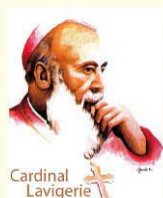


MISSIONARIES OF AFRICA

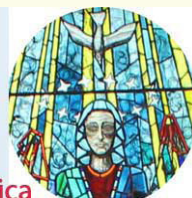
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*Mary
Queen Of Africa
Pray for Us.*

Missionaries Of Africa



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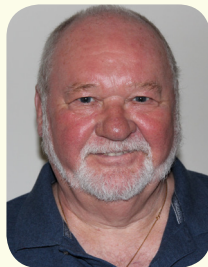
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Editor's Word.

November is traditionally the month of the Holy Souls in the Catholic Church. It is a time when we remember those we have known who have gone before us into Eternity. Some we have loved. Some we had difficulties with. Some we still have difficulties with, unable to lay to rest past hurts and resentments.



Fr. Michael Heap MAfr

The Church asks us to pray for all these people who are part of our lives because we, the living, are still influenced by our interactions with them. We miss some of them because they meant so much to us. Some we feel bad about because "if only....", "perhaps I could have done this or that, perhaps I should have said this or that, but now it is too late." It is never too late because God is outside time and holds in his heart all these people from whom we are separated. He is the one who makes up for all the love that we didn't or couldn't show. He is the one who holds their continued love for us. St Paul tells us that everything will come to an end except love.

By praying for all these people, or when we can't pray, by consciously leaving them in God's loving hands, we are joined with them through God. All the sins and shortcomings that limited or spoiled our relations with them here on Earth no longer have any power.

What about punishment and purification? I believe that can safely be left in God's gentle hands. What we should do is pray.

What about people who are still alive and from whom we are separated by distance or misunderstanding or hurt?

Jesus uses the image of the vine to describe how we are all linked to him and through him to the Father, and crucially, in him we are all linked to one another. When we pray for one another, we pray, as we say in the Mass, "through him, and with him and in him".

In our Magazine we often speak of White Fathers and students who have become priests or bishops, but what about the thousands of students or even priests and brothers who, for reasons only really known to God, have left Formation or the Society? What of the many more thousands of men and women who have been touched, in one way or another, by our Society and who, in their turn, have marked our Society by their passing? We pray for them also and ask Almighty God to make of our contacts with them, past or present, fruitful.

Jesus said that unless we are one vine with him we cannot produce fruit. Throughout this month of November let us join in prayer all those we have known in Jesus Christ.



Fr Patrick Shanahan, MAfr. RIP.

Patrick Shanahan returned to the Lord on 7th August 2016 at the age of 74, of which 51 years of missionary life in Ghana and Great Britain. A brief and bald statement covering Patrick's life and work. He was a short man so the description is fitting, yet he had an enormous heart and his life of service went so far beyond the confines of what is written above and his commitment touched so many people in so many places, that what is written above becomes a travesty.



Fr Patrick Shanahan



I was asked to write a necrology for him since we spent the last 15 months or so in the same community, but although I knew him and appreciated him as a kind, considerate, joyful and intelligent confrere, I am very aware that his life had so many more facets to it,

which I only glimpsed. He was not secretive, but whenever we talked or shared, he would always show more interest in the other person. Yet he was indefatigable. When he wasn't away in Zimbabwe, or Congo or Sierra Leone, or Belgium or France, or India, he was always ready to help out saying Mass at local churches or schools. How many of the teachers or pupils were aware of Patrick's appearances before UNICEF in Geneva or meetings at Chatham House, always on behalf of the poor and vulnerable street-children?

Patrick was born into an Irish family in Bushey on 30th August 1941. He died in Cambridge, convalescing from throat cancer with his brother and his brother's family, on 7th August 2016. His ashes were finally laid to rest in the White Fathers plot in Kensal Green, North London on the Feast of the Holy Souls 2016.



From ordination in 1966 until 1973, he was part of a White Father team visiting schools and talking about Africa and our work there. His presentations were lively and appreciated because he connected with the students. I, myself, was so impressed by a session he directed at Easter 1971 on Spirituality that I joined the Society.

