



Church has no "magic solution" for Africa

"The church does not have the 'magic solutions' to Africa's problems, but accompanies Africans," said Bishop Fulgente Muteba Mugalu of the Democratic Republic of Congo.

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"The black continent is once again the focus of the Church's concern. It is a clear and strong sign that presents the need for a serious reflection. Fifteen years after the first continental Synod, this event shows the compassion of the Church on this world that is known for its problems," writes Bishop Fulgente Muteba Mugalu of Kilwa-Kasenga, President of the Bishops' Commission for Social Communications in the Democratic Republic of Congo, in a message for the Second Special Assembly for Africa of the Synod of Bishops. The Message, entitled "Compassion for Africa," was sent to Agenzia Fides.

Commenting on the theme of the Synod ("The Church in Africa at the Service of Reconciliation, Justice, and Peace"), Bishop Muteba Mugalu affirms that "taking into account the general situation in Africa, it is of great relevance. In fact, while people on other continents in general enjoy peace, development, and social progress, African populations never end up emerging from misery. The evils that afflict the African peoples are little in comparison to the economic and political problems. Coups, constitutional revisions in favor of a smaller political class, wars, human rights violations, poverty, corruption, bad governance, appropriation of public funds, lack of potable water and electricity, scarcity, ethnic conflicts, illnesses like AIDS, malaria, tuberculosis, etc., illiteracy, lack of infrastructures, unemployment, harsh living conditions, intolerance, tribalism, exploiting of natural resources, manipulation, distortion of democracy, etc. are some of the evils afflicting the continent."

Faced with this situation, the Bishop said, "the Church is far from making itself illusions on the so-called African problem. Convoking this Synod, the Pope reaffirms the conviction that the Africans themselves are the first who should find solutions to their problems." The Synod, says Bishop Muteba Mugalu, "is not only a sign of the Church's humility, but also a form of respect for the people of the continent. On the one hand, the Church does not have the intention of finding magic solutions to the pressing problems of Africa. Instead, she wishes to express her compassion for the suffering of so many people on the black continent and, at the same time, reiterate the fundamental values without which it would be impossible to speak of an Africa willing to walk on its own."

Coming from a country that is experiencing conflict in its eastern regions, Bishop Muteba Mugalu offers several considerations on the operation of the international community for peace in Africa. "It is becoming more evident that some

international institutions are marked by an inefficiency and lack of credibility in their peace-keeping missions. It is no secret that the battalions that the United Nations sent to the areas of conflict in Africa did not come to bring peace. In fact, without doubting of the good intentions of international institutions working for peace in Africa, one must admit that the failures are multiplying. The very composition of the peace troops sent to aid victims of the conflict reflects an ethical problem that cannot be avoided. It would be useful if the Synod offered a prophetic word to these institutions. Some of these give the impression that they make peace harder to reach, instead of re-establishing it.”

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