

Meeting of the Reflection Group on Islam Lilongwe, November 29, 2018

Letter

“... for the sake of Christ, then I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions and calamities; for when I am weak then I am strong” (2 Cor. 12: 9-10).

The Cost of Mission

Dear Comboni Confreres, Bishops, Comboni Sisters and Lay Comboni Missionaries with all the members of the Christian Community in Central African Republic, we, the Comboni Missionaries gathered here in Lilongwe-Malawi from the 25th to the 29th of November 2018, for our meeting of the *Reflection Group on Islam*, send you our warmest greetings.

We have been following, with great concern and sadness, the rising levels of violence in your country since 2016. So many people have been victims of relentless and vicious tribal, political and religious conflicts. Thousands have been displaced, hundreds have been brutally massacred in the holy places where they had come for worship or were there to seek refuge.

We are greatly saddened by the latest news of the killings of more than 40 people including the Vicar General of the Diocese of Alindao. May their blood, united with the blood of Jesus Christ and many martyrs, be the sacred sign and seed of lasting peace and reconciliation for the country!

We could only imagine the horrors and the fear that freezes your hearts at the sound of the shootings and cries of the people being slaughtered in your Church compounds!

We could guess your perplexing sadness when you gaze at the slain bodies of the people whom you catechized and baptized teaching them the ways of non-violence according to the Gospel values.

We could imagine your feelings of powerlessness when you have no protection for your very lives and for the lives of the people you love and who have come to you for refuge scared to death with their beloved ones.

What suffering might this be causing you to see that most of the victims of this war are the people who have no part in the conflict: the mothers, children elderly and the sick, people in who are now in tears not knowing where to go to and whom to turn to!

Above all we imagine how hard it might be for you the feeling of being abandoned and cut off from your beloved ones, pushed to question the very presence of God in all these unfortunate events: Where is God?

Dear brothers and sisters in the Mission, we feel what you feel. We had wished that t one of you would have been present with us in the conference to share with us facts on the ground the agony that you and your people are experiencing at this very moment.

From our side, as a sign of our solidarity with you and with the people you serve wholeheartedly, and aware of the dangers you face as you remain in your mission posts, putting your very lives in danger for the sake of the Gospel and of the People of God, we would like to remember you by:

1. Dedicating to you, in a special way, the Holy Eucharist of the last day of our conference which will be presided by Fr. Mariano Tibaldo- the General Secretary for Mission.
2. Committing ourselves to remaining in touch with you through the established forms of communication so that you share with us your fears, anguish and anxieties in the midst of all these sufferings

Being proud of you, for you are truly making common cause with the people on the Cross with Christ in the footsteps of our Founder and in accordance with our charism we send you our regards

With our deepest spirit of solidarity and Prayers

Participants of the Reflection Group on Islam

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------|
| 1. Fr. Tibaldo Mariano – | Rome |
| 2. Fr. Amoussou Comlan Ghislain – | South Sudan |
| 3. Fr. Kyankaaga John Richard– | Egypt/Sudan |
| 4. Sc. Musonda Cosmas – | Malawi/Zambia |
| 5. Fr. Kanyike Edward Mayanja - | Malawi/Zambia |
| 6. Br. Gonzales y Reyero Enrico - | Chad |
| 1. Fr. Crespim Baraja - | Mozambique |
| 2. Fr. Munketalingi Jean-Marie - | Malawi/Zambia |
| 1. Fr. Nyakundi Isaiah Sangwera - | Ethiopia |
| 2. Fr. Fasil Kebede Eshete | Kenya |
| 3. Fr. Badola Tigine Desire - | Malawi/Zambia |
| 4. Fr. Abraham Hailu | Ethiopia |
| 5. Fr. Burgers Jude Eugene - | South Africa |
| 6. Fr. Adanle Abouke Leopold | Togo/ Ghana/ Benin |
| 7. Fr. Mbuthia Simon Mwaura | Egypt/Sudan |

“I am ready to make common cause with you; ... from now on no rain, no sun ... will stop me from being yours... my joy will be complete when I give my life for you.... (St. Daniel Comboni in Khartoum)”