Passion of Christ, Passion of Victims of Modern-Day Slavery

After his campaign in the different cities and towns of Europe, Cardinal Lavigerie went back home to Algiers. The campaign was not finished. He immediately seized on the celebrations of Good Friday (19th April 1889) to invite the Christians to see, in the sufferings of the slaves, the continuity of the passion and cross of Christ. For him, Christian compassion with the suffering Christ should necessarily lead to com-passion with the victims of slavery. Elsewhere in his campaign, he used the text of the Last Judgment of Mathew 25: 31ff, to come to the same conclusion.

This year’s Lenten season, and in a special way Holy Week could be used for meditation, reflections, public prayers and actions in favour of the victims of modern day slavery. In a number of countries, they have the custom of holding an ecumenical celebration of the Way of the Cross on Good Friday. Why not seize this occasion to reflect together with our brothers and sisters of other Churches on the evil of modern-day slavery in view of a common action in our respective areas? Let us also profit from the bicentenary celebrations of the birth of Dr. David Livingstone (19th March), another anti-slavery campaigner, to enter into this ecumenical conversation.

Nnyombi Richard, M. Afr

NEWS FROM THE SOCIETY

A CD-ROM - Se Comprendre

"Se comprendre" magazine (in French) was started by the White Fathers in 1955. These were missionaries in North Africa and were appointed to France to help North African workers in France. In the wake of the Second Vatican Council, with its new perspectives towards the world, other religions and in a special way the Muslims, Se Comprendre made an effort in its reflections to follow the diverse developments sparked off by the Council’s new teaching. All the publications in the last 57 years have been put in digital form: (www.comprendre.org/Parus.htm) and have now been put on a CD-Rom. On this CD, you can conduct a research by theme, word, author and date. The price is 30 €, postage included.

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"Cardinal Charles Lavigerie and the Anti-slavery Campaign." Documents prepared by Jean Claude Ceillier and François Richard. Rome 2012. Still available at € 5.00 per copy exclusive of postage. Contact Fr. Pedro Sala: segr.amm@mafrome.org

FORMATION AND MEETINGS

- Fr. Jean-Claude Ceillier gave a series of talks on Cardinal Lavigerie’s Anti-Slavery Campaign during his visit to Congo (DRC): Bukavu (05/01), Kinshasha (12/01), Goma (09/01), Lubumbashi (15 & 16 & 17/01).
- Canada: Conference (by Fr. Gilles Barrette) and Sharing: 11th and 12th February 2013: Modern forms of Slavery of the 21st century at
Montreal; 9th March to MSOLA and M. Afr. Community of Quebec
- Ghana - Tamale, Saturday 26th January: Inauguration of the 125th Anniversary in Ghana. Reflections and sharing were on modern forms of Slavery in Ghana and their challenges to the Christian and Islamic moral perspectives.
- Kenya, Saturday 16th February: Symposium: "From the Anti-Slavery Campaign to the fight against Human Trafficking”, at Tangaza College, Nairobi.
4. "Can we Afford to Tolerate Human Trafficking in Our Society?", by Radoslaw Malinowski.
For more information call: 0711583895 or 0723866533. Or e-mail: maganyainnocent@yahoo.co.uk maggi.kennedy@googlemail.com

OTHER NEWS

Victim of racial discrimination ...what to do?
One of our African confreres was at least twice a victim of racial discrimination at the hands of airport immigration officers in Italy. Normally, according to the laws of Schengen Countries, there is no passport / ID control from one member country to another and if there is any, then it should not be only for a particular group of people, in this case Blacks. This is exactly what happened to our confrere in question and probably it has also happened to many others, at the airports and elsewhere. But what is laudable is that this confrere was courageous enough to report this to the ’Anti-racial discrimination Office” and hopefully there will be a follow-up on his case. Following the example of this confrere, let us report such incidences. This will be our small contribution to building up a European Society free from racial discrimination. With internet, we can easily have access to the different offices dealing with this issue.

