



Missionary Prayer Intention - "That the African continent may find strength in Christ to pursue justice and reconciliation as set fourth by the second Synod of African Bishops" - Comment on the Missionary Intention for November 2011

Vatican City (Agenzia Fides) - Africa is the continent called by the Pope to hope: "With Jesus Christ, who trod the African soil, Africa can become the continent of hope" (Benedict XVI, Homily in Yaoundé, on March 19, 2009). In this line, the Holy Father Benedict XVI urged Christians in Africa to continue to hope against hope, despite the difficulties in the areas of politics and society. One can certainly not ignore the real problems in this young continent. There are many situations of injustice, poverty, disease, exploitation, intolerance, violence and war. The Christian hope is not based on an attitude that refuses to see the problems or wishes to ignore. The Church believes that it must proclaim Christ, the Good News of the Father, so that men may find in Him hope, reconciliation and peace.

In order for there to be economic development, just like cultural or social development, a climate of peace is required that can overcome the divisions and wounds through reconciliation. The crucified Christ has reconciled us with God, he destroyed our condemnation of nailing it on the cross with Him. By accepting Him, who is source of peace and justice for all, we build reconciliation. True reconciliation with God that takes place only when there is reconciliation between people.

Blessed Pope John Paul II, in his Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation "Ecclesia in Africa", presented the Church as a "family of God." The Pope recognized as particularly suitable for the situation of the continent, this ecclesial model. He said that "the image sets, in fact, the emphasis on care for others, on solidarity, warmth in human relationships, acceptance, dialogue and trust. The new evangelization will thus aim at building up the Church as a Family, avoiding all ethnocentrism and excessive particularism, trying instead to encourage reconciliation and true communion between different ethnic groups, favoring solidarity and the sharing with regards to the personal and resources between the particular Churches, without undue ethnic considerations" (Ecclesia in Africa, n.63).

The Church in Africa must be for all a place of true reconciliation. Thus, forgiven and reconciled with each other, the Africans will be able to bring to everyone forgiveness and reconciliation that Christ offers. The faithful of the continent must be a leaven of reconciliation that leavens the dough, to extend the Kingdom of God which is justice and peace. Remember their fellow citizens, as proposed by the Lineamenta of the Second Synod for Africa, that men are truly brothers. Otherwise, the world will increasingly seem a battlefield, where only selfish interests count, and where the law of force prevails, which keeps humanity from the desired civilization of love. Pope John Paul II entrusted to Mary the African continent. He asked her intercession so that a new Pentecost takes place on the Church in Africa. And so, "the outpouring of the Holy Spirit makes the cultures of Africa places of communion in diversity, transforming

the inhabitants of this great continent in generous children of the Church, which is the Family of the Father, the Fraternity of the Son, Image of the Trinity, the seed and the beginning on earth of the eternal Kingdom which will have its fulfillment in the City whose builder is God: City of justice, love and peace". (Ecclesia in Africa, No. 144). (Agenzia Fides 31/10/2011)