

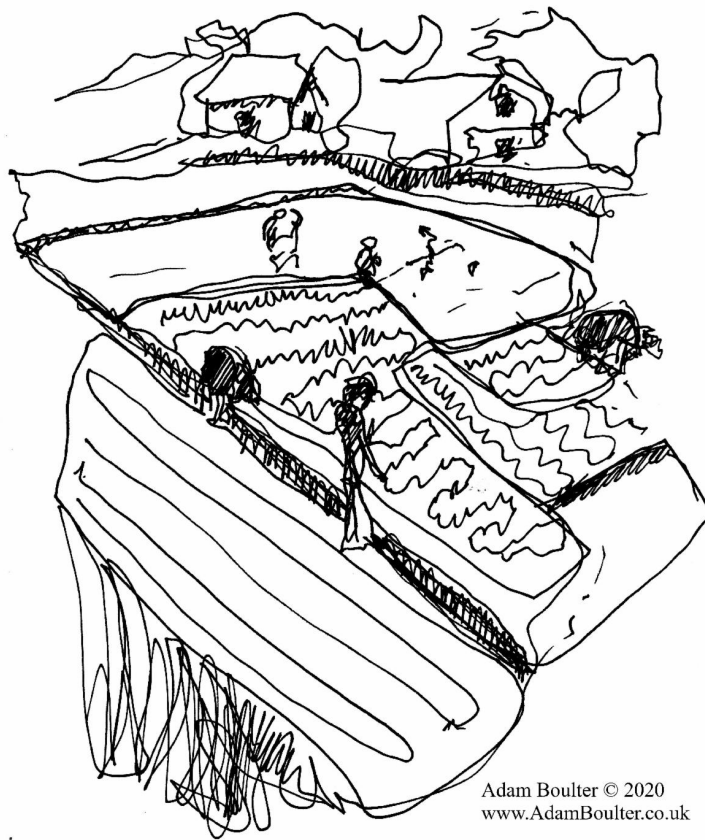


# LENTEN DEVOTIONALS

## offered by Leaders of the Diocese of Toliara

### Reflection on Economic Development

By  
The Rt. Rev.  
"+Samy"  
Samitiana  
Razafindralambo  
Assistant Bishop  
Diocese of Toliara



Adam Boulter © 2020  
[www.AdamBoulter.co.uk](http://www.AdamBoulter.co.uk)

*For the kingdom of God is like a man travelling to a far country, who called his own servants and delivered his goods to them. And to one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one... and immediately he went on a journey. Then he who had received the five talents went and traded them and made another five talents. ... His Lord said to the first two of them... "Well done, good and faithful servant. You were faithful over a few things. I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your Lord." (Matt. 25:14-23)*

The Travelling God provides Real Joy – a Lenten Reflection

Theological reflection:

Jesus laments over Jerusalem and predicts the destruction of its temple. Then on the other hand, after sharing these future events, He invites us to a new kind of life. He leads his disciples toward something real – something that everyone longs for: the *Real Joy*. This joy is humanly real as well as divine.

This is something for prayer and meditation during this Lenten season:

*what is Real in our life?*

In order to reach that goal, the first step God has chosen is to transform humanity by being with them, to create a new model of relationship with them. Creating a trustful relationship so they become his servants.

Next is sharing, giving his treasure to those who have accepted to be transformed to be called his servants. He gave something of his own life, of his own creation. He gives the opportunity to grow and to become more responsible, to steward something which is not yours.

Then travelling – leaving the space for the human enterprise still with all necessary environment (called also his Grace). *Travelling God*: He is so marvelous and such a surprising God because He is travelling to meet a new person in his field in order to share who He is, his talent, that part of himself, something alive. This is life.

What does God say about this?

God is concerned, first, for the human being. God wants us to grow by creating a good relationship with Him, with each other, and with the local and global environment so that we become his servant.

God wants us to grow by making us good stewards of his own gifts, trusting us and our abilities as good stewards. He has given everything so that we, together, can make grow what we have received of his kingdom.

His gift of life is compatible, adaptable, and can be contextualized to every kind of situation. No one is excluded. No one is unable to make this gift fruitful and growing – except those who don't believe in life and growth.

He is traveling in order to meet His new people where they are. He wants to include his whole people to participate in his joy as He is the *Real Joy giver*. The missionary God is travelling as He longs to meet his new people<sup>[1]</sup>, to make them good stewards – servants who deserve to live the *Real Joy*.

Last week, a young girl of 16, a member of the parish of St Patrick's Cathedral, came to our house and brought yogurt. I was amazed and asked her, "Where did you get it? Did you make it? How did you make it?" She explained the simple process of making yogurt in the Tagnalana method. She has the idea and skills to add value to the milk and continue producing more and more yogurt.

Malagasy people, especially of the southwest, are people of the sea, of the cow, and of the sweet-potatoes, cassava, beans... People of nature<sup>[2]</sup>. We are aware how important it is to be good stewards of nature because we know that this is the world in which to live. This is the world which gives us life. But we are also a tribal people. We usually share what we have only amongst our own tribal members.

Toliara City is a land of newly-settled people: the large scale of droughts in the 1940's, the 1960's, and the 1980's<sup>[3]</sup> have pushed people to move to Toliara. We are still learning how to share space with other tribes, and how to make that space productive for everyone.

Some Parishes within the Diocese of Toliara have established economic development programs in order to put these scriptures into practice. God has come to meet us where we are. He has shared with us his salt, his goat, his coffee. We have started to know

that new way of living with him. We have come to realize that God's mission is all about trust, sharing, and stewardship – just as the young girl has done with her gift of yogurt.

I noticed the *Real Joy* in the face of that young girl as she has tested something very deep – even in the hardships of life. The joy of participating in the process of the sustainability of God's mission is also giving another joy: the joy of being with the next generation of the family God.

During this Lenten season let us learn the joy of giving for economic development: to add value in what God is providing. One economic development project at the parish level can change the life of the whole community. This will ensure the sustainability of the mission of God in that Parish.

The people of God in the Diocese of Toliara wish to share *Real Joy*: sharing and growing for the sake of Christ's Glory and his kingdom.

Let us pray with the prayer of St. Francis of Assisi:

***Lord, make me an instrument of your peace:***

***where there is hatred, let me sow love;***

***where there is injury, pardon;***

***where there is doubt, faith;***

***where there is despair, hope;***

***where there is darkness, light;***

***where there is sadness, joy.***

***O divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek***

***to be consoled as to console,***

***to be understood as to understand,***

***to be loved as to love.***

***For it is in giving that we receive,***

***it is in pardoning that we are pardoned,***

***and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.***

***Amen.***

<sup>[1]</sup> A Norwegian missionary came 200 years ago, a Roman Catholic 100 years ago, Anglican Episcopalian through lay people 45 years ago, and the McGregors 13 years ago.

<sup>[2]</sup> This is the life of 80% of the Malagasy people.

<sup>[3]</sup> This is from recent research on the internal migration of the people coming to Toliara. It means that Toliara city is very transient city depending on the climate and climato-geography.

I pray God's richest blessings on you and your family during this Lenten season,

**+Samy**

If you would like to support the Economic Development programs in the Diocese of Toliara, please click the Donate button below. I encourage you to give generously.

Interested in joining us to support this great cause?

**Donate!**

People Reaching People: <https://www.peoplereaching.org>