

Ncube breaks his silence and vows to return to his flock in Zimbabwe

Abigail Frymann

THE ARCHBISHOP of Bulawayo, who resigned last year amid accusations of an affair with one of his staff, has spoken publicly for the first time in more than a year, saying he wants to return to his native Zimbabwe, even if it costs him his life. Archbishop Pius Ncube was until last year the most consistent and fierce critic of President Robert Mugabe and his Zanu-PF party. He has been keeping a low profile at the request of the Vatican since the story of the affair broke, but he was sorely missed by many in the run-up to the country's now discredited recent elections.

Independent Catholic News (ICN) reported this week that the archbishop has been in England since last June and that he intends to return to Zimbabwe soon. ICN said that he celebrated Mass last Sunday at an undisclosed location in England and told parishioners that he had been here in order to "pray, study and rest", but he added: "a shepherd must be with his flock, even if it means death".

The congregation, which included a number of Zimbabwean refugees, burst into spontaneous applause at the news. Archbishop Ncube also said that during his stay in England he had only eaten one meal a day because

"in Zimbabwe many eat only once every three days". During his homily the archbishop focused on the theme of humility and the need for prayer, saying Jesus' humility was revealed in the picture of the Messiah entering Jerusalem on a donkey, and in his washing the feet of his disciples.

Archbishop Ncube urged people to spend time in prayer. "As Christians we are not materialistic, always chasing after riches, after position, after pleasure ... We do not belong to ourselves. We live for the Lord. That's why it is very important for each one of us to spend each day 10 minutes, 30 minutes every day or even more, talking with the Lord." He added: "God comes close to the vulnerable. People who cry - they live much longer than those who don't cry ... I'm not much of a crier. I wish I was. We must ask God for the gift of tears."

The archbishop appeared to have lost none of his clear-thinking criticism of Mugabe. He named him at the end of a rogues' gallery of "the proud who are destroying this world", mentioning those who crucified Jesus, then Hitler, Stalin, Mao Zedong, Pol Pot, before coming to Mugabe, who "got into power by hook and by crook - and this time we hear during the election he changed the results and went around beating up people, shooting some

of them. And he has forbidden the NGOs to give food to those people who supported the opposition. That's pride."

He then praised Princess Diana, Gandhi and Nelson Mandela for their humility. "If we are humble we will bring a lot of blessings to our people ... If we are proud we will destroy."

■ The South African Council of Churches, which includes the country's Catholic bishops' conference, has urged the international community not to recognise the presidency of Robert Mugabe, because it regards the recent election as fraudulent. The 26 member churches issued a statement this week saying that they want the Southern African Development Cooperation and the African Union (AU) to support the setting up of a transitional government incorporating the opposition and Mugabe's Zanu-PF party.

At the G8 meeting in Hokkaido, Japan, this week, the Prime Minister Gordon Brown handed photographs of the charred body of a member of the opposition Movement for Democratic Change, Joshua Bakacheza, to G8 and African leaders. Some leaders then called for sanctions to be imposed worldwide on Mugabe and 11 other government officials, leading to the freezing of all their overseas assets and a total ban on travelling abroad.

AUSTRALIA

Pell accused on eve of World Youth Day

SIX DAYS before the Pope and hundreds of thousands of pilgrims were due to arrive in Sydney for World Youth Day, the city's Archbishop Cardinal George Pell was fighting off serious criticism over his handling of an allegation of clerical sex abuse, *writes Mark Brolly*. On Monday the Australian Broadcasting Corporation's *Lateline* current-affairs programme accused the cardinal of misleading a man who said he had been sexually assaulted by a Sydney priest 21 years earlier.

The programme's presenter, Tony Jones, said that *Lateline* had documents showing Cardinal Pell had written to the man, Anthony Jones, in 2003, telling him that his allegation of sexual assault was not being upheld because the Church had received no other similar complaints about the priest in question, Fr Terence Goodall. But the presenter said that the cardinal had signed a letter to another man on the same day, upholding his

claim that Goodall had sexually assaulted him when he was a young altar boy. Tony Jones said that the documents also showed that Cardinal Pell had ignored the recommendations of the Church's own investigation by a layman, Howard Murray, into the allegations.