From 1973 until 1980 he worked in Education with young people in Northern Ghana. Because of his personal contacts with local Muslims in Tamale, the Church was given a large area of land for schools and lodgings on what is now Education Ridge.

After further studies, he was appointed to Tanzania, East Africa. A confrere there at the time wrote, "Pat's approach to the phenomenon of street children was not so much focussed on taking 'kids' off the street as on accepting, discovering and helping them develop and direct their unique contribution to society."

Tanzania did not last long and he was back in Ghana. He lived for a while as a slum-dweller, ministering in Accra (near what is now called Sodom and Gomorrah). He was interested in everyone and explained to me how he would not have survived there but for the kindness of all the "excluded" and "undesirables".

Back in UK, for a while, he worked in Cambridge and London on

Justice and Peace, but always he was going off on trips promoting, training, helping Street Children Africa and other such organizations. For a short while he even edited this magazine which he predictably renamed “Young Africa”!

At his funeral on 1st September, two days after his birthday, there were so many people he had influenced and touched by his warmth and genuine interest and there was a very moving collection of messages from all over the UK, Africa, and Asia, from people who felt affirmed by meeting him. But there are also the thousands and thousands of street children who couldn't be present, but to whom Patrick gave a voice and dignity.



Pat was co-founder of
 **StreetInvest**
Investing in children on the street



“Every child needs a trustworthy adult in their life”



A Champion of street children!



World Youth Day^①



When I heard that Fr. Peter, a young Nigerian confrere working in Mahagi, Congo was going to World Youth Day in Poland, I asked him to send me an article. He sent an interesting article on the WYD, but I thought his other articles might interest our readers because they describe some of the difficulties behind preparing for big events. Harder than it seems!



Congo - yes. Mahagi - no.

I did not travel with a group from our diocese in Mahagi, Congo. Going with a group entails a lot of preparations- spiritually, emotionally and financially. However I did meet a group from Congo in Krakow and also priests from our neighboring country –Uganda. The Congolese group was from Kinshasa, the capital of Congo. To join this group or to send our young people from Mahagi to the capital, would have cost more than what I paid personally all the way to Krakow. Kinshasa is very far from Mahagi in the East of Congo. We are on the border with Uganda, a different world and



the road is bad. To get to the capital you have to fly. But that means travelling 200 miles to the next town, a flight to Bunia, then on to Kinshasa. The flight is \$600 return to Kinshasa. To take a group to Bunia and then on to the capital would cost a lot of money (which we don't have). Those young people who represented Congo in Poland were from the capital or those with the means to join them. Each one had to pay \$ 400 to participate in the WYD excluding fares to the capital. Isolated as we are here in Mahagi, that amount of money (\$1000) for our youth is impossible.

I said that Mahagi is isolated, but only isolated from the rest of the Congo. We are on the border with Uganda and most things (including money) are Ugandan.

Europe – yes. Back to Congo?

I must admit that I had other fears also. It would be my first time in Europe, and my first time with such a group. How would I manage? In addition, many young people would like to go to Europe but how many would agree to come back. And I would be responsible!

All in all, I decided it would be best if I went alone from our diocese to see how the land lay!

In the event, I was the only one from our region. It was a great experience and I regret that others couldn't come. It is a world of discovery.

Some religious congregations sent delegations to promote vocations and people asked me why I did not bring anyone? I would have loved to, but it was not yet our time. Next time, God willing!

Visa problems

Just for me, it was very difficult to get a visa. God knows how many places I had to go, applying for a visa. I went to Nairobi, Kenya, and was told - Try Nigeria or Congo. Going to Nigeria would use up all my money and there is no Polish Embassy in Congo!

Back from Kenya, in Congo, it was suggested - Try the Belgian Embassy. That meant flying to Kinshasa – too expensive, and no certainty of getting a visa. Alternatively, I could take a boat (definitely not a pleasure cruise!). This would take a week on the river. In the end I tried my luck in Uganda. In Uganda, confreres helped me contact the Papal Nuncio and I got my visa from Uganda!

