

Portuguese History Academy
Centre for the History of Society and Culture (Coimbra)
National Library of Cabo Verde
University of Cabo Verde
University of Santiago (Cabo Verde)

International Conference - Call for Papers
Vatican II and Africa: Reception, Impact and Implementation

Praia, Cabo Verde, 3–5 December 2025

As Bishop Patrick Kalilombe noted, the Second Vatican Council (1963–65) ‘was largely a forum for the concerns of the Churches of Europe and America in the 1960s’, and Africa’s presence at the Council ‘was marginal and by proxy’. While these statements contain some truth, they may underestimate Africa’s role in the Council. The impact, reception and implementation of Vatican II in Africa have not yet received the scholarly attention they deserve. General overviews still dominate the literature, while case studies remain scarce. For, instance, although the announcement of Vatican II on 25 January 1962 coincided with the growing consolidation of nationalist movements in Africa, the current scholarly understanding of the positions taken by Catholic prelates at the Council regarding the diverse processes of colonisation and decolonisation/independence/emancipation/self-determination in Africa during the conciliar years (1962–68) remains somewhat unclear. In fact, little is known about the perspectives of African bishops or missionary bishops in Africa concerning Church governance in the turbulent contexts of the Cold War, colonisation and decolonisation. The situation is not very different concerning topics such as church reform, liturgy and clerical education. The conference ‘*Vatican II and Africa: Reception, Impact and Implementation*’ seeks to gather diverse experts such as historians, theologians, canon lawyers and journalists to discuss the relationship between Vatican II and Africa from 1962 to the present day. This event is organised by the Portuguese History Academy, the Centre for the History of Society and Culture (Arts Faculty of the University of Coimbra), the University of Cabo Verde and the University of Santiago (Cabo Verde) and the. It will be

held from 3 to 5 December 2025 in Praia, the capital city of Cabo Verde, West Africa (Venue: National Library of Cabo Verde).

We invite proposals for twenty-minute papers exploring any aspect of the relationship between Vatican II and Africa. Proposals may be submitted in English, Portuguese, French, Spanish or Italian (for papers presented in any language other than English, an extended English abstract will be required). Potential topics include (but are not limited to) the following:

- African secular and ecclesiastical reactions to Pope John XXIII's announcement of the General Council
- Christian unity and interreligious dialogue
- Narratives of colonisation and decolonisation, including colonial, anticolonial and postcolonial violence
- African contributions to the Council's major documents
- Reception and implementation of the Council's major documents and directives
- African bishops and missionary bishops in Africa on the Roman Curia and church governance
- Bishops and the theology of the episcopate
- Vatican II and church-state relations in Africa
- Canon law, ecclesiastical discipline and clerical celibacy.
- Liturgy, vernacular languages and ecclesiological discourses.
- Catholic normativities and narratives of adaptations (ecclesiological, sociopolitical, ethical ideological, etc.)
- Clerical education and the lay apostolate
- The Virgin Mary and Marian devotion
- Doctrines and ideologies (Atheism, Communism, Marxism, Laicism, etc.)
- Africa and Africans as portrayed by non-Catholic observers
- Western Christianity as perceived by African Conciliar Fathers
- The African diaspora and Vatican II
- Media as instruments of the apostolate
- Africa and Africans in Vatican II-related media reports

Proposals, consisting of a title, an abstract (maximum 300 words) and a brief academic track record, should be submitted to jairzinho.lpereira@gmail.com by Wednesday, 10 September 2025. Feedback on the proposals will be provided by 15 October 2025.

For any queries or further information, please contact the conference organiser, Dr. Jairzinho Lopes Pereira (jairzinho.lpereira@gmail.com).

Related date:

30 September 2025