ABOUT THE CENTER FOR ETHICS AND CULTURE

The Notre Dame Center for Ethics and Culture is dedicated to sharing the richness of the Catholic moral and intellectual tradition through teaching, research, and engagement, at the highest level and across a range of disciplines.

As a traditions-based center committed to our Catholic intellectual heritage, we welcome dialogue with all moral traditions as we grapple with the most pressing and complex questions of ethics, culture, and public policy today.

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March 22, 2017

Dear Colleague,

It is my great pleasure to welcome you to the Notre Dame Global Gateway in Rome for our conference on “African Christian Theology: Memories and Mission for the 21st Century.” This conference is designed to take stock of where we have been in African theology, to see what has been achieved, and to look ahead to where we are going.

During our all-too-brief time together, we will take up three major goals: 1) identifying pressing current questions in African society, church, and theology; 2) engendering intergenerational conversation within the African theological community; and 3) building bridges between the academy and the Church, both within Africa and with the global Church. To address these issues, we have brought together an impressive cross-section of African theologians, international scholars of religion and society, Church leaders, knowledgeable lay men and women in the Church, and other scholars from a broad spectrum of African societies and beyond to take a fresh look at African theology and its nature, methods, relationships, and contributions to African churches and societies.

This week, we gather in Rome in the hope that our efforts will have a universal appeal to the worldwide Catholic. This is to say, it is our hope that the present conference will contribute in some ways to clarifying what the issues are for theology and the Church in Africa and in what ways the African churches can continue to contribute to the clarification of the Faith from an African perspective—for Africa, for the rest of the world, and for the Church.

Finally, I would like to express my particular thanks for the support of many organizations and individuals whose generosity has made it possible for us to gather for this truly unique and exciting event, especially the Notre Dame Center for Ethics and Culture and Notre Dame International. A warm welcome to everyone joining us for this conference; I look forward to spending time in conversation and reflection with you in the days ahead!

In Christ,

[signature]

Rev. Paulinus I. Odozor, CSSp, Th.D., S.T.D.
Associate Professor of Christian Ethics, the Theology of World Church, and African Studies; Fellow, Kellogg Institute of International Studies; Faculty Advisory Committee Member, Center for Ethics and Culture
African Christian theology emerged as a formal branch of study in the Catholic Church in the mid-20th century when several African priests, trained in Rome and various European universities, began to approach the Faith as “African Christians,” not merely the “consumers” of a Eurocentric understanding of the Christian Faith. One of the initial works to come out of this new movement, Des Prêtres noires s’intérogent, attempted to respond to “the assumption that Africa represented a cultural and religious tabula rasa for the implantation of a Christian civilization from Europe.” They insisted that African self-worth must be respected and that “room must be made for African genius and contribution in the establishment of the Catholica, not only among the peoples of Africa…but in the wider world as a whole.”

African theology, like the African church, is no longer begging merely to be heard or to be recognized. Encouraged by the openings afforded all theologies in the Church by the Second Vatican Council and by the two African synods, as well as with the active encouragement of Popes Paul VI and St. John Paul II, African theology has come into its own and witnessed a great and unprecedented flowering. African theology has largely coalesced around the theme of inculturation and has gone on to probe, interrogate, and dialogue with realities both in and outside the African churches with regard to morality, worship, dogma, scripture, pastoral activities, evangelization, interreligious dialogue, etc. It has also continued to engage African societies at various levels: political, social, and economic.

Life in Africa is much more complex than in the days of Des Prêtres noires s’intérogent, and African theology is now influenced by and open to concerns other than those of African Traditional Religion. Colonial independence, wars and violent conflicts in post-independence Africa, the HIV/AIDS epidemic, the massive and continued impoverishment of a large section of African societies, the emergence of the internet and social media, the rise of fundamentalist and militant Islam, and the expansion of Pentecostalism have fundamentally altered the African landscape; similarly, globalization, the worldwide sexual revolution, and the simultaneous rise of the Church in the Southern Hemisphere and its contraction in many Western countries have changed the way the African church thinks about itself and its place in the world.