At last I arrived in Poland. Everything was suddenly easy. Instead of registering online a year before travelling, I was immediately welcomed into the group of White Fathers in Lublin.

Fr. Peter Ekutt, MAfr



Dr. David Abdulai (1951-2016) “Mad Doctor”.

I first met Dr. David in 2005 on a visit to Tamale. I said Mass in the chapel of the White Fathers in Tamale, Northern Ghana and a slim, quiet man who had spent most of the Mass in the corner, head down listening, was later introduced to me. It was only later on that I got to know what a great and good man he was.

I was told that he was running a clinic where he treated people who could not afford doctors' fees. It sounded very worthwhile but I had no idea about the extent of Dr David's work, his abilities and his kindness.



I saw him every time I came to Tamale (about once a month) since he attended Mass regularly at the White Fathers. I was told that he came to Mass in the chapels of the religious congregations to avoid his presence causing a fuss in the parish churches.

I worked in our Formation House near Kumasi, and several of our students went to work with Dr David during the holidays. Through them I heard more about his work and impact.

The students told me how he worked from a clinic he had named Shekinah (Hebrew for the Presence of God amongst His people). There were all sorts of people working there, qualified health professionals, volunteers, ex-patients etc., and everyone was treated as equals at the service of Dr David's "brothers and sisters" (the sick, the poor, the needy).

Later I visited our students and found them living in a small hut. The sick and the helpers all lived in similar huts and food was shared.

There were people with HIV/AIDS and various other sicknesses, but one of the specialities was hernia operations, a very common medical condition in Ghana. One of our students was asked (with the permission of the patient) to assist with an operation. Dr David saw the student was getting queasy part way through, so he asked him to stand beside the patient and say the rosary. The student was grateful and the patient was happy.

Every day, donated food was prepared. Volunteers went out with it looking for people with mental problems living on the streets. Some of these people were grateful, many were indifferent, some were very choosy and critical of the food offered them, but Dr David insisted that all were to be treated with respect.

He himself had known hunger as a child – one of eleven brothers and sisters, eking out a living on a small farm. He was too small to work and so was sent to school. With scholarships he progressed through schools until he graduated from medical school in Accra in 1979. After some years specialising abroad, where he could have become rich, he returned to his homeland to serve the poor. He set up two clinics eventually treating 120 people a day. Aid and gifts from abroad and all went to the service of the poor.

In 2012 he received the Martin Luther King Jr. award from the USA. He was famous, but in 2016, when he contracted thyroid cancer, his friends had to contribute what they could towards the cost of his medication. The President of Ghana sent a plane to bring him to Accra for treatment, but on 3rd October 2016, at the age of 65, Dr David, the friend of the poor, died a poor man.



Jesus promised that those who visit the sick and feed the hungry will be welcomed into the Kingdom. We commend Dr David to his love.





World Youth Day ②

Personal impressions offered by an African missionary visiting Europe. The second part of Fr. Peter Ekutt's article on World Youth Day in Poland.

A Nigerian in Krakow.

I am proud to be a Nigerian. But I am aware that my country sometimes gets a very bad press. I was afraid that going to Europe I would be suspected of all sorts of things. Why are you here? What are you doing? How long are you staying? Where is your visa?

Miracles happen. No-one suspected me of anything or questioned me.

Cultural shock.

Although my first experience in Europe was positive, I discovered a different world.

Young people seemed taken over by technology. Everybody is on his smart phone with earphones. Nobody looking, nobody listening. Everybody communicating with somebody far away or playing games on the phone. Talking to people was not that easy. I wanted to talk. I wanted friends to talk with. I wanted someone to talk to me. I wanted to ask questions. I wanted to be with others, but it was very difficult. People on phones! I asked one young man, 'How are you doing? It is my first time here. Can you tell me about your country?' He suggested I buy a book to learn more about his country! I was in a world of technology. Machines doing almost all the jobs. People with no time, all looking busy and occupied.

Everything had to be paid for. Nothing was free. Everything can be paid for, even from your bedroom, without going to the bank or having cash. I joined the system by getting a debit card. Everything is online. This new reality.