Cardinal Pell said Goodall had been investigated by the Church and the police, and had been stood down. He said he had accepted two of Mr Murray's recommendations of January 2003: that Goodall be assessed for suitability to continue as a priest; and that the allegations of both complainants had been sustained and that they be offered remedial assistance. But, unlike Mr Murray, he did not believe there was sufficient evidence of rape where that was alleged. He said: "The letter to Mr [Anthony] Jones was badly worded and a mistake. I was attempting to inform him that there was no other allegation of rape and I overstated my argument with Murray."

COLOMBIA

Betancourt speaks of 'miracle' release

THE FORMER hostage Ingrid Betancourt has described her release from captivity by Colombian forces on 2 July as a "miracle", *writes Jon Stibbs*.

The devout Catholic has spoken of her faith as a powerful solace, saying she prayed daily during the six years that she was held by the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia. For three of these she was chained up day and night. After she and 14 other hostages were released she was shown on television holding a rosary she had made in the jungle. The news of her freedom was greeted with delight by the Vatican and the Pope said he would receive her as soon as possible. While she is in France, the former Colombian presidential candidate, who has dual Colombian/French citizenship, plans to visit Lourdes.

CANADA

Nation's top honour awarded to activist abortion doctor

THE DECISION to confer Canada's highest civilian honour upon its most prominent abortion activist has provoked outrage from the Canadian Catholic hierarchy and reawakened the long-dormant national abortion debate, *writes Sabritri Ghosh*.

After weeks of speculation, Governor-General Michaëlle Jean announced on 1 July that Dr Henry Morgentaler would receive the Order of Canada for his contributions to "health care". The Montreal gynaecologist helped to usher in an era of unrestricted abortion in Canada by repeatedly defying a 1969 law requiring a medical committee's approval to have or perform an abortion. His decades-long legal battle ended in 1988 when Canada's Supreme Court struck down the country's existing abortion legislation. Canada has been without an abortion law ever since.

The reaction from Canada's Catholic bishops to the news that Morgentaler was being honoured was swift and unequivocal. "Canada's highest honour has been debased," declared Toronto Archbishop Thomas Collins in the first of many statements from Canadian bishops denouncing the appointment. He called upon "all people of goodwill" to demand the award be revoked and instructed local parishes to pray for an end to "the scourge of abortion" during Mass on 6 July.

The Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops issued its own statement on 3 July asking "the appropriate authorities to reconsider this nomination ... We believe that linking this award to a procedure as harmful as abortion constitutes a serious error which undermines the significance of the Order of Canada," the bishops said.

A priest in British Columbia who received the Order of Canada for his work with troubled youth returned his award on the day Dr Morgentaler's was announced. In a similar gesture of protest, the directors of Madonna House, an Ontario-based Catholic community, publicly returned the award given to their late founder, Catherine Doherty, on Tuesday in front of the Governor-General's house. "We are confident that Catherine is spiritually present with us, affirming this gesture of love for our country and for the values which alone can sustain it," said Fr David May, one of the community's directors.

Speaking at his Toronto clinic on 2 July, Morgentaler dismissed the protests against him as coming "from the usual sources: the Catholic Church, the fundamentalists ..." Although now retired from his practice, the 85-year-old still operates a string of private abortion clinics across Canada. No date has yet been set for the investiture ceremony.

JAPAN

Brown seeks Pope's aid on development

Robert Mickens *in Rome*
Hazel Southam *in Hokkaido*

THE PRIME Minister Gordon Brown has personally asked Pope Benedict to help "galvanise the international community to accelerate progress" on achieving the Millennium Development Goals, which he admitted were not likely to be met, it emerged this week.

The 8 July issue of *L'Osservatore Romano* printed copies of Mr Brown's letter to the Pope, dated 23 May, and the reply that the Vatican secretary of state, Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone, sent on 3 June, during this week's G8 summit in Japan of the leaders of Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Russia, Britain and the United States.

