

## **Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace**

At the II Synod for Africa in October 2009, Cardinal Peter Kodwo Appiah Turkson filled the key role of relator (reporter) systematizing the contributions made both before and during the Synod and presenting them in an inspiring biblical framework. During the Synod, three companions -- Paul Beré S.J. (West Africa), Samir Samir S.J. (Near East) and Michael Czerny S.J. (English Canada applied to Eastern Africa) -- served in the capacity of *adiutor* (expert) contributing to the work of the *Relator*. At the concluding banquet hosted by the Holy Father, Pope Benedict XVI named the 61-year-old Cardinal from Ghana as head of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, to succeed Cardinal Renato Martino retiring on grounds of age.

Cardinal Turkson took over at the end of January and soon turned to Father General and asked the Society of Jesus for someone who could assist him. This is surely a service which the Society can gladly offer the universal Church. With the support of Fr Fratern Masawe S.J. (Moderator of JESAM) and Fr James Webb S.J. (Provincial of English Canada), Father General is missioning Fr Michael Czerny, S.J., 63, founding coordinator of the African Jesuit AIDS Network (AJAN), to take up the position of personal assistant to Cardinal Turkson.

For Jesuits, the idea *socius* probably best expresses what Fr Czerny is being asked to do, in other words, to help the Cardinal and the Council staff in all aspects of the far-reaching programme of Justice and Peace. To this mandate, Michael brings a lifelong commitment in social justice ministries, as founding director of the Jesuit Centre for Social Faith and Justice in Toronto (1979-1989); as director, at the University of Central America (UCA) in San Salvador, of its Human Rights Institute (1990-1991) and as Vice-Rector of the UCA (1991); as Secretary for Social Justice at the Jesuit General Curia, Rome (1992-2002); and most recently as founding coordinator of AJAN (2002-2010).

The mission of the Pontifical Council is to promote justice and peace in the world, in the light of the Gospel and of the social teaching of the Church. The Council has a President, Cardinal Turkson, who is assisted by a Secretary and an Under-Secretary, all named by the Holy Father for a period of five years. With them work a multi-national staff of about twenty priests, religious and lay persons to carry out the wide-ranging programmes and activities. The Holy Father also appoints about forty Members and Consultors from different parts of the world who contribute to the planning of the Council's activities and initiatives. A high point is the Plenary Assembly, a time of authentic discernment of the *signs of the times*.

On 2nd February, Fr Paterne Mombé S.J. (West African Province), founding director of the Centre Espérance Loyola in Lomé, Togo, arrived at AJAN House in Nairobi as associate coordinator and future Coordinator. Paterne and Michael will work together very closely during the coming months.

We wish them and their co-workers every blessing as they take up their new missions.

*Nairobi, Feast of Saint Josephine Bakhita, 8 February 2010*