Churches in some places are now things from the past. Buildings to be admired by tourists. Is this the end of the Church in Europe? By and large, it was a good experience. I learned a lot about my continent of Africa as well as the continent of Europe. I hope our youth will one day partici-





pate in the WYD. It is a world of meetings and discovery.

Home after WYD.

Back in Congo, people came to ask me many questions about my WYD experience. I invited all the youth of our centre to share my experience with them. I was invited to schools and even our local radio stations. Next year, at our diocesan youth week, I will be joyfully sharing my experiences. Lots of videos, photos, memories to share. The isolated youth of Mahagi will discover that youth elsewhere in the world are also asking the same questions they ask themselves in Mahagi: What is the future like for me? What am I doing with my life? While they think of going to Europe in search of opportunities, some European youth are also thinking of coming over to Africa. Imitating what I saw in Krakow, we have started a 'Youth Alive' group. This group tries to form youth with sessions on life issues, like HIV, drugs, immigration, vocations etc. This is one of the fruits of the WYD.



HIV AIDS Educational posters

Money problems.

Because it was so expensive, I couldn't pay myself to go to WYD this year and was funded by the White Fathers, for which I am very grateful. They saw me as one preparing the way for the future!

Many young people here want to go to the WYD in Panama, Central America, next year, but is it feasible? I have opened a 'Panama Bank' and people put in whatever they can. From 11 people we already have \$20 in the kitty (think big!). We are aiming for 5 participants.

The youth of Mahagi are members of the Church, citizens of the World.

Fr. Peter Ekutt



Fr Geoffrey Riddle, MAfr.

Geoff was born in London on 31st January 1925 and died on 28th July 2016. He was 91 years old when he died and had been a Missionary of Africa for 67 years in UK and in Tanzania.



Geoff was a confrere who was undaunted by anything. A man and a missionary of great faith and confidence. It started early. He was the eldest of 6 siblings and his sister remembers that whilst their mother looked after the baby, Geoff would take his four siblings on very long walks in the country. No buses allowed – just walking for miles! On one occasion they entered a field of cows. Geoff assured everyone there was no bull. But there was! It charged and they all had to run for their lives and jump a fence.

Geoff attended North Finchley Grammar and was encouraged by the PP to become a priest and a missionary. After taking his Missionary Oath in 1948, he was ordained in 's-Heerenberg (Netherlands) on 11th June 1948. After 5 years in Scotland (further studies in St Andrew's and then teaching in the White Fathers' seminary (St Boswell's), he arrived at last in Tanzania, and never wished to leave it again.

Apart from a brief spell making Mission Appeals in USA, he taught in Tanzania and worked in parishes. He stayed there until 1977. In those days in East Africa it was normal to take home leave every 7 years, later reduced to 5 years.

It was only during these home-leaves that his youngest sister (the baby mentioned above) got to know him. She remembers vividly how, when the family had borrowed a lawnmower from friends, Geoff volunteered to fix it. He took it entirely apart and was contemplating it on the lawn when the fiends turned up to find their mower dismembered. Nothing daunted, he ordered everyone off to take a cup of tea and in no time they heard the mower whirring away like new.



