

RELIGIOUS SUPERIORS' ASSOCIATION OF SOUTH SUDAN

Juba, South Sudan

P. o. Box 21681 - Nairobi, Kenya

Email: rsass113@gmail.com Tel: +211 956191126

www.rsasouthsudan.blogspot.com

LET US TAKE CARE OF OUR COMMON HOME - SOUTH SUDAN

Workshop on the Papal Encyclical Letter Laudato Si

Final Communiqué – Juba, 1st May 2016

“Let us read the signs of the times” (Cf. Mt 16:3)

We came together in Juba from the 27 to 30, April, 2016, as representatives of the more than 500 religious present in South Sudan to reflect on the message of the Encyclical letter of Pope Francis “**Laudato Si**” (translation from the Latin language: *May You be praised*) and its implications for us today.

While the country is trying to come out from the violence, death and destruction of the civil war and implement peace, we are called to overcome our anxieties and fears and not to lose hope. We ‘**raise up our heads**’ (**Lk 21:28**) and try to read the signs of the times. We don’t want to react to any kind of challenge we have to face but to interact with one another and with all people of good will and live our universal call of being co-creators of the world we live in.

Looking around at our reality in South Sudan, we **SEE** some worrying signs: pollution of the water, of the land, of the air; deforestation and cutting of trees without replacement, burning the forests, overgrazing and desertification and oil exploitation as the major income for the country but as a grave polluting agent.

Exercising our **JUDGMENT**, we see a breaking of the fundamental relationships that make us men and women created in the image of God. In the long years of war we lost the relationship with our brothers and sisters, becoming like Cain who killed his brother. We have lost our relationship with God who has entrusted to us, as stewards, his creation, and making ourselves lords of creation we put in danger our sacred home. We have lost sight of the common good because of greed and thirst for power.

As the prophet Micah (6:8) said we feel called to **ACT** justly, *to love tenderly* and *to walk humbly* with our God. Education of children and youth and formation of leaders is a priority in our parishes and schools. As a Church we feel the need to be a prophetic voice towards those who are decision makers in the political arena through our commitment to Justice, Peace, Care of Creation and Reconciliation. By using the media, particularly radio, we intend to spread the message of **Laudato Si** in our communities. Liturgical celebrations and international days of observance can be the chance to sensitize our people on the importance of planting trees, keeping the environment clean, particularly in urban areas, and improving and practicing agriculture.

Finally, we, religious men and women, call all the People of good will to make a personal reflection on our life-style, being self-critical and open to change, aware that the resources at our disposal are limited. Our spirituality has to be translated into our concrete actions.

Together with Pope Francis, *Let us sing as we go. May our struggles and our concern for this planet never take away the joy of our hope. (No. 244)*

Signed by: THE PARTICIPANTS OF THE ANNUAL ASSEMBLY 2016 OF THE RELIGIOUS SUPERIORS' ASSOCIATION OF SOUTH SUDAN (RSASS)