In 2003 and 2004, the University of Notre Dame in its various units—the Department of Theology, the Institute for Church Life, Notre Dame Student Government—and in collaboration with various groups outside the university—the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of Nigeria (CBCN), the Symposium of the Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar (SECAM), the Conference of Women Religious of Nigeria, the Catholic Laity Council of Nigeria, Spiritan International School of Theology, Enugu, and the Catholic Institute of West Africa—hosted a two-part conference (at Notre Dame and in Nigeria) in response to the publication of the pastoral letter of the USCCB titled “A Call to Solidarity with Africa.” This effort gave rise to a number of enduring initiatives in the African churches and in African theology. The present conference is, in a way, a continuation of that work begun more than a decade ago.
Thursday, March 23, 2017

2:00–3:00 p.m.  Session 3: Scripture in the African Church
   Session Chair: Fr. John Fogarty, CSSp (Spiritans Generalate)
   WALSH AULA
   Fr. Paulin Pocouga (Catholic University of Central Africa)
   “Reading the Bible in African Contexts: Theologies of Scriptural Interpretation in Africa”
   Sr. Jerome Obiorah (University of Nigeria Nsukka)
   “Scriptural Formation in the African Churches: How Can the African Church Ensure a Truly Well Versed People of the Book?”
   Sr. Josée Ngalula (Saint Eugène de Mazenod Institute)
   “Scripture, Preaching and Catechesis in African Catholicism”

3:00–3:15 p.m.  Discussion
   WALSH AULA

3:15–3:45 p.m.  Break
   COURTYARD

3:45–4:55 p.m.  Session 4: African Theology: The Question of God
   Session Chair: Dianne Pinderhughes (University of Notre Dame)
   WALSH AULA
   Fr. Charles Nyamiti (Catholic University of Eastern Africa)
   “Christological Memories of the Church in Africa: The Question of God in African Theology”
   Fr. Bonaventure Ugwu, CSSp (Spiritans International School of Theology)
   “The Holy Spirit in Current African Theology and Pastoral Practice: An Evaluation and a Critique”
   Fr. John Egbulefu, CCE (Pontifical Urban University)
   “Proposals towards a New Understanding of the Trinity in Africa”

4:55–5:10 p.m.  Discussion
   WALSH AULA

5:10 p.m.  Conference Adjourns for the Day

7:30 a.m.  Mass
   ROOM 410

9:00–9:45 a.m.  Session 5: Dogmatic Concerns in African Christianity
   Session Chair: Sr. Veronica Openibo, SHCJ (Society of the Holy Child Jesus Generalate)
   WALSH AULA
   Fr. Leonard Santedi Kinkupu (Catholic University of Congo)
   “Some Pressing Dogmatic Questions for African Theology Today”
   Archbishop Berthelemy Adoukonou (Pontifical Council for Culture)
   “The Anthropological Question in African Theology Today”

9:45–10:00 a.m.  Discussion
   WALSH AULA

10:00–10:30 a.m.  Break
   COURTYARD

10:30–12:10 p.m.  Session 6: Pastoral Questions in the African Church
   Session Chair: Bishop Matthew Hassan Kukah (Diocese of Sokoto, Nigeria)
   WALSH AULA
   John Cardinal Onaiyekan (Archdiocese of Abuja, Nigeria)
   “Ten Pressing Pastoral Issues in the African Church, As I See Them”
   Laurent Cardinal Monsengwo (Archdiocese of Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo)
   “Pastors as Public Theologians. Faith, Politics, and Justice in the African Church”
   Archbishop Buti Thlagale (Archdiocese of Johannesburg, South Africa)
   “What We Have Learned and What We Are Faced With: The Catholic Church in a Post-Apartheid South Africa”

12:10–12:25 p.m.  Discussion
   WALSH AULA
Friday, March 24, 2017

7:30 a.m. Mass
ROOM 410

9:00–10:05 a.m. Session 9: The Church as Evangelizing Agent in Africa
Session Chair: John Cavadini (University of Notre Dame)
WALSH AULA

Fr. Luke Ijezie (Catholic Institute of West Africa)
“Biblical Fundamentalism and Its Influence on Contemporary African Theology”

Obiageli Nzenwa (Independent Human Resources Consultant, Abuja)
“Fueling Our Faith and Reclaiming Our Faithful”

J. Matthew Ashley (University of Notre Dame)
“Ignatian Influence on the Spirituality of Pope Francis and Its Relevance to the Leadership Style in the Global Church”

10:05–10:30 a.m. Discussion
WALSH AULA

10:30–11:00 a.m. Break
COURTYARD

11:00–12:15 p.m. Session 10: Family and Faith in Africa
Session Chair: Fr. Emmanuel Katongole (University of Notre Dame)
WALSH AULA

Nontando Hadebe (St. Augustine College, South Africa)
“Memories of Women, Gender, and Theology in the African Church”

Aïcha Kola (School of Theology for Laymen, Douala)
“The Church and the African Family Today”

