

Sr Alison Munro, OP, the Director of the Southern African Catholic Bishops' Conference AIDS Office, is the co-editor of a new book "Catholic Responses to AIDS in Southern Africa" which was launched recently at the plenary session of the SACBC held in Manzini, Swaziland. She is the author of two articles in the book, one on the history of the Church's response to AIDS over the past thirty years, and one on the HIV testing of candidates for religious life and seminarians.

The Southern African Catholic Bishops' Conference (SACBC) AIDS Office and St Joseph's Theological institute have collaborated on "Catholic Responses to AIDS in Southern Africa" launched in January 2014 during the plenary session of the bishops of the SACBC in Manzini, Swaziland, and in several centres in South Africa. It was also launched at a Caritas Internationalis/UNAIDS antiretroviral treatment consultation in Rome in late February.

The book looks at the response of the Church over the past thirty years, outlining the programmes to address home based care of the sick and the dying, antiretroviral treatment which helped turn the tide, prevention, and the care of orphans and vulnerable children.

Cardinal Napier's paper takes a critical look at the response of an urban diocese to the pandemic, Bishop Dowling's details the response of a rural diocese. Fr Michael Czerny SJ from the office of Cardinal Turkson in Rome examines the Church's global response to AIDS. Different papers examine the theology of sin in the context of AIDS, the tricky question for the Catholic Church regarding the use of condoms, the issue of whether or not there should be HIV testing for candidates to seminaries and religious life, how a particular theological institute has addressed the issue of AIDS, AIDS as a theme in spiritual direction, and AIDS and inter religious dialogue.

The book brings together the work of AIDS activists and theologians, and makes details of the Church's response available to a wider public.

The papers were originally presented at a theological conference held at St Joseph's Theological institute in Cedara, KwaZulu Natal, South Africa in January 2013.

Cost Euros 10, plus postage and packing from the SACBC AIDS Office. amunro@sacbc.org.za; AIDS Office: 012 323 6458. www.aidsoffice.sacbc.org.za

Also available from the Kindle Store.