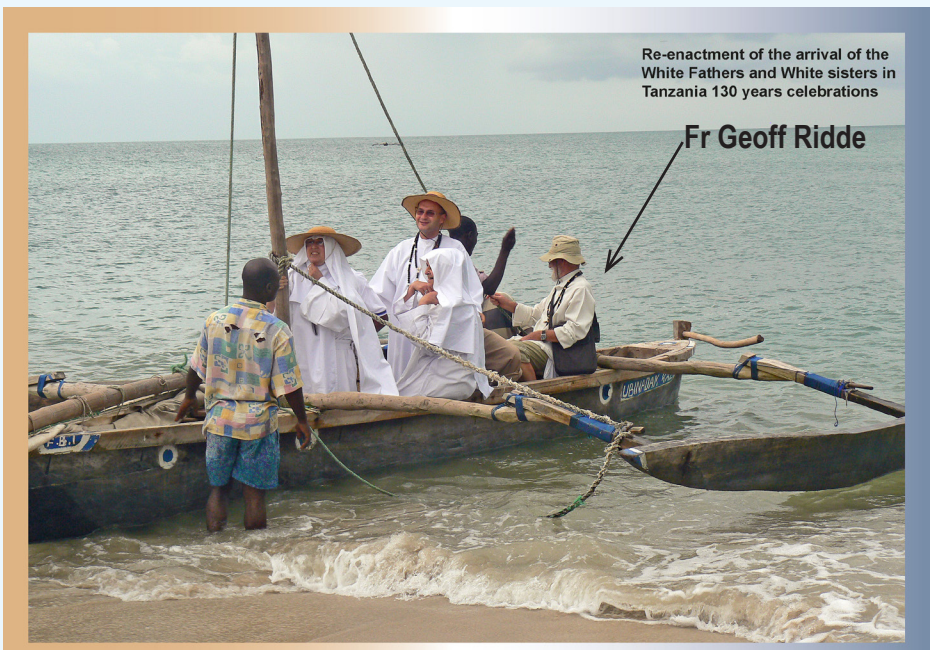
After the 30 days retreat in Jerusalem and more years in Tanzania, Geoff was caught for home service. He accepted to be assistant in a house for student White Fathers in London, however having arrived, the superior was appointed Provincial and Geoff became superior in his stead. He spent 4 years there but never forgot Tanzania. Once a week he would go into the attic where he had an altar and would say Mass in Swahili. The



students were regaled with stories of Tanzania and bush life. At one point, advocating a simple life-style, he suggested that the same food should be cooked every day and the leftovers added to the pot for next day. The suggestion was not taken up. During this time, he also took an interest in Ecumenism and on his return to Tanzania put his studies to good use.

Over the next few years, he became very well known to the different groups of non-Catholic Christians, as well as Muslims, in Dar es Salaam. He was always very forthright in putting forward the Catholic viewpoint. Always clearly, gently and with a smile. Perhaps that is why he was always invited back. People knew there was no duplicity or pussy-footing with him.

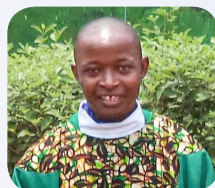
Throughout his life he had kept himself fit and when in Dar es Salaam went regularly to swim in the ocean. But time catches up with all of us. Although, as he got older, he was invited back to UK, he always refused. His remaining years, he was looked after by sisters in Dar es Salaam, where he wanted to be. He is now buried in Africa.





Parish handed over to the Diocese

By Fr Humphrey Mukuka, M.Afr



Fr Humphrey

I received my first appointment as a Missionary of Africa to Aru Parish in the Democratic republic of Congo (DRC). Aru was something that made me so proud and zealous to begin my ministry as a Catholic Priest. Despite some issues that were affecting our community, I was so courageous and zealous to live my priestly ministry according to what I had acquired during my formation. It is for this reason that I invested so much in learning the local language and the culture in order to live this missionary vocation fully and be in contact with the local population as a missionary. As I kept on integrating myself into community life and other pastoral activities, three months after my arrival, I had the confirmation that our Parish, Notre-Dame du Congo d'Aru, was to be handed over to the Diocese of Mahagi-Nioka.

This decision was already taken some two years ago. I accepted this decision with a lot of pain and regret. It was not yet official but I had to carry on with my pastoral activities as though nothing was happening in my heart. I kept asking myself questions like: "Why was I appointed to a parish that was soon to be handed over to the diocese?" "Why do the Missionaries of Africa keep handing over parishes and other institutions to dioceses whilst we have a good number of candidates in formation?" "Can we find other means than handing-over parishes to dioceses as has been done traditionally?" As a young confrere I am very concerned.

The Parish of Our Lady of Congo was first handed over to the diocesan clergy in 1978. Then, it was handed back to the Missionaries of Africa in 1993. The parishioners and the local population still remember the mismanagement in the parish that they observed during this time with the diocese. For this reason, they are worried about the new handover. We have been preparing them so that they accept the situation, though it seems difficult for them to bear.