In his letter Mr Brown complimented the Pope for speaking "powerfully" to the United Nations in April, especially on development. "As things stand today, we are not on track to meet the Millennium Development Goals by 2015," he admitted in the letter. Mr Brown told Pope Benedict he hoped to "be able to call on [him] at the Vatican" in order to continue the close cooperation between Britain and the Holy See on international development.

On the Pope's behalf Cardinal Bertone replied: "The Holy Father prays that the important international meetings planned for the second half of the present year will ... put into effect a concerted international plan of action aimed at freeing the world from extreme

poverty, from the scourge of hunger and from the chronic lack of general health care." On Tuesday the leaders signed a statement pledging to "consider and adopt" a target to cut carbon emissions by half by 2050 and agreed to fulfil the promise made at the Gleneagles G8 summit in 2005 – which followed the Make Poverty History campaign – to increase international aid by US\$50 billion a year by 2010, of which half will go to Africa.

Caritas gave a cautious welcome to the climate change pledge. "We think that this is a step forward, but it's only progress if it is implemented," said Caritas' permanent delegate to the UN, Joseph Donnelly.

Earlier Pope Benedict XVI and the heads of Catholic bishops' conferences of the so-called G8 nations called on their government leaders to "courageously adopt all necessary measures to conquer the scourge of extreme poverty".

In a joint appeal on 17 June, the nine bishops – Britain represented by conferences in England and Wales, and Scotland – urged the G8 leaders to "deepen actions to reduce global poverty and address global climate change", saying they were "particularly concerned for the poorest and most vulnerable" people of the world.

"I, too, add my voice to this urgent appeal for solidarity," the Pope said on Sunday at Castel Gandolfo after praying the Angelus. He asked the G8 leaders to "put the needs of the weakest and poorest populations at the centre of their deliberations" since they were the most vulnerable to the "perverse effects" that "financial speculation and turbulence" were having on food and energy prices.

"I hope that generosity and far-sightedness will help [the G8 leaders] take decisions aimed at re-launching an equitable process of integral development that safeguards human dignity," the Pope said.

Vatican relocates Neocat seminary to Rome

THE BISHOPS of Japan have succeeded in closing the lone seminary of the Neocatechumenal Way seminary in their country, *writes Robert Mickens*.

But the terms set forth by the Holy See – which amount to relocating the seminary to Rome – indicated that the decision may only be provisional and was aimed at keeping alive the Neocats' presence in Japan.

This latest development follows the temporary suspension in late May of a verbal agreement between Pope Benedict XVI and the Japanese bishops to shut down the seminary (*The Tablet*, 10 May and 21 June).

"The Redemptoris Mater Seminary of Takamatsu will be closed as a diocesan seminary," wrote Vatican secretary of state Cardinal Tarcisio Bertone in a letter to the bishops dated 26 June and obtained by *The Tablet* this week. The cardinal said that "as an expression of the Holy Father's paternal care for it", all [the institute's] components would be aggregated to the Neocat seminary

in Rome and put under the direction of an 84-year-old retired Japanese bishop – Peter Takaaki Hirayama, bishop emeritus of Oita.

Cardinal Bertone acknowledged that the 25 or so Neocat priests who currently work in the country were likely to encounter various difficulties in the wake of the recent decision. He said the Congregation for the Evangelisation of Peoples would appoint a vicar who would liaise with Japan's bishops in handling various issues connected to their "presence and ministry". It was not clear whether the vicar would be a Vatican official, a Neocat member or a Japanese prelate.

In the letter Cardinal Bertone also said the name of the aggregated institution would be the Redemptoris Mater Seminary for Japan. But it was unclear when the transfer would take place and the Secretary of State told the Japanese bishops that "until the above-mentioned plans [were] implemented" they had to allow the Neocats to maintain the current *modus operandi* of the facility in Takamatsu.

UNITED STATES

US bishops defy Vatican over liturgy recommendations

Abigail Frymann

AMERICA'S BISHOPS have rejected the new English translation of the Proper of Seasons – the collection of daily texts used at Mass – in an astonishing display of defiance to the Vatican's Anglophone liturgy body.