Fr. Paulinus Odozor, CSSp (University of Notre Dame)
“Amoris Laetitia: The Youth and the Question of Reception”

12:15–12:30 p.m. Discussion
WALSH AULA

12:30–2:00 p.m. Lunch

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12:25–2:00 p.m. Lunch

2:00–2:50 p.m. Session 7: Liturgy and Liturgical Theology in the African Church
Session Chair: Fr. Louis Lougen, OMI (Oblate Generalate)
WALSH AULA

Fr. Elochukwu Uzukwu, CSSp (Duquesne University)
“Liturgical Memories of Inculturation in the Church in Africa”

Fr. Francois Kabasele (Democritus University of Thrace)
“Towards an African Sacramental Theology”

2:50–3:05 p.m. Discussion
WALSH AULA

3:05–3:30 p.m. Break
COURTYARD

3:30–4:45 p.m. Session 8: Moral Theology: The Question of Values in the African Church
Session Chair: Nwando Achebe (Michigan State University)
WALSH AULA

Fr. Laurenti Magesa (Catholic University of East Africa/Hekima College)
“Ethical Memories of the Church in Africa: Moral Concerns and Inculturated Christian Response”

David Clairmont (University of Notre Dame)
“Religious Diversity and Christian Spirituality: Comparative Religious Ethics for a Global Church”

Fr. Stan Chu Ilo (DePaul University)
“Cultural Diversity and Theological Education in the African Church”

4:45–5:00 p.m. Discussion
WALSH AULA

5:00 p.m. Conference Adjourns for the Day
Saturday, March 25

7:30 a.m. Mass
ROOM 410

9:00–11:45 a.m. Session 13: The Social Situation and Some Current Issues in African Christianity
Session Chair: M. Shawn Copeland (Boston College)

Peter Cardinal Turkson (Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development)
"The African Churches and the Social Question: Lessons from Catholic Social Teaching"

Fr. Raymond Aina, MSP (National Missionary Seminary, Nigeria)
"Laudato Si and the Environmental Challenge in Africa"

Fr. Ludovic Lado, SJ (Catholic University of Central Africa)
"African Pentecostalism in an Emerging World Church"

Fr. Michael Perry, OFM (Franciscan Generalate)
"Social Reconciliation and the Role of the Church in Africa: Reflections from Burundi, Eastern DRC, and South Sudan"

Dianne Pinderhughes (University of Notre Dame)
"Social Disorganization and Social Disintegration: Some Observations for Black Catholics"

11:45–12:00 p.m. Discussion
WALSH AULA

12:00–1:00 p.m. Lunch

1:00–2:25 p.m. Session 14: Faith and Culture in Contemporary Africa
Session Chair: Fr. William Headley, CSSp (University of Notre Dame)

Archbishop Fortunatus Nwachukwu (Apostolic Nunciature, Nicaragua)
"Ethnicity, Race, and Discriminations as Challenges to the African Christianity"

2:25–2:40 p.m. Discussion
WALSH AULA
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<td>Break</td>
<td>COURTYARD</td>
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<td>3:00–4:15 p.m.</td>
<td><strong>Session 15: Emerging African Scholars from Notre Dame: The Agenda of African Theology</strong>&lt;br&gt;Session Chair: David Clairmont (University of Notre Dame)&lt;br&gt;WALSH AULA&lt;br&gt;Emeka Ngwoke&lt;br&gt;“Newman, Universal Revelation, and Inculturation among the Igbo of Nigeria”&lt;br&gt;Emery Longanga&lt;br&gt;“What We Have Heard: Quest for Narrative for the New Evangelization in Africa”&lt;br&gt;Sr. Mary Regina Anibueze, DDL&lt;br&gt;“Liturgical Theology Contextualized: Towards an African Liturgical Theology”&lt;br&gt;Alison Fitchett Climenhega&lt;br&gt;“Contesting Healing: Charismatic Faith Healing, Medical Treatment, and Development Among Ugandan Catholics”&lt;br&gt;Mark Enemali&lt;br&gt;“Manipulating the Deity: The Case of the Ark Narrative in 1 Samuel 4-6 and Its Echoes in African Christianity”&lt;br&gt;WALSH AULA</td>
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<td>4:15–4:50 p.m.</td>
<td>Closing Summation: John Cavadini</td>
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<td>6:30 p.m.</td>
<td>Closing Mass Celebrated by Francis Cardinal Arinze</td>
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<td>7:45–9:00 p.m.</td>
<td>Post-Mass Reception</td>
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