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Confusing dowry with lobola

CARDINAL Wilfrid Napier of Durban said in one of the press briefings during the Synod of Bishops on the Family that, as para-phrased by the British Catholic Journal. The Tablet, "in Africa cohabitation is common, where a couple live together while the man works to pay off the dowry".

But "dowry" refers to property or money brought by a bride to her husband on their marriage. What the cardinal was referring to was, by contrast, lobola, or bridewealth, a custom among Zulu and other Southern African groups, when cattle or cash is transferred by the bridegroom's family to the bride's family.

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