The postal vote, which went out to bishops absent from the Florida meeting, failed to get the required two-thirds positive vote from its 250 Latin-rite members, the website *Whispers in the Loggia* reported on Monday. The vote was closed and the result announced early, meaning that at least 83 bishops had already voted “no”.

The matter was forced to a postal vote after US bishops attending their spring plenary meeting in Florida failed to give the amendments proposed by the International Commission on English in the Liturgy (ICEL) either the two-thirds majority required to pass them or one-third needed to reject them (*The*

Tablet, 21 June). The changes were part of a 10-year effort by the Vatican to align the texts more closely with their original Latin. But bishops who criticised them said words such as “gibbet”, “ineffable” and the use of lengthy, complex sentences made them too inaccessible.

In a statement, the bishops said they had “failed” to approve the translation, adding: “The vote at the meeting was inconclusive and subsequent mail ballots from absent members kept the measure from passing.”

The text is a “Grey Book” or second-stage draft, that was prepared by ICEL, and has been approved by a number of English-speaking bishops' conferences. The Order of Mass has been approved by the 11 Anglophone conferences – which cover Australasia, North America, the UK and Ireland, South Africa, India, Pakistan and the Philippines – and is awaiting *recognitio*, or confirmation, by the Holy See.

ROME

Benedict XVI ‘planning new rite reforms’

THE FORMULA for eucharistic consecration would be put back into Latin for Masses that are celebrated in the vernacular if the Pope introduces universal changes to the post-Second Vatican Council liturgy, says Italy's *Panorama* magazine.

According to the report the Pope has asked the Congregation for Divine Worship (CDW) to study some modifications to the current liturgy, which was reformed by Pope Paul VI in the wake of the Council. According to the report, Latin would be restored not only for the words of institution at Mass, but also for the “formulae of baptism, confirmation, confes-

sion and the other sacraments”. The Italian magazine said the Pope had also asked the CDW to look at changing the place where the sign of peace occurs during Mass. It currently follows the Agnus Dei (Lamb of God), but it would be moved to immediately after the Prayers of the Faithful or during the Offertory (as in the Ambrosian Rite) “so as not to disturb the silence that precedes Communion”.

This particular change has been under study at the CDW for several years and has long been used by some Latin Rite communities, including those connected to, or influenced by, the Neocatechumenal Way.

VENEZUELA

‘Stooge’ movement denounced by hierarchy

ONE OF Venezuela's two cardinals has denounced a socialist breakaway movement calling itself the Reformed Catholic Church, writes *Jon Stibbs*. Cardinal Jorge Urosa Sabino accused the founders of the Church – dissident Anglican, Lutheran and Catholic priests in the western city of Ciudad Ojeda – of attempting to divide the Catholic Church.

However, Enrique Alborno, one of the Reformed Catholic Church's first bishops, a former Lutheran minister “ordained” as bishop last week without papal mandate, said: “We don't side with any political banner, but we cannot fail to recognise and support the so-

cialist achievements of this Government.” He is one of three bishops the fledgling Church appointed to serve its 2,000 parishioners, who are largely in the western state of Zulia.

The Catholic Church has frequently clashed with socialist President Hugo Chávez in the past. In an interview on Union Radio in Caracas, Archbishop Roberto Lückert of Coro, who is vice-president of the Venezuelan Bishops' Conference, said: “They [the Government] want to destroy the Catholic Church.” He also claimed the group was funded by Chávez's Government to undermine Catholic leaders. This claim was denied by Enrique Alborno.

AUSTRALIA

Numbers for WYD ahead of expectations

TWO WEEKS before World Youth Day was due to begin the numbers of visitors registered and whose applications were being processed had already exceeded the total number expected to attend the event. Official figures showed that by 1 July 229,810 people were registered or had applications being processed, while the total number expected for the event was 225,000. The numbers of Australian visitors were lower than expected – 71,506 as against 100,000 – but Australians were in an easier position to make later bookings.

