probably stark naked, for we know from John that he hurriedly put on his outer garment the moment he spotted the risen Christ on the shore (21:7). That day, he and his companions were engaging in the cast-net method of fishing, as Mark tells us (1:16), which would have required Peter to frequently jump in and out of the water to catch the fish. By the time he was digesting the breakfast meal, Peter had gathered his friends and companions. Simon had a been given a new name and a new job: fishing a missionary mission, the profession of Christ, the profession of Christ, the profession of Christ, the profession of Christ, the profession of Christ, the profession of Christ, the profession of Christ, the profession of Christ, the profession of Christ.

The Missus site is not the Dalmanutha that is, the place to which Jesus went after feeding the multitudes (probably to escape the attention of Herod Antonius, the mur-derer of John the Baptist). Nobody knows where the real Dalmanutha was, scholars speculate it might have been somewhere around Magdala.

Among purposes, however, the Missus site is well wide, we may reflect on the effects of a missus that is reflected in the magnifier Benedicent church of the Loaves and Fishes, a faithful recre-ation of a 3rd-century basilica that took place there, and on the sacrifice that canters may demand of us.

In his homily, our spiritual direc-tor, Bishop Zithule Patrick Mveve of Klerksdorp, pointed out that Jesus' concern and concrete action for the poor must inform our Christian approach today. As a good example of this, Bishop Mveve recalled the motto of the Belgian Cardinal Joseph Cardinal (1882-1967), founder of the Young Christian Workers movement: "See Jesus Act."

South Africans need not be told that poverty remains a massive prob-lem in the world today. Much as we are being told that poverty is inevitable, we do have the means to feed everybody in the world. Jesus had the means to feed the hungry multitudes before him, even at the very real risk of drawing unwelcome attention to himself. The world has seen it, has it happened, but has it ever act?

Whichever way one chooses to interpret the Gospel account of the feeding of the multitudes, if there is one miracle of Jesus' ministry that remains acutely relevant today, it is this one.

This is the second part of Günther Simmermacher's series on The Southern Cross' "Pilgrimage in September."

**The kingdom of God**

I N the first chapter of Mark, after Jesus was baptised by John, he was tempted for 40 days in the wilderness. In Luke 4:1-11 Jesus quoted the Announcing the Good News of the kingdom of God, for which he had been sent. What did Jesus mean by the kingdom of God?

After his death and resurrection, his followers (including, eventually, Paul) also preached in his name, and this is why we believe the Gospel. But the Gospel Jesus' followers preached, and the message of the book of Nazareth was the Messiah, that he had been put to death on a cross, and that he had risen from the dead (See Acts 3:13-15).

The synaptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark and Luke) tell us that Jesus began at some point to warn his disciples that he would be put to death and rise again on the third day (10:14). The Gospel he preached as part of his message, however, seems to be centred on the Good News that the kingdom of God was "at hand," that it was so close it could almost be touched.

At times Jesus seemed to suggest that the king-dom of God was indeed as close as his followers thought it was. "For the kingdom of God is within you" (11:20; 17:20-21), while far more he stressed in his final discourse to his disciples that the kingdom of God was "not here in the way you see it. The kingdom of God is like the "now, but not yet" paradox of the near-ness of the kingdom of God.

Many of Jesus' parables explore the mystery of the kingdom of God and the inestimable value of spiritual food. Jesus was, of course, aware of exactly what it is. Today, many Christians simply associate it with wealth and positions of power. Matthew usually refers to the kingdom of God as "the kingdom of heaven" and Luke often to the kingdom of heaven that place where we hope to live with Jesus after he returns.

Dr. Donald Senior, a prominent scholar of Matthew's gospel, tells us that Matthew's preference for "kingdom of heaven" over "kingdom of God" resulted from a sensitivity to his Jewish Christological heritage and his desire to avoid direct reference to the Almighty or the name "God". He called the king-dom of God or the kingdom of heaven, what is being referred to in the gospels is the reign of Jesus. Jesus was announcing the nearness of God's rule in human affairs.