I have been serving as a young missionary priest in Aru Parish since October 2015. My missionary experience during this period has been very rich and significant. It is for this reason that I feel sad leaving such a dynamic parish. I have been awaiting my new appointment since the handing over on 25 September. May the Lord grant me courage and strength to face this challenge positively! I started my missionary ministry during the month of Our Lady of Congo, after which the parish is named, I therefore ask our mother Mary to intercede for this parish, to intercede for me so that I can find joy on the unknown “road to Emmaus” so that my heart can flame up again.

(<https://mafrsaprovince.com/2016/10/03/notre-dame-du-congo-daru-parish-handed-over-to-the-diocese-of-mahagi-nioka/>)

*Fr. Humphrey is a young confrere from Zambia. His story speaks for itself, showing an aspect of our life as missionaries, that is not always evident. Our charism is to build up the local Church, so that it can grow in its own way. We give our all for the sake of the mission and then have to move on. We have left our families and homes and, in a sense, the parish and the mission become our family and home. But each time we pull up roots and move on, it is a new wrench. Like Fr. Humphrey we need Mary's prayers. **Editor.***



Noufe Emmanuel, Mukuka Humphrey
and Jimeno U Jesus

LION TALES AND A LION'S TAIL REMEMBERED

Nowadays anyone wanting to see lions or leopards in Africa would go to a game park. "Park" is a misnomer: They are vast areas of untouched bush. The Serengeti in Tanzania is the size of Yorkshire and Lancashire together. All manner of animals live there in their natural habitat. A hundred and forty years ago, when the first missionaries arrived, the whole of East and Central Africa resembled a vast game park. At the beginning of the last century, any missionary travelling on foot or bicycle, the only means of transport, would take a gun with him.

Bishop Léonard of Tabora (1912-1928) travelled all over his vast vicariate on a bicycle with a flask of water and a .45 Colt revolver in his episcopal belt. Although he was a great lover of wildlife, personal safety took priority and he shot at least four lions. A .45 revolver has a quite short effective range so they must have been close. Lions were not an uncommon sight until a few years ago. Fr Burton was riding pillion behind a confrère when he spotted a lion running along the road after them for some distance. "Hey, did you see that lion?" he asked. His confrère said, "No". Fr Burton was not a man to get excited, so that was the end of the conversation.

Early one morning, in the middle of the town of Tabora, a White Sister went to visit the little hut outside their house (there was no plumbing in those days) and was surprised to find that when she tried to push open the door it was pushed closed. Inside was not another person but a lion. There are numerous incidents in the mission diaries of Fathers and Sisters encountering lions or leopards. One Father riding his bicycle on a narrow path through long grass suddenly noticed a lion's tail across the path a few feet in front of him. Swerving round it, he stood on his pedals and sprinted away, fortunately without further incident. The late Father Coghlan, who must have been known to some readers, had a close encounter with a lion the consequence of which was to spend a night up a

tree, the frustrated beast growling as it patrolled the area below. In the morning the lion had gone and he, having leapt on to his bicycle, reached home safely.

A diocesan priest-cyclist found a lion trotting behind him on a lonely road. He increased his speed, and the lion did the same. He rode at full pelt, but the lion loped behind him without breaking sweat. Finally, out of breath, he got off his bike and put it in position between the two of them. The lion sniffed at it curiously until he rang the bell on the handlebars and the lion, startled, ran away. I do not know of a Father being actually killed by a lion but I knew an old Dutch missionary who did not write home for some months. Finally his relatives asked the local curate to write and demand an answer to their letters. He replied that his right arm had been temporarily incapacitated by a lion which had bitten him on the shoulder. Now he had recovered and could write again. It was all true, but the sceptical curate did not believe him and wrote an abusive letter to him in reply.



by Fr Frank Nolan



Fr Stephen Collins, MAfr

Fr Stevie Collins died in a Glasgow nursing home on 21st June 2016. His passing was quiet as was his life. A priest, a gentleman and a gentle man. He reached a good age (94) and put it to good use as a missionary for 69 years in UK, Uganda and South Africa.



