

Sudanese bishops: Faith brings cooperation

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KHARTOUM, Sudan -- Like the early Christians who were challenged by social pressures and political forces, Sudan's Catholics face modern-day challenges that can best be met by "putting Christ at the center of their life," the bishops of Sudan said.

They also said called upon their collaborators in various ministries to initiate a period of spiritual renewal, strengthen the spirit of cooperation, communion and mutual support, share resources and personnel in an effort to better serve the Sudanese people.

The July 16 statement from Cardinal Gabriel Zubeir Wako of Khartoum, Auxiliary Bishop Daniel Adwok Kur of Khartoum and Coadjutor Bishop Michael Didi Mangoria of El-Obeid followed Sudan's partition into two nations as South Sudan became the world's newest country a week earlier.

The bishops urged a peaceful outcome to the recent violence in Sudan's South Kordofan state. Witnesses said a series of attacks by government troops were aimed at the ethnic Nuba people around Kadugli, South Kordofan's capital. Other attacks occurred in Abyei, home primarily to members of the Dinka Ngok tribe, supporters of the government of Southern Sudan.

The bishops also called for new pastoral initiatives to foster vocations, form new catechists and provide faith education for families, especially children.

"Ours is a call to respond to new prospects, to strengthen and accompany our faithful in their spiritual activities," the bishops said. "But this call can only be fulfilled collectively, through the involvement and cooperation with our sister churches and in dialogue with the other religions."

In addition, the bishops welcomed a July 12 statement to the Sudanese Parliament from Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir, who invited all segments of society to help rewrite the country's constitution.

"This is a positive move and assurance from the president, a sign of reconciliation and an appeal to heal our wounds and an effective request for every citizen to rise from the ashes of our past and recreate our future with peace, dignity and equality for all," the bishops said.

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