Jesus proclaimed the reign of God as Good News. Perhaps nothing else in the Bible is so universally understood to be Good News as Jesus' good news. People all over the world have come to understand a tremendous amount about Good News, so well as the prayer Jesus taught his followers. "Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven."" He told his disciples to expect the reign of God, the reign when God's will is done here with the same fullness and power as in heaven.

Among Jews of his time, the coming of the Messiah was the hallmark of Israel's new life as God's chosen people. For them the Messiah was the inaugurator of the heavenly age of the Kingdom of God. For Jesus, however, the coming of the Messiah was simply as well as the prayer Jesus taught his followers. "Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven."" He told his disciples to expect the reign of God, the reign when God's will is done here with the same fullness and power as in heaven.

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Middle East synod: What is needed for peace

The October Synod of Bishops for the Middle East appealed to Christians to remain in the region, work towards greater understanding with those of other faiths, and managed to upset Israel, as CINDY WOODEN reports.

CLOSING the two-week Synod of Bishops for the Middle East, Pope Benedict said: “We must never resign ourselves to the absence of peace.” Peace is what will stop Christians from emigrating, he added.

Synod members released a message to their own faithful, their government leaders, Catholics around the world, the international community and to all people of goodwill. The Vatican also released the 44 propositions adopted by synod members as recommendations for Pope Benedict to consider in writing his post-synodal apostolic exhortation.

Although the bishops said the main point of the synod was to find pastoral responses to the challenges facing their people, they said the biggest challenges are caused by political and social injustice and war and conflict.

“We have taken account of the impact of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict on the whole region, especially on the Palestinians who are suffering the consequences of the Israeli occupation: the lack of freedom of movement, the wall of separation and the military checkpoints, the political prisoners, the demolition of homes, the disturbance of family life and the thousands of refugees,” they said in one of the strongest sentences in the message.

They called for continued Catholic-Jewish dialogue, condemned anti-Semitism and anti-Judaism, and affirmed Israel’s right to live in peace and security in “internationally recognised borders”.

Although relations between Christians and Jews in the region are often coloured by Israeli-Palestinian tensions, the bishops said the Catholic Church affirms the Old Testament’s promise to Abraham—and to the Promised Land in Hebrew Scripture—is the word of God and that God’s promises to the Jewish people are still valid.

However, “to recourse to theological and biblical positions which use the word of God to wrongly justify injustices is not acceptable. On the contrary, recourse to religion must lead every person to see the face of God in others.”

Addressing the synod’s final news conference, US Melkite Bishop Cyril Bustros said: “For us Christians, you can no longer speak of a land promised to the Jewish people”, because Christ’s coming into the world demonstrated that God’s chosen people are all people, and that the Promised Land would be the Kingdom of God established throughout the world.

The bishops’ point in criticising some people’s use of Scripture was intended to argue that “the biblical text cannot use the theme of the Promised Land to justify the war of laws to Israel and the expulsion of Palestinians”, Bishop Bustros explained.

The statement by Bishop Bustros provided an immediate reaction from Israel. In a statement, Israel’s deputy foreign minister, Danny Ayalon, said the Vatican should distance itself from what the bishop said and that the Papacy should not be allowed to jeopardise their relations.

“We express our disappointment that this important synod has become a forum for political attacks against Israel, in the best tradition of Arab propaganda,” he said.

The propositions called for a corps of Christian youth to be set up to “promote greater communion, cooperation and dialogue between Christians of different rites, promoting greater communion and dialogue between Catholics of different rites, between Catholics of different rites, and with the Jewish and Muslim majorities of their homelands.

They also offered words of support for the suffering Iraqi people, both Christians and Muslims, and for those forced to flee the country.

In their message, the bishops expressed particular concern over the future of Jerusalem, particularly in the context of Israeli initiatives that threaten the composition and demographic profile of the city through construction and buying up the property of Christians and other people of faith.

They also offered words of support for the suffering Iraqi people, both Christians and Muslims, and for those forced to flee the country.

They expressed their commitment to efforts to promote full Christian unity and promised to strengthen cooperative efforts with other Christian churches in the region because unity is necessary for effectively sharing the Gospel.

Tout. Father David Neuhaus, the South African-born vicar for Hebrew- and Russian-speaking Catholics in the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem, told the synod the divisions were principally among the leaders of the different churches, “but the more you get to the grassroots, the more those divisions disappear”.

