

Sermon by Rt Rev Anthony Poggo at the consecration of Bishop Frazer and Bishop Matthew at the All Saints Cathedral on 2nd December 2012

Numbers 27:15-17; 2 Cor. 4: 1-10 & John 21:15-19

Introduction

My name is Anthony Poggo. I am Bishop of the Diocese of Kajo-Keji. I would like to thank the Archbishop for asking me to preach at this service for the consecration of Bishop Frazer and Bishop Matthew.

Before I come to my talk on today's function, I would like to mention something on advent and also on yesterday's world AIDS day.

Advent

Today is also 1st Sunday in Advent. This is the beginning of the Christian Church calendar. It is an important day in our church calendar. This is because we are preparing for Christmas, let us remember that Jesus is reason for the season. There is an attempt to take Christ out of Christmas. This is why some people say x-mas. X is a reference to an unknown figure. During Advent we also look forward to the Second Coming of Christ. This is why we sing songs like 'O come, O come, Emmanuel!'; and 'Lo! he comes with clouds descending'.

World AIDS Day on 1st December 2012

Yesterday was World AIDS Day. The theme of this year's celebration is: "Getting to zero: zero new HIV infections. Zero discrimination. Zero AIDS related deaths".

This day also marks the **31st anniversary** of the first diagnosis of HIV. HIV & AIDS is real in South Sudan and

requires urgent right action from everybody for its defeat. We must succeed in the battle against HIV/AIDS before it reaches its 50th anniversary in 2031.

As Religious Faiths we should break the silence, fear and misconceptions surrounding HIV & AIDS. HIV is preventable and manageable like any other disease. We should encourage all people to take a test to enable them to know their status. Those who test negative should not be proud but strive to remain negative and exhibit concern for those who test positive. We should integrate HIV & AIDS related activities into our religious activities.

I am chairman of a National Working Group on Faith, Pro-SAVE and Anti-SSDDIM in South Sudan. We encourage partners working on HIV to take the approach on multiply SAVE and reduce SSDDIM.

Multiply SAVE and reduce SSDDIM

We must do all we can to **multiply SAVE** which stands for Safe practices, Access to treatment, Voluntary testing and Empowerment.

We also need to work hard to **reduce SSDDIM** (Stigma, Shame, Denial, Discrimination, In-action and Mis-action), to multiply SAVE (Safe practices, Access to treatment, Voluntary testing and Empowerment) to defeat Aids.

Role of Religious Leaders

The Archbishop of Canterbury in his message on world AIDS day said that there is need to religious leaders and all people to join hands to fight against HIV/AIDS. He also said that there is a link between AIDS and gender violence.

He talked about the many challenges which governments, in collaboration with churches, other faith organizations and civil society, can overcome: He also said that there are still some 7 million people who don't have access to such ARVs and the importance of such people being put on ARVs.

What is consecration?

Today our two brothers are being consecrated to be Bishops. The word consecrate means one is being set apart for a purpose; in this case being made a Bishop.

In our reading from **Numbers 27:15-17**, we read of how Moses asked God to select a leader to take over from him so that the people are not like sheep without a shepherd.

Joshua was selected to take over from Moses. He was described as a man in whom is the spirit. It is important that when we choose or elect leaders, we ensure that they have the right qualification for the role they are to undertake. It should not be because of where you come. It is unfortunate that we in the church tend to elect Bishops from areas where they come from. His Grace had proposed the transfer or translate of Bishops but this has been shelved for now. We need to in the church, government, organisations appoint people on merit, know in Human Resources as **meritocracy** not on **akwanocracy** (akwana akwana).

Joshua was then invested with some of Moses' authority. The Archbishop assisted with the Bishops will lay hands on you to consecrate and set you apart as Bishops.

A Bishop is a **shepherd** of God's flock the people or the church.

What does a shepherd do?

1. As a shepherd, you lead the people to ensure that they are **fed well spiritually and also physically**. You do this through the pastors and those who work under you.

This is why in our gospel reading, when Jesus reinstated Peter, he asked him three times whether he loved him and each time, he gave him a command. Two of the commands were that Peter was to feed the lambs and the sheep. Why did Jesus separate lambs from sheep? I think this was to ensure that Peter should take care of all groups of people, children, youth, women and men.

2. A shepherd **protects the flock** from attack from animals and other prey. In our case, you ensure that there is Biblical teaching that would not make the sheep to go away. This is why Jesus asked Peter in John 21:16 to "Take care of my sheep".

3. **A shepherd counts and knows** his flock. Know your flock. How many are they? Where are they? How are they doing? They do this by visiting the flock.