Born in Edinburgh on St Stephen's Day (Boxing Day) 1921, he was one of four siblings, three boys and one girl. The other two boys, after different careers both became priests (in Glasgow and Kent). The girl, Betty, married Vincent and together they had ten children. As for Stevie, towards the end of the War, he entered the White Fathers' Novitiate in Sutton Coldfield, took his Missionary Oath in Rossington Hall in 1946 and nine months later was ordained priest.

Although ordained a Missionary of Africa he was not to see Africa immediately. Just one month after his ordination he was appointed to Heston near what is now Heathrow as the Provincial Secretary.

Within a year he became a teacher in the junior seminary then after another year he was moved to the White Fathers' senior seminary in Scotland. Another two years and he became superior in Rutherglen near Glasgow, in charge of Promotion (making the White Fathers known, seeking funds and vocations). He stayed there for five years and was instrumental in starting the White Fathers' Garden Fete which still continues.

Four jobs in four different places in nine years. The Missionaries of Africa do not take a Vow of Stability! Then after his 30 day retreat in France – Africa!

He started off as bishop's secretary, then into teaching, until after seven years he was recalled to Rutherglen for one year where he revived the Garden Fete. Then back to Uganda for eight years of parish work and one year of further studies at Gbaba Pastoral Institute.

After another twelve years of teaching, Stevie was no longer young but accepted to be guest-master in two different White Father houses in Kampala, Uganda. Being of a cheerful and welcoming disposition, he was eminently suited to such work. Being in his late sixties one could expect him to start taking things easier, but in 1990 he began working with people living with





Stevie in Kampala Uganda

AIDS. At that time in Uganda, AIDS was a terrible scourge, destroying families. Grandmothers would suddenly find themselves having to bring up their grandchildren because their sons and daughters had died from AIDS. Stevie formed women's and children's groups to help with the situation on the ground.

His pastoral involvement with people living with AIDS in Uganda lasted until 1995, but his home-leaves were becoming more and more frequent. In 1997 he was appointed, at the age of 78 to further AIDS ministry in South Africa. But by 2000 he was really no longer able to get around as before.

I remember meeting him when he came back to UK (London) and he was asking me if I knew of any colleges where he could follow courses on counselling. He still wanted (now aged 81) to serve and be of use in the ministry. However after a session in Rome for those over 70 he accepted to slow down.

He lived the rest of his life in Glasgow. First in Rutherglen then in a nursing home, visited regularly by his confreres and family.



Stevie has left a school named St Stephen's after him in Mbarara and a road in Kampala named Fr Collins' Road. He has left a memory of a gentle priest who cared and devoted the whole of a long life to the people of Uganda. He has left an example of quiet and faithful service.



Promise Ojiofor is a young Nigerian man who left during his studies with the Missionaries of Africa, but has kept in touch with us. After a First Class degree in Ghana and National Service in Nigeria, he obtained a scholarship to do a Masters' degree in Diplomacy and International Affairs in Baku, Azerbaijan. I asked him to share his experience of the Pope's recent visit there. Editor.

An African Experience of the Pope in Azerbaijan



Promise Ojiofor with his Mum

It was somewhat surprising to many – including me – that Pope Francis chose Azerbaijan as a destination for his apostolic visit. The nation is composed of approximately 95% Shia Muslims with a tiny minority of 500 Catholics. These Catholics are almost all non-Azerbaijanis, mainly Filipinos or Vietnamese.

There is only one Catholic church – the Immaculate Conception Church in the capital Baku, –there are no Azerbaijani priests and the first Azerbaijani deacon was only ordained this year. Hence the question, why would the Pope choose to make such a trip to Azerbaijan?

At least it would be easy to get to see the Pope as most people in Azerbaijan either do not know him or feel utterly indifferent towards him. Not like my own homeland of Nigeria, where there are so many Catholics. Seeing the Pope there would be quite impossible because of the crowds who would surround him. I was about to embark on the greatest religious meeting of my life. I was excited.

On the morning of 2 October 2016, I woke up very early, ironed and pressed my best clothes and dressed. I was already imagining what it would be like meeting the Pope in person? Shaking hands with him? Taking a selfie with him then uploading it onto social media? All my friends back home would be happy for me and perhaps a little envious.

