

My Brothers,

Let me begin by expressing my appreciation and gratitude to the Nuncio for his tireless effort to fill the vacant sees – an expression of his solicitude for the local church

The year 2008 has had major dramatic events on the political front:

- In South Africa, former President Mbeki was recalled by his own party in order, in the long run, to make room for Mr Jacob Zuma. Justice Nicholson's verdict of Political interference in the Zuma corruption case, paved the way for Mbeki's recall. Mbeki's recall on the other hand deepened the division within the ruling party and eventually led to the formation of the new political party – COPE. Justice Harmse overturned the Nicholson Judgement. Now the case goes to the Constitutional court.
 - South Africa will now have a government that is likely to be totally controlled by the political party and not accountable to the nation. The Independence of Government becomes blurred.
 - Seeking a political solution to what is essentially a criminal case will seriously undermine the rule of law and set a bad precedent.
 - Government refuses to appoint a Commission of Inquiry into the Arms deal while the Zuma case is still in the courts. Hopefully, this can be done once the Zuma case has been concluded in order to get down to the source of the conflict.
 - The Media has been an outstanding moral watchdog in South Africa and not the churches who should in fact give moral leadership to the Nation
- Zimbabwe:

South Africa has failed dismally as a mediator in trying to broker peace and a government of National Unity in Zimbabwe. President Mugabe ought to be persuaded to retire. He has done his country incalculable harm. SADC (Southern African Development Community) too has failed to offer a strong leadership in the resolution of the Zimbabwean disaster – it is no longer just a crisis. We call for fresh elections without Mugabe.
- The USA:

The election of Mr Barak Obama as president of the United States is greatly significant and Symbolic. The majority of American voters have spoken. Race has effectively been discarded as a measure of a man or woman's worth. South African Politics are largely governed by issues of race. Here, 15 years down the line, we are still not a united nation. It is imperative that this divide be overcome.
- South African Church leaders, meeting in Stellenbosch this week have re-committed themselves to a new vision of Moral Leadership. We committed:

“We covenant to be a clear fearless prophetic voice, giving moral direction to the nation and beyond; We undertake to build and promote a caring society which protects, honours and enhances life in all its forms as a gift from God; We will do this by following Jesus Christ, who through His incarnation, gave His own life to save life (John 10:10)”
- The Global ethic – a challenge to the churches:

Perhaps this is the most contentious, most divisive subject in both church and society. The

subject us as much religious as it is political. It is the global post modern ethic that puts great value on differences. It underscores the diversity of choices and sexual diversity. Different sexual orientations are 'celebrated'.

Post modernity maintains that reality is a social construct, that truth is what you make of it. There is no objective truth. It further asserts that reality is a text to be interpreted and your interpretation is as valid as that of the next person. Effectively, the authority of the Word of God has been turned on its head. God himself has been knocked off the pedestal. It is man and women who reign supreme. Transcendence has become fictional. The individual has become the creator, free to shape his or her own destiny. The individual is the Yardstick. Natural law is seen as an integral part of ancient explanations or mythologies. A whole new vocabulary and concepts have been produced by the postmodern global ethic. These are also in part the Judeo Christian teachings and values.

The 'right to choose' is touted as the fundamental norm, the principle of non-discrimination. One can freely choose bisexuality, homosexuality, lesbianism, heterosexuality. Children now have the right to choose abortion irrespective of their parent's beliefs. They too have equal rights.

Euthanasia, the campaigners assert, is an expression of the right to choose and that it also affirms the dignity of the individual. Reproductive health means the right not to reproduce. It means safe abortion. It means unrestricted access to contraceptives. It was the 1995 Beijing conference that jettisoned the complementarity of man and woman. The goal is to achieve an a-sexual society, a society free of sexual labels. The Cairo Conference spoke of family under all its forms in order to include families of same sex parents. There is a concerted effort to eliminate words such as 'virginity, chastity, spouse, husband, wife, marriage' etc. If I may add, both the Maputo Protocol and the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) intended to legalise abortions and to legitimise in-vitro fertilization in most African Countries. Such legislation will make it possible to poach ovarian human eggs from African women. Harvesting ovarian human eggs in Africa will help meet the needs of embryonic stem cell research in industrialised countries. It is illegal to use British eggs in Great Britain. Biological colonialism is on our doorstep.

Do church leaders have a say in these complex moral issues of the day or are we simply left to the mercy of unscrupulous campaigners?

Finally, we do need to hear the voices of those who have reacted to the implemented changes in the liturgy.

I had agreed that I would speak on Botswana and Swaziland, but I have asked Bishop Ndlovu and Bishop Setlalekgosi to speak to the situations in their own countries.

Thank you