Half a million people are expected to attend the final Mass, at Randwick Racecourse. The Pope is due to land tomorrow and spend three days at an Opus Dei retreat centre on the outskirts of Sydney, according to the Australian *Sunday Telegraph*. He is to fly by helicopter to St Mary's Cathedral House in central Sydney. On Thursday, he will be welcomed at Sydney's Government House, pray at the tomb of Australian-born Blessed Mary MacKillop and meet Prime Minister Kevin Rudd and Governor-General Michael Jeffery, before a harbour cruise and his first encounter with World Youth Day visitors.

(See *Andrew Thomas Kanina*, page 6.)

Robinson brands US Church incompetent

AUSTRALIAN BISHOP Geoffrey Robinson, whose criticisms of the Church's response to sexual abuse have prompted rebukes from the Vatican and American and Australian bishops, says he is “overwhelmed with evidence of incompetence and far worse” in the US Church, writes *Mark Brolly*.

The former auxiliary Bishop of Sydney, who has returned to Australia from his five-week, 15-venue tour of the US promoting his bestselling book *Confronting Power and Sex in the Catholic Church: reclaiming the Spirit of Jesus*, warns that the American Church has some massive problems before it. He says he returned to Sydney to find 13 letters from US bishops asking him not to go on the tour and accuses the Prefect of the Congregation of Bishops, Cardinal Giovanni Battista Re, of orchestrating the bishops' letters and a May statement by the Australian bishops criticising his [Bishop Robinson's] views.

Bishop Robinson, in a report about his trip published on the independent website *Catholica Australia*, wrote that Cardinal Re's statement that the invitation to tour the US was by some organisations not in communion with the Catholic Church “is the exact opposite of my experience”.

IN BRIEF

St Thérèse's parents beatified

Pope Benedict has given his approval for the beatification of the parents of St Thérèse of Lisieux – Louis Martin (1823-94) and Zélie-Marie Guérin (1831-77) – and for the canonisation of the Blessed Damien of Molokai (1840-1889). All five of Martin and Guérin's surviving daughters became nuns. Belgian-born Damien de Veuster went to Hawaii at the age of 24 and served in a leper colony at Molokai.

Pope to lead tele-'Biblethon'

Pope Benedict XVI will read the first chapter of Genesis on the premier Italian State Television RAI-1 to begin a week-long, round-the-clock broadcast of the Bible in Italian this autumn. Other participants will include Rome's chief rabbi, several Vatican cardinals and Italian actors.

New Focolare head

Maria Voce, a 71-year-old Italian with degrees in theology and canon law, was elected last Monday as president of the worldwide Focolare Movement. She succeeds the founder and only other president, Chiara Lubich, who died in March. Ms Voce joined Focolare in 1959.

Templeton dies

The American-born philanthropist Sir John Templeton has died aged 95 in the Bahamas. A Presbyterian, he set up the Templeton Prize for Progress in Religion to award honours equivalent to Nobel Prizes. Blessed Mother Teresa of Calcutta was its first winner, in 1973.

'Balloon priest' found

A body found 60 miles off the Brazilian coast is thought to be that of Fr Adélir de Carli, who went missing in April while attempting to break the record for spending the longest time flying by helium balloons.

Catholic magazine cleared

The Canadian Human Rights Commission has dismissed a complaint filed by gay rights activist Rob Wells against the conservative magazine *Catholic Insight*. Mr Wells alleged that articles against homosexual practice were a form of "hate literature" but the commission stayed the charges, "because the material is not likely to expose a person or persons to hatred or contempt based on sexual orientation".

Ban on autistic boy upheld

A severely autistic teenager can be barred by his parish from attending Mass because of his disruptive behaviour, a judge ruled last week. Fr Daniel Walz of St Joseph's Church in Bertha, Minnesota, had filed for a restraining order to keep 13-year-old Adam Race from Mass, alleging he had become "disruptive and dangerous".

Letter from Rome

It's official. Archbishop Angelo Amato SDB has been named the new prefect of the Congregation for Saints. The key papal appointment – key because the 70-year-old Salesian will become a cardinal – was made on Wednesday. Well known to Pope Benedict, the Italian became the then-Cardinal Ratzinger's right-hand man (No. 2) at the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF) in 2002 when his Salesian confrère, Tarcisio Bertone SDB, was named Archbishop of Genoa.

