



## ADVANCED SEMINAR BRIEF: The Role of Religious Institutions and Leaders in the Political Arena

St Paul National Major Seminary, Kinyamasika  
18 March, 2015 | 1430-1700

Dr Maximiano Ngabirano delivered the Keynote at this Advanced Seminar. The response was made by Fr Dr Pascal Kabura. The Director Fr Lazarus Luyinda moderated the plenary. In his introductory remarks, Dr Ngabirano referred the student audience to the founding documents of the Vatican City State and literature that contains information regarding The Church in a Modern World.

He sought to set the pace by stating that Liberation Theology, with roots in the Catholic University of Luverne is born out of the socioeconomic injustices of exclusion and attendant consequences. He then stated that humans live in two worlds broadly speaking:

The world of good and that of evil... and that these form the premise for perception, understanding, knowledge, practices and attitudes; he noted that religion consequently created social identities, i.e. denominations such as Protestants, Catholics et al.

“This is how,” asserted Dr Maximiano, “the advent of religion introduced new fractious identities which, in Uganda are best exemplified by the religious wars of (B)Uganda.”

Effectively, the power structures were reorganized to the detriment of the ordinary citizen.

The power reorganization and allocation notwithstanding, he observed that the ordinary citizen was (and still is) complicit through their actions and omissions:

- Ordinary citizens are satisfied even when they hold no real power;
- Vast sections of the population, including religious leaders and the institutions they lead are content with exclusion or being relegated to the fringes of society;

Instead, Christians, regardless of their denomination, for as long as they are acquainted with these matters should actively support the cause for justice.

The notion of speaking truth to power is best anchored on the knowledge that the submissions being made are supported by utmost conviction; priests should be passionate in their pursuit of priesthood and extend the same passion towards social justice.

Introspection ought to be carried out on questions relating to the role of the church in human rights, urbanization; and technological advancements. This perforce militates against the sustained assault on the role of religious leaders in political affairs. A word of caution however was given: cultural relativism of the kind that makes the society permissive of anything and everything, including



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obnoxious foreign practices ought to be refrained from without stifling the enlightenment and progression of society.

The Advanced Seminar was brought to a close by the Rector, Fr Lazarus Luyinda who implored the students to heed the calls to active citizenship that were made by both Dr Maximiano and Dr Kabura in their submissions. He observed that one cannot aspire to priesthood per se; there must be a social dividend to the society one inhabits as a tangible outcome of ordination. For his part, Dr Kabura noted that the population is awaiting instructions from its (religious) leaders and so the aspiring priests should not let down the population which expects so much guidance in virtually every sphere of life.