



AFRICA/SOUTH AFRICA - "Enormous progress on integration, but we need to fight corruption", says Cardinal Napier

Vatican City (Agenzia Fides) - "20 years since the end of apartheid, South Africa has made enormous progress in terms of integration among different racial and cultural components of the Country, but we must do more to fight corruption". This was stated by Cardinal Wilfrid Fox Napier, Archbishop of Durban, in an interview with Fides Agency, on the occasion of the Ad limina visit carried out these days by the Southern African Catholic Bishop's Conference (SACBC).

In 1994 the first free elections were held in South Africa, marking the end of apartheid and the beginning of the democratic era. On the progress made in this period of time and the problems still to be addressed, Cardinal Napier says to Fides: "I think that after 20 years a lot of positive things have happened in South Africa, of which we are grateful. One of these is the facility of the relationship between people of different cultures and races", continued the Cardinal. "20 years ago I did not think that in this short span of time people could understand and accept one another as they do today. Even at an institutional level guarantees are written in the Constitution that mean that the political system is fair and equitable for all".

"On the other side - the Cardinal continues - we have a disturbing level of corruption, people are appointed in public offices based on personal loyalties and friendships and not according to their skills. This is known to everyone, as surveys regarding the current President and several other senior policymakers demonstrate. I hope that with the upcoming elections, the new government can give a more constructive contribution, even to raise the morale of the population, otherwise the future could be very uncertain".

With regards to the hopes for the Church in South Africa, the Archbishop of Durban says: "The Church is dealing with the concept of the new Evangelization, already mentioned by Saint John Paul II. A concept that was also highlighted by Benedict XVI, that is to say to renew our faith, to rebuild the Church and put Jesus Christ at the center of our lives. And now Pope Francis is showing us how to do it in a very direct and practical manner. So I think that the Church of South Africa looks at Pope Francis as a model to imitate. Certainly he is instilling a new spirit in the Church, even in those living in South Africa", says Cardinal Napier. (L.M.) (Agenzia Fides 02/05/2014)