

MINUTES

*Catholic Biblical Federation
10th Plenary Assembly
Mar Del Plata, Argentina*



Day 4

April 18, 2023

M01/18/04/23 INTRODUCTION OF THE DAY BY ITS MODERATOR DR. STEFANIA DE VITO

The day began with a prayer led by Ms. Marry Sperry in remembrance of HaShoah, the anniversary of which falls today. She mentioned that if we were to observe a second of silence for each victim of the Holocaust, we would remain silent until the 24th of June. Her prayer focused on ending anti-Judaism and antisemitism among Christians worldwide.

The moderator for the morning session, Dr. Stefania de Vito, introduced the theme of the day: “Proclamation of the Word of God in a Wounded World,” and emphasized that proclamation cannot occur without remembering and reflecting on the past.

M02/18/04/23 CONFERENCE OF HIS EMINENCE CHARLES CARDINAL MAUNG BO

Card. Bo is the Archbishop of Yangon and the current President of the Federation of Asian Bishops’ Conferences.

The Cardinal’s address was delivered via a pre-recorded and televised conference titled “Proclamation of the Word: Inspiration from the Evangelizing Decade of Pope Francis.” In his address, he highlighted Pope Francis’ focus on evangelization. Unfortunately, he could not join the Assembly live due to internet connection issues. After the televised presentation, a discussion among participants took place, followed by six interventions. The speakers’ concerns and contributions centered on the effectiveness of evangelization, which is a central concern of the current pontificate.

M03/18/04/23 CONFERENCE OF BISHOP ANTONYSAMY PETER ABIR

Bishop Peter Abir earned his doctorate at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome and has had a rich teaching career of the Bible in India and authored numerous books. He was consecrated as Bishop of the new diocese of Sultanpet, Palakkad, Kerala, in 2014 and continues to serve the Word of God. He is the President of the Indian Episcopal Conference and the Biblical Commission of the Kerala Episcopal Council.

The Bishop delivered his address in person, with his conference titled “Is and Should True Christian Faith Today Be a Gift or a Sacrifice?” This thought-provoking question invited reflection and

introspection on the nature of Christian life and mission, in particular reference to the context and situation on the Indian subcontinent.

M04/18/04/23 CONFERENCE OF DRA. SUSANA NUIN NÚÑEZ

Dr. Susana Nuin Núñez comes from Uruguay and is a social communicator, sociologist, and doctor of research in social sciences. She has taught at the University of Buenos Aires. She collaborated as a consultant with CELAM and the Conference of Aparecida. She founded CELAM's Social School and directed the training and study center CEBITEPAL. She has authored numerous publications and research studies.

The speaker delivered a presentation in Spanish, titled "¿La cultura, en la Iglesia católica, hoy y mañana debe ser doctrina o kerygma?" The English title of the presentation reads, "Should culture in the Catholic Church be doctrine or kerygma today and tomorrow?" It posed fundamental questions regarding the nature and strategy of Christian proselytization in the contemporary world.

M05/18/04/23 CONFERENCE OF PROF. NICOLETTA GATTI

Italian by birth, Prof. Gatti obtained her doctorate at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome and currently lives in Ghana, where she is dedicated to university teaching in the fields of African hermeneutics, biblical theology, and interreligious dialogue. She is intensely involved in academic and pastoral activities in the biblical and Ghanaian contexts.

Her presentation, delivered in Italian, was titled: "La nostra evangelizzazione è realmente un dialogo con i popoli e le culture?" (English title: "Our evangelization: Is it truly a dialogue with peoples and cultures?") was a very pragmatic and context-based analysis. Among numerous valuable insights, she proposed a three-prong pragmatic method of biblical study and shared examples and experiences of its transformative impact in her context.

M06/18/04/23 WORKSHOPS

The first part of the afternoon session was reserved for thematic workshops that showcased various projects and activities of biblical nature. Four workshops took place:

- Culture–Bible–Identity Project
- LectioYouthNet & Lectionautas
- Catechesis with a Bible
- Bibliodrama

Reports from each workshop are available in the documentation of the Assembly.

M06/18/04/23 REGIONAL MEETINGS

Regional meetings with relevant discussions and sharing took place as scheduled between 5 – 6 p.m. Reports from these meetings will be included in the Assembly's final documentation.

M06/18/04/23 PRESENTATION BY THE REPRESENTATIVE OF KIRCHE IN NOT

The final session of the day started at 6.15. p.m. and was moderated by the CBF Secretary General, Fr. Jan Stefanów (SG). The session was devoted to the presentation by a representative of one of the key CBF funding agencies, Kirche in Not (KIM), known by its English name, "Church in Need."

The report was delivered by Maria Inés Espinosa, a representative of KIM who gave a presentation on religious freedom in the world, which is the context and reason for the organization's mission and work. KIM contributed to the financing of this Assembly. Its mission is to inform, care for and help Christians who are in need, including providing financial resources. Ms. Espinosa presented a report on religious freedom, which is the only one of its kind, analyzing the situation in about 190 countries where the organization works, showing that religious freedom is either limited or non-existent in nearly one-third of them. The SG expressed profound gratitude for the work of the organization and its support for the CBF.

The report outlined the situation on each continent, with terror groups and government-sanctioned or organized persecutions and oppression identified as the most dangerous factors threatening and limiting religious freedom.

The Q&A session followed, during which a representative from Cameroon expressed gratitude for the organization's work in his country and shared specific projects that KIM had spearheaded and spearheads. In response, the speaker acknowledged the recognition and appreciation and emphasized the need for the right preparation of the projects to facilitate their allocation.

The second intervention alluded to the increasing religion-based aggression in northern Mexico and the recent killing of two Jesuits. Ms. Espinosa encouraged reporting and public exposure of such incidents, along with the need for legal counsel, since these are criminal acts that need to be dealt with by the legal system.

In his closing comments, the SG emphasized the diversity of the Church and expressed gratitude to KIM for helping to increase awareness about the issues at hand and encouraging those in need to seek help instead of silently suffering. He also recognized the benefit that KIM's responsible and accountable use of funds brings to all who are helped.

Responding, the KIM representative stated that the organization serves as a bridge between donors and beneficiaries, with many donors being elderly and confident in the organization's mission. In addition, KIM is committed to disseminating the Bible, often the only book owned by many individuals, as part of its mission to promote hope and literacy.

The day ended with the Eucharist celebration starting at 7.15 p.m., followed by supper.