“When you walk through the streets of Jerusalem, Bethlehem or Nazareth, and you ask which group they belong to, the answer from Christians is ‘I am a Christian’,” he said. “But I am Roman Catholic or Greek Catholic or Maronite’.”

The bishops at the synod also recognised their own failures in not promoting greater communion between Catholics of different rites, with other Christians and with the Jewish and Muslim majorities of their homelands.

The propositions called for creation of a “commission of cooperation” between Church leaders of different rites, the sharing of material resources and establishment of a programme to share priests.

They also echoed a repeated call in the synod for the pope to study ways to expand the jurisdiction of Eastern Catholic patriarchs to allow them greater power in providing for their faithful who live outside the traditional territory of their churches and to consider dropping restrictions on ordaining married men to the priesthood outside the traditional homelands of the particular Church.

Maronite Archbishop Joseph Sourli of Cyprus told reporters: “The synod is not a medical prescription or a cure for the problems Christians face in the Middle East, ‘it’s a journey that is just beginning’ and will have to be implemented by the region’s Catholics—CNS.

Contributing to the story were Sarah Delaney and Judith Sudilovsky.
Sister Mary Fergus McMorrow, who died on September 8, was born on September 19, 1923, in County Armagh, Northern Ireland. Her upbringing in home and school was deeply Catholic. At the age of 15, she responded to the Lord's call to dedicate her life to him as a missionary sister. At that time, to become a Holy Cross missionary sister meant never seeing home and country again.

She made her first vows on August 15, 1944, and arrived in South Africa 63 years ago, in October 1945.

She trained as a teacher of commercial subjects and taught throughout her teaching career in Holy Cross schools throughout South Africa and also in Windhoek, Namibia. She often cared for the boarders and students in sports.

In her teaching career, in many ways she was a perfect model, in many ways she was a perfect model, in the lives of the students who came under her care. She was a perfect model of Christ's love to those who were less well off.

She was very interested in our lady's cenacle and many friends of hers were stationed. She loved to keep up with local and world news and be the first to share news items with her community.

She was delighted when home from their missions for introduction and always kept in close contact with her family in Ireland.

After retiring from teaching in 1993, she was appointed community superior in Maitland, Cape Town, and in January 2001 at the age of 78, she began a period of activity in the Holy Cross community and St Charles Borromeo parish, Victory Park, Johannes-

burg. In her last few years she had health problems but was always loyal to the last, to the community and personal prayers.

Her last days consisted of care for both Mass and even shortly before her death, with great determination and her walking stick, was off to the nearby church to attend Mass.

Sister Fergus was very honest and forthright, independent and warm-hearted. She was grateful for the smallest attempts to help her, and had a way of saying, “Thank you very, very much.”

Sister Fergus died peacefully at Victory Park in the presence of her family. (011) 609 7246, (011) 609 7247.

OMI conducted her moving funeral service, in which music mingled with African and

community members.

The burial took place in West Park cemetery.

Born: November 2, 1977.

Education: Divinity College, St Martin de Porres, Jackal Drive, Summerstrand, George, Plate, Bryanston, Juan Booy-

son, 011 782 4338.

Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament: First Friday of the month at 15:00 and on the 1st Saturday of each month at 15:00. At Our Lady of the Angels, Little Eden, Tel: 011 609 7246.

Family member living in the home: Vivienne, 073 768 3653 or at sbonifa@iafrica.com

Holiday accommodation: Self-catering holiday accommodation available from budget to luxury.

FISH HOEK: Self-catering and mine. Amen “Say this

RCP. Amen 

accompany them to the nearest church to attend Mass and even shortly before her death, with great determination and her walking stick, was off to the nearby church to attend Mass.

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community members.

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The great thurible swinger

I did not know John van Castricum very well at school because he was a class ahead of me at CBC Pretoria in the 1950s. But I do remember him fondly and think of him every time I go to Benediction or attend a service in which a thurible is used. We were fellow altar servers at the parish of St Pius X in Waterkloof, Pretoria, in the 1950s. But I do remember him fondly and think of him every time I go to Benediction or attend a service in which a thurible is used. There was a time, however, when John somehow let the charcoal in the thurible go out, much to the annoyance of our fellow servers.