Amato is extremely conservative, but is no theological slouch. A specialist in the field of Christology and a defender of the purity of the faith against religious relativism, he is said to have been the main author of the 2000 CDF Instruction "*Dominus Iesus*". He is also believed to have been the main censor of writings by such theologians as the late Fathers Jacques Dupuis SJ, Roger Haight SJ, Jon Sobrino SJ and former Salesian-turned-diocesan priest Fr Peter Phan. But don't think that all men with SJ after their names are anathema in the archbishop's eyes. He studied for his doctorate under the late Fr Zoltan Alzeghy SJ at the Jesuit-run Gregorian University. And it is from that same order and institution that Pope Benedict has now plucked his successor. Fr Luis Ladaria SJ is named CDF secretary and promoted to archbishop, marking the first time that a Jesuit has been given a top slot at the doctrinal office. The 64-year-old Spaniard has taught at the Gregorian since 1979. The Pope knows him well, too, since he has been the secretary general of the International Theological Commission (of which the CDF chief is always president) since 2004 and was a member of the ITC from 1992 to 1997. Next move on the curial chessboard? Look for Cardinal Antonio Cañizares Llovera of Toledo to be named prefect of the Congregation for Divine Worship.

The Sant'Egidio Community in Rome is well known for its outreach to the poor and the marginalised. This lay Catholic movement, which was founded in the wake of the Second Vatican Council, also has a special dedication to the elderly. And each summer its members add extra programmes and activities for old folks, especially because many municipal services are reduced so that city employees can go on holiday. Peacemaking efforts, activities to fight the spread of Aids in Africa and a commitment to building better relations with other Christians and religions round out the community's profile.

Well, almost. There are a few other things Sant'Egidio is up to that don't always get published. One activity that deserves to be promoted is the Trattoria degli Amici. This

charming little restaurant in Piazza Sant'Egidio in the heart of the famous Trastevere neighbourhood is run by community members and some of their disabled "friends" – hence the name (*amici*). You can tuck into some very good pastas. And there's one particular waiter with what seems to be a photographic memory who will run down a long list of wines. In the summertime tables on the small cobblestoned square offer a view of the Sant'Egidio Church, its seventeenth-century facade aglow in soft light. That's because the Trattoria degli Amici is only open in the evenings from 7.30 p.m. until just before midnight. The place often gets crowded just after 9 p.m. when Sant'Egidio's evening prayers let out from the nearby Basilica of Santa Maria in Trastevere. Next time you're in Rome you might consider prayers and a meal with friends there.

Pope Benedict XVI, who is off to Australia today for World Youth Day, recently had a human-rights centre named for him in Spain. The Archbishop of Valencia – Cardinal Agustín García-Gasco – announced plans to open the Benedict XVI Institute for Human Rights at the Catholic University of Valencia.

The announcement caught my eye because just last month the Archdiocese of Brindisi in southern Italy named its newly built minor seminary after the current Pope. It happened during a papal visit. Now everyone knows that there were lots of buildings, centres, reception halls and foundations named after Pope John Paul II while he was still alive. And there have been even more since his death three years ago. Some of them carry the appellation "the Great". Ironically, some of this was seen as just one of the many manifestations of a "cult of personality" surrounding John Paul that irritated a few of the lifelong devotees of Joseph Ratzinger/Benedict XVI. And now, what have we here? A new personality cult forming around his successor? A number of places and institutes have already been named after Papa Ratzinger. They include the "Benedict XVI Dream Centre", a facility that Sant'Egidio founded in 2007 in Conakry (Guinea) to care for people with Aids; the Augustinian Cultural Centre "Benedict XVI" near St Augustine's relics in Pavia (northern Italy); and a number of parish and community-centre halls that have also been named after the Bavarian pontiff. Next autumn, to coincide with the Synod of Bishops, the Vatican publishing house (Libreria Editrice Vaticana) will open its third store in Rome. And that shop also will be named after Benedict XVI.

Robert Mickens