



Southern African Catholic Bishops' Conference

At the end of the Third week of Lent.

The Fourth Week of Lent is Looming.

This Sunday is one of those strange Sundays where Clergy can wear 'Rose' Vestments – a symbol of relief from the Purple-somber before we move into Passiontide and Holy Week. In the Gospel we hear the all-too-familiar John 3.16 – God so loved the World that he sent his only begotten Son – not to Condemn. Let's pray for each other as we try to live this – not just about others, but about ourselves.

The Offices of the SACBC.

Last week we mailed you about the Departments of the SACBC – Justice and Peace, Liturgy, Culture and Catechetics, Evangelization and Ecumenism and Inter-religious dialogue. Together, these departments accounted for R 1.035 Million (or 12.4%) of the Lenten Appeal allocations in 2011. Together with the Department for Seminaries and for priestly formation (mailing week 1), the major department of focus areas of the conference account for 41.4% of the Bishops' Lenten Appeal allocations for 2011.

Under the Office of the Secretary General, there are a number of focus areas – such as the Catholic Parliamentary Liaison Office, Counter Trafficking in Persons, Office for Home Affairs and Marriage Officers Office, Office for Migrants and Refugees, Office for Communication and Media, Publications, Archives etc. These Offices focus on core areas of the work of the Church such as the Office for Youth, education for Life or Communication and Media or on areas that need particular focus given our Southern African situation – such as Refugees and Migrants, Counter-trafficking in persons or Specialised Ministries (Prisons, Police, Military and Emergency Services). Offices account for R1.43 Million (or 17%) of the allocation from the Bishops' Lenten Appeal for 2011.

The Lenten Appeal supports these very necessary interventions – be it in the Legal System such as the Catholic Parliamentary Liaison Office (www.cplo.org.za) or with internationally recognised church-wide concerns. This is all part of the Lenten Appeal's support for the work of the Church.

Cardinal Napier comments on the RedBull 'Jesus walks on water' advertising campaign.

The RedBull SA Jesus walking on Water advert.

The Southern African Catholic Bishops' Conference wishes to register our disappointment in the RedBull brand for choosing to flight the RedBull 'Jesus walks on Water' campaign.

In a multi-faith country like South Africa, where over 70% of people profess to be people of faith, the use of Faith-based symbols in a satirical, if tongue-in-cheek manner is guaranteed to cause a reaction.

We are grateful to the many people - Catholics, other Christians and people of other faiths or no faith – who have registered their displeasure with the campaign both with RedBullSA, their marketing representatives and the Advertising Standards Authority of South Africa.

During this time of Lent which many Christians use as a preparation for the festival of the Resurrection of the Lord Jesus at Easter, we question the timing of the release of the advert- which seems to be part of an international campaign. While the RedBull adverts are characterised by their cleverness, we believe that RedBull South Africa have overstepped a mark.

While we welcome the halting of the campaign, we would ask that RedBull SA undertake not to just halt the campaign, but to cancel it completely. We also suggest that the Marketing team and their Advertising and Public Relations companies make a serious effort to attend sensitivity training – people are more than consumers and faith-based symbols are more than marketing opportunities.

Much of RedBulls marketing is targeted to small shop owners, youth and young adults. In the spirit of observing Lent, we suggest that Catholic store owners and our young people fast from displaying and consuming RedBull until Easter. We suggest that the money you would have spent on RedBull be donated to charitable works. In this way, RedBullSA will understand that the idea that there is ‘no-such-thing-as-bad-publicity’ is dangerous territory when it comes to mocking religious symbols

Cardinal Wilfrid Napier OFM
Spokesman of the Southern African Catholic Bishops’ Conference

The Pastoral Agencies Meeting.

Twice a year, all the agencies (departments, offices and associate bodies) working directly in pastoral animation meet to discuss common causes and concern. This meeting included all the Secretaries and Directors and the Liaison Bishops for each area. This year’s first meeting was held on Wednesday and focussed on the Second Phase of the Pastoral Consultation. Phase one had focussed on an assessment of the effectiveness of the Pastoral Plan entitled ‘Community serving Humanity’(1989). Phase 2 has focussed on enabling Catholics to meet together and discuss their relationship with Jesus Christ and the Church. For more information, see the Department of Evangelisation’s page.

Other issues raised included May as Family Month in the Conference area, preparation for the Synod on the New Evangelisation, preparation for World Youth Day in RIO 2012 (time is short!), Campus ministry and the Association of Catholic Tertiary students. Cardinal Napier gave input on the New Evangelization pointing out that in some way, the Conference of Bishops and the Bishop in the Diocese can both lead and enable others to take the lead. He encouraged the use of the Pastoral Cycle and Strategic Planning Methods to assess where the Church is with becoming a Missionary Church.

