

Office for unity

Thursday, November 9, 2023

Charity, the key to true dialogue

Where charity reigns, there God is. But it's hard to make charity reign, because each and every one of us is full of selfishness, pride and misplaced self-esteem; yes, all of us, foreigners and Madagascans alike, selfishness has a hold over us. We must continually strive to get out of it; but we never get out of it definitively, once and for all. We never are completely filled with true charity; we become, we have to become, a little less selfish, a little less proud, every day, in order to become a little more charitable.

This is the key to true dialogue... When we make this effort humbly, patiently, without ever becoming discouraged, we will know how to speak truths without bitterness, with objectivity, and above all with the just will to build and not destroy, to encourage and not discourage.

I've tried to make this effort, but, as always, there's a gap between what we set out to achieve and what we actually achieved, between the Christian charity we wanted to put into each and every one of our words, and the mediocre reality of what was actually said.

Who can make up the deficit? Who can rectify what has gone wrong? Who can soften what has been hard? No one but the One who took upon Himself our sins and our miseries. It is to Him, and to Him alone, that I entrust the dialogue between us. He wants us all to love each other as brothers. May He help us to do so, and may His Grace in us not be in vain.

Meditation text taken from Remy RALIBERA, s.j., "Vahaza¹ et Malgaches en dialogue", Saint Paul 13323, 1966, p.87

¹ In Malagasy, the word *vazaha* means "foreigner" and by extension refers to an individual of white European origin.

INTERCESSIONS

Prepared by the brothers and sisters of Madagascar

1. This year marks the 50th anniversary of the Charismatic Renewal in Madagascar. Today, prayer groups are established in several cities, and the number of members is growing.

Thank you Lord for those who, listening to the Holy Spirit, dared to found these prayer groups. We entrust to you the path that lies before us, and we ask that this movement may increasingly serve the cause of Christian unity.

2. In the midst of a political, social and economic crisis, the Malagasy people are called to the polls for the presidential election on November 16.

Lord, we pray to you for peace in Madagascar, for a population today divided and on the brink of civil war. Let us pray that decision-makers will seek to contribute to peace and the mutual edification of the common good.

3. Protestant Lutheran communities and some Reformed churches celebrated the day of Reformation on October 31, in commemoration of the Protestant Reformation.

Lord, we bless you for the witness, in word and deed, of all our Lutheran-Reformed brothers and sisters around the world. Root our hearts, Lord, we pray, in your Word, so that we may honor the Christian name we bear!