There was a time, however, when John gave an extra twist to his practised circular motion and the thurible back from another loop and quietly continued swinging it gently to and fro. John did not know John van Castricum very well at school because he was a class ahead of me at CBC Pretoria in the 1950s. But I do remember him fondly and think of him every time I go to Benediction or attend a service in which a thurible is used.

Thethurible swinger

Always well attended, a highlight of the pastoral week. Being a senior acolyte, John was official thurifer, and for us juniors, to be given the privilege of carrying the Incense “boat”, was an enormous honour.

There was a time, however, when John somehow let the charcoal in the thurible go out, much to the annoyance of our fellow parish priest, Mgr Mason, who suffered great wrath from the congregation at his performance. The little girl replied: “Then you ask him.”

Thethurible swinger

13th Sunday—Year C (November 14th)

Reading: Malachi 3:19-20; Psalm 98:1-9; 2 Thessalonians 3:7-12; Luke 21:5-19

W e are almost at the end of the year now, and that may be why a faint air of menace hangs over the readings for next Sunday.

It is hard to be sure precisely what Malachi means in the first reading, but we can read it into our life and our time: “The Day is coming—it is, it will appear, a somewhat challenging day, and all arrogant people will be like stubble.” The prophet combines two metaphors: that of the after-harvest, “neither to rot nor stalk”, to describe what will happen to the wicked, and that of sunrise, a beautiful and alluring experience, which is nonetheless very effective in the sleep of those who are under the yoke. The prophet says: “The sea and what fills it, the world and its inhabitants, the streams are to clap their hands together, the mountains are to sing for joy.” And why? Because “he is coming to judge the earth; he will judge the world with righteousness, and the peoples with justice.”

In the second reading, the menaces come from Paul, who is not above offering him- self as a model, “we were not idle among you, nor did we eat food without payment”. He stresses how hard he worked when he was with them, “work, because we had no right, but now giving you a model, for you to imitate us”. It seems that one day, the Thessalonians were so taken with the idea that the second coming might be “any day now” that they were lounging around with their feet up, doing nothing at all. Paul has no time for that attitude.

In the gospel reading for next Sunday, the menaces come out of a clear sky. Some of Jesus’ disciples (Luke, with his accustomed charity, does not bother to identify them) have been acting as wide-eyed tourists, admiring the beautiful stones and gilt-encrusted windows with which the temple was decorated, and Jesus chides an abrupt bucket of cold water over their enthusiasm. “These things that you see—the days will come when not a stone will be left upon a stone that will not be destroyed.”

The great thurible swinger

Church Chuckle

On the evening Benediction was an enormous honour. Being a senior acolyte, John was official thurifer, and for us juniors, to be given the privilege of carrying the incense “boat”, was an enormous honour.

The gasp from the congregation at his performance was nothing short of angelic, with its end (6)

2. He may attend the ACM’s assistant (7)

3. Leave (6)

4. Priest’s assistant (7)

5. Places I find specific

DOWN

1. Empower (6)

2. They can spin on a (Mk 12) (6)

3. Leave (6)

4. Priest’s assistant (7)

5. Places I find specific

6. Margin of safety at sea?

7. Swiftly expose one’s

8. Religion of Society of

9. Tin dyes suggest

10. Religion of Society of

11. Tin dyes suggest

12. Never brought to

13. Vain worshipper (8)

14. Isaac, 18 Locum, 19 Hospice, 21 Wilfrid Napi-

15. They can spin on a

16. Religion of Society of

17. Swiftly expose one’s

18. Morality (6)

19. They can spin on a

20. Stair.

21. Wilfrid Napier

22. Square meals at press

23. Fervent (6)

24. Religion of Society of

1. Places I find specific

2. He may attend the

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21. Wilfrid Napier

22. Square meals at press

23. Fervent (6)

24. Religion of Society of

ACROSS

1. Unveil, 4 Ganges, 9 Tickle to death, 10 Rotated, 11. Never brought to

12. Never brought to

13. Tin dyes suggest

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