

SYMPOSIUM DES CONFÉRENCES
ÉPISCOPALES D'AFRIQUE ET
MADAGASCAR



SIMPÓSIO DAS CONFERÊNCIAS
EPISCOPAIS DE ÁFRICA
E MADAGÁSCAR

SYMPOSIUM OF EPISCOPAL CONFERENCES OF AFRICA AND MADAGASCAR

ADVENT MESSAGE

To The Church, Family of God in Africa!

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

As we enter the Holy Season of Advent, a privileged time of grace when the Church invites us to “lift up our hearts,” I extend to you the fraternal greetings of the bishops of Africa and its Islands. Advent, the season of expectant waiting and joyful hope, reminds us that “*the Lord is near*” (Phil 4:5) and that God never abandons His people, even when the world around them seems overwhelmed by darkness.

Our beloved continent Africa continues to face trials that weigh heavily on the hearts of her people. In many regions of Africa, families endure the harsh realities of conflicts, violence, and forceful displacement, kidnapping and banditry, poor governance and infrastructural deficits, hunger and poverty. Economic fragility, corruption, and weak institutions strain the fabric of our societies. The ongoing effects of climate change, manifested in droughts, destructive floods, and environmental degradation, are threatening the livelihoods of millions, especially the poorest among us. Many of our young people, deprived of opportunities, embark on perilous journeys in search of a future, often risking their lives along dangerous migration routes. Others are displaced within their own lands, searching for safety and dignity. These sufferings, pierce the heart of Africa, and echoes the words of Pope Francis who reminds us that “*the cry of the poor becomes our own cry*” (*Evangelii Gaudium*, 11).

In the midst of these challenges, I wish to affirm with deep pastoral solicitude that the bishops of Africa stand close to you. You are not alone in your sufferings. Your cries for justice, peace, and dignity resonate within our hearts and in our prayers. As shepherds, we walk with you, bearing your burdens and raising your concerns before God and before the world. The Church in Africa, guided by the Holy Spirit, remains committed to defending life, promoting peace, advocating for good



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governance, and working tirelessly for the integral development of our communities.

Yet Advent invites us to lift our gaze beyond the wounds of the present moment. It proclaims that a light shines in the darkness (cf. Jn 1:5), and the darkness cannot overcome it. The birth of Christ, which we await with longing, assures us that God enters human history precisely at moments when hope seems fragile. In this season of hope, I invite all Christians in Africa and its Islands to turn their eyes to Jesus Christ, the Savior of the world and the Prince of Peace. He alone is our enduring hope when the world disappoints; He is our strength when fear surrounds us; He is our justice when earthly systems fail. Let not your hearts be troubled or discouraged. As the Lord Himself assures us, *"Take courage, I have overcome the world"* (Jn 16:33).

Advent also calls each of us to interior renewal and active witness. The coming of Christ urges us to purify our hearts, to renounce all forms of violence, corruption, and injustice, and to become instruments of peace in our families, communities, and nations. It urges us to recognize the face of Christ in the poor, the displaced, the unemployed, and the suffering. It calls us to care for our common home, as Pope Francis teaches in *Laudato Si'*, and to promote a culture of solidarity, dialogue, and mutual respect. The transformation we long for in Africa begins in our hearts and radiates outward through concrete acts of charity and justice.

Beloved sons and daughters of the Church in Africa, as we journey through this sacred season, may the hope of Advent fill your homes with peace and your hearts with renewed courage. May the coming of Christ dispel every darkness that weighs upon our continent and open for us paths of reconciliation, unity, and integral human development. Entrusting each of you to the maternal intercession of Mary, Our Lady of Africa, I pray that this Advent may be for all a time of grace, healing, and profound encounter with the living God.

A blessed and grace-filled Advent to you all.

In Christ our Hope,

✠ Fridolin Cardinal Ambongo
Archbishop of Kinshasa
President of SECAM

