



Southern African Catholic Bishops' Conference

At the end of the Second week of Lent.

Last week we mailed you about how your contributions to the Bishops' Lenten Appeal are used to assist in the formation and training of Seminarians and the ongoing formation of Priests. This week we focus on the Departments of the SACBC. The Conference maintains departments in major focus areas. These departments are responsible for Christian life and the good functioning of the Church. Currently, there are departments for:

- Evangelization
- Christian Formation, Liturgy and Culture
- Ecumenism and Inter-religious Dialogue
- Justice and Peace
- Seminaries
- Finance

The Department for Evangelization is tasked with spreading the Gospel and making all Catholics aware of their missionary mandate. Focus areas include Sodalities, Marriage and Family, specialised ministries and the preparation and animation of the pastoral forum – many people would be familiar with Phase II of the process already.

The Department for Christian Formation, Liturgy and Culture is responsible for:

- Catechetics including the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) and the training of Diocesan Catechetical teams. Currently, a major project is the revision of the Confirmation syllabus.
- Liturgy - a very busy last 6 years with the extensive correspondence on the 3rd Edition of the Roman Missal and its implementation in Southern Africa. This department will also be responsible for the animation of the Translation of the 3rd edition into local vernaculars – a process that is already underway.
- Culture - one of the clash points in Southern African Catholicism is the role and influence of various cultures on the mission of the Church. This section is responsible for the ongoing investigation on the role of healing in our cultures and has produced a number of documents on Ancestral Customs and their place in the community of Faith.

The Department for Ecumenism and Inter-religious Dialogue maintains relationships with other Christian Churches and Ecclesial Communities (Ecumenism) and with other Faith based groups. Fruitful Encounter is necessary to maintain good relationships as a Faith-Based Community with other Faith-Based Communities.

The department for Justice and Peace maintains the proud legacy of the Church in Southern Africa's commitment to Social Justice and upliftment. Programmes include a major focus on the Environment, on Land, on Gender, on Crime and on Good Governance and transparency. Round table discussions are held regularly. The main work of the Department at a Conference level is to train and animate Diocesan Justice and Peace teams.

As the Department for Seminaries has already been discussed, the Department of Finance is our last focus for this week. The department maintains good governance and transparency in the management of the Affairs of the Conference. The Department is responsible for the day-to-day running of Khanya House (through the Financial Manager), the oversight of the Seminaries and the funding of Departments and Offices (through the Finance Management Committee) and for Fundraising and the SACBC Foundation (through the Fundraising Committee). All these responsibilities are executed under the close supervision of the Finance Committee of the Bishops' Conference – a high powered team of lay experts and business leaders and Bishops – who have overall responsibility for the Conference.

Next week – the Office of the secretary General and the Offices of the Conference.