(In Italy : ufficio anti discrimination razziali - http://2.114.23.93/unar/Default.aspx ; Numero verde 800 90 10 10)

World Council of Churches (WCC): New Affirmation on Mission and Evangelism
A new ecumenical affirmation on mission and evangelism, "Together towards Life: Mission and Evangelism in changing Landscapes", prepared by the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism (CWME) was recently approved by the central committee of the WCC. Different Churches participated in writing this Statement: Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Anglican, Protestant, Evangelical, Pentecostal and Indigenous Churches from North, South, East and West.
This is what we read in the last paragraph (no. 11) of its preamble: "This statement highlights some key developments in understanding the mission of the Holy Spirit within the mission of the Triune God (missio Dei) which have emerged through the work of CWME. It does so under four main headings: i. Spirit of Mission: Breath of Life. ii. Spirit of Liberation: Mission from the Margins. iii. Spirit of Community: Church on the Move. iv. Spirit of Pentecost: Good News for All. Reflection on such perspectives enables us to embrace dynamism, justice, diversity and transformation as key concepts of mission in changing landscapes today.” And the last paragraph of this Statement (no. 112) reads: "The Triune God invites the whole creation to the Feast of Life, through Jesus Christ who came “that they may have life, and may have it in all its fullness” (John 10:10, REB), through the Holy Spirit who affirms the vision of the reign of God, “Behold, I create new heavens and a new earth!” (Isaiah 65:17, KJV). We commit ourselves together in humility and hope to the mission of God, who recreates all and reconciles all. And we pray, “God of Life, lead us into justice and peace!”
This Statement will be presented to the WCC’s 10th Assembly at Busan, Korea, end October/November 2013, whose theme will be exactly the final words of that Mission Statement, "God of life, lead us into justice and peace.” We can already consult this text from:
INTERNATIONAL, NATIONAL AND RELIGIOUS DAYS

February - 2013
+08: St. Bakhita: Prayers for victims of Trafficking
+20: World Day of Social Justice

March - 2013
+08: Women's Day
+19: 200th Anniversary of the birth of Dr. David Livingstone (1813; cf. Ecumenical collaboration)
+22: Lavigerie ordained bishop at St. Louis des Français in Rome. (1863 - 150 years ago)
+25: International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade
+29: Good Friday (Today's Slavery - New Passion of Christ)
+31: Easter Sunday

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From Cardinal Lavigerie's Good Friday Homily (19th April 1889) on Slavery in Africa

"There, then, for an entire unfortunate race, is the cruel Passion of the Saviour truly renewed. All its elements are found there. I could point them out one by one. Nothing is missing, neither the Herods, nor the Pilates, nor the Judas, nor the cruelty of the scourging, nor the cowardly insults, nor the cross.

Never has anything in such abominable proportions been seen. In Jerusalem, Calvary was the summit of a hill. It bore only three crosses. In Africa, it is an immense continent. Blood is flowing everywhere, from the veins of millions of Blacks, mixed with the tears of mothers whose children are massacred before their eyes. Cruel abandonment is practised, deliberately, even shamefully preached by some who hold that one can allow to continue, without feeling disturbed, something that has been going on for so many centuries and who are not ashamed to declare it to the world! In the African interior, the cry of despair of Calvary arises from every breast: "Why are we abandoned?" And, sadder still, we begin to detect, even in the heart of Europe, greed, debauchery, hatred ready to join forces for the continuation of this long martyrdom."

Some materials on Modern-day Slavery
These sites are proposed by our confrere Claudio Zuccala. He says that "they contain a wealth of material that can be used for different initiatives, especially with the youth".
- Witness: Illuminating the World of Modern-day Slavery: Lisa Kristine at TEDxMaui
Here is the Youtube link: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WwB6bPgPoi4
- See also the song 27 million by the Christian singer Matt Redman
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K69NdzPwvj0