As a Bishop, you do not have to do these things on your own. Delegate. Remember Exodus 18 where Moses was doing everything on his own until his father came and gently rebuked him. Ensure that you work with others and delegate before your father in law comes to rebuke you.

In our second reading, taken from **2 Corinthians 4: 1-10**, we are reminded in verse 1 that the ministry that God has given us is by his mercy and that we should not loose heart. We should not distort the word of God.

In verse 5, we are called upon not to preach ourselves but to preach Jesus Christ and to consider ourselves as his servants. Most governments refer to their workers as civil ‘servants’. This is similar to the Biblical view on Christian conduct. Jesus expects people who want to be great in the kingdom to be “servers” or “servants of all”, Matthew 20:25-28.

As a bishop, you need this reminder that you are God’s servants. You need to be humble and not be proud. People will do what they can to raise you. This should not get into your head.

Pitfalls of Leaders

There are three key pitfalls for leaders. For us to remember, these are referred to by the letter W for the men and letter M for women leaders:

Pitfalls for Leaders

Pitfalls for Male Leaders	Pitfalls for Female Leaders
Wealth	Money
Wine	Merisa
Women	Men

1. Wealth/Money

We need to be careful on this. The Bible says that the love of money is the root of all evil. It is not money that is evil but the love of money.

Leaders need to be cautious on this. As a Bishop, have reliable professionals who handle finance and keep away from controlling funds. Leave this to Treasurer and Finance offices. Keep an oversight role. Ensure that you

have annual audits. When I became a Bishop, I asked why we were not doing any auditing. I was told that our funds were not sufficient to warrant any external audit and that we could not afford the audit fees. Since then we have now instituted audits. People fear audit because they think auditors come to find faults. The reality is that they come to advice you to improve.

Wine/Merisa

Leaders should be careful in their relationship with wine/merisa. In some parts of the Anglican Communion, it is all right to take a little wine. As a Bishop, you will be traveling to parts of the world where this is no a problem. Be careful.

Even here, you may have people give you gifts of church wine. Be careful.

For leaders who do not have the church regulations to stop them from taking a little wine or merisa, watch out. This can easily be your pitfall.

Women/Men

Leaders have to be honest in their relationship with the opposite sex. This is a huge challenge for all leaders. No one is exempted from this.

How Juba has changed

In one of my trips to Juba, I took a walk to exercise and decided to buy some fruits. I got into conversation with the fruit sellers, they wanted me to buy more but I said, this is just for me. They said how about family, I said I am a visitor in Juba and do not have a family? They said, how about “lukilili” which is the Bari word for a bat. I then wanted further clarification but all of them burst into

laughter. It did not know what it was. I then realized they were saying – they were asking whether I was not expecting a visitor who only came at night! Is this how Juba has changed?

Commercial sex workers have now increased in Juba. Many of the women in the sex camps are from neighbouring countries such as Kenya and Uganda but there are also many other South Sudanese. Here is what one is quoted in one of the publications: "They [clients] tell you they want you, then they take you to a room and when you ask them to use a condom they pull out a knife or [hold] you at gunpoint,"

Hard work is a must

For South Sudan to catch up with the rest of the world in development, we will need to work extra hard in our country and church we need to have a change of attitude. We must see work as part of our God-given responsibility and not a curse, see Genesis 2:15; Exodus 20:9.

No work no food

The Bible encourages hard work. Paul writes in 2 Thessalonians 3:10 that any person who does not work should not eat. Laziness is the mother of poverty. We need to make good use of our working time. We should not encourage unnecessary visit to offices. We should go into office and sit doing a lot of nothing. Be an example, I do not like going to an office and to spend more than 30 minutes.

We need to keep time

We need to work at keeping time. Let us forget about local time.

Each of us have roles to play

We all have individual roles and can make a useful contribution to the development of our church and country. This responsibility is to each and every Christian. Who is the church? Many people think that the church is Bishop. God will not send us angels to do it miraculously. He has to use you and me as His builders. He has given us talents to use in these roles. South Sudan needs more servant leaders and fewer bosses.

A Health check for the church and individuals

Giving is one of the challenges that most Christians struggle with. How are you supporting your church both here and also in South Sudan? It has been said that the health of a church is seen in two things namely, the way the members give and the importance of the Bible in the life of the Church and its members. How important is

Three types of givers

Type of Giving	Solution	Manner of giving
Stony giver	Hammer	Give Tearfully
Spongy Giver	Squeezing	Give Fearfully
Honey-comb giver	Hold	Give Cheerfully

What type of giver are you? Some people say I cannot give because I have not yet been touched. The Bible desires us to be cheerful giver “for God loves a Cheerful giver” – 2 Cor 9:7.

Conclusion

We need to support the church, as we are part and parcel of this church. What will you do to support the work of the church?