I left the university where I am studying and quickly took a taxi, ignoring the



Pope Francis in Azerbaijan

usual stares from locals who may never have seen a dark-skinned African like yours truly. With great difficulty I found a taxi driver who spoke some English, and, in no time, we arrived at the church. I was going to receive communion from the hands of the Pope himself!

We shouldn't count our chickens!!

The church was surrounded by policemen and wailing sirens. I thought the President must be inside, but he wasn't. Security was tight; I wasn't allowed through the checkpoints; I realised they had reserved seats for certain persons only; merely purchasing a ticket did not guarantee a reservation. I asked one of the policemen why they wouldn't let me in? Seeing that I didn't understand Azeri and with a great effort, mixing English and Azeri, he shouted, "Qara (black), leave here now!" My hopes were shattered by those four words. I stood there taking in the situation. I wouldn't see the Pope, our Pope. I was ashamed. I broke down in tears. Trying to put myself together, I found a taxi – again with much difficulty because I am a foreigner who understands little Azeri – and went home.

During the ride home, the taxi driver – who understood English because he had lived in Canada – asked me what brought me to Azerbaijan and how I enjoyed the country? After some thought, I responded, "Interesting, but more complicated than I could ever imagine". I doubt he understood the depth of my feeling. Thank God, he didn't. I wasn't in the mood to put into words my feeling of frustration and exclusion. Our Pope had come and gone and I hadn't seen him.



HAPPIER LION AND LEOPARD STORIES

Fr Frank Nolan



There is on record one Father who was killed by a leopard in the west of Tanzania. What do you do if you meet a leopard? A Sister told me that to attend primary school she had to walk several miles through the bush. Her father would accompany her until they reached the maize fields surrounding the village then returned and left her to continue the last few hundred yards alone. One day, soon after her father had left her, she caught sight of a leopard beside her path. What should she do now? Calling to mind the stories and songs they used to sing around the fire at night, she looked away from the leopard and marched past it to school. She told me, you should not look at a leopard. It upsets them. But if you meet a lion, look at it and walk away backwards. Lions are both lazy and stupid so if you look at it they think you are approaching and it licks its lips waiting for his dinner to be served. Once you are at a suitable distance, you run away or climb a tree.

Father Burton had a leopard story of about an old bush missionary. Like the Nazarenes of old, no profane razor had ever touched his beard and hair, which combined to make a greying mane from which emerged a face equipped with round steel-rimmed spectacles. One day, on safari, through dense forest, he came to a narrow river that had to be crossed. The bridge consisted of a slippery moss-encrusted tree trunk, which had been felled to fall across the stream. Little used, the luxuriant tropical vegetation had closed around it leaving a long, narrow tunnel. Undaunted, the Father got down on his hands and knees and began to crawl across to the other side. He was half-way across, when he came face to face with a leopard. I should like to know which one was more surprised, said Father Burton. What to do? Looking the beast straight in the eyes, ruffling his beard and twitching his truly enormous moustache, in as loud and bellicose voice as he could muster, he cried, "Whoof, Whoof". The leopard retreated a couple of steps. A third Whoof came from the depths of a beard followed

by a blood-chilling growl. The leopard leapt into the branches of an over-hanging tree and disappeared. In the evening, back at the mission, he re-enacted the scene playing both parts, to the amusement of his younger confreres, one of whom related the incident of Father Burton.

West African Leopards. (Editor)

In the 70's, I was told a story from the diocese of Segou, Mali, in the 50's. A brother was late back from visiting a village. The confreres started supper without him. Eventually he turned up, with the unlikely excuse that he had been delayed on the road by a leopard. This was greeted with a laugh, but as the brother went to put his stuff away, one confrere noticed that the brother's white gandourah (habit) was stained with blood. On further enquiry, it turned out that he had been attacked by a leopard, which had ripped away part of his buttock. The brother had strangled the leopard, and then ridden his bicycle back to the mission. One of the confreres stitched the buttock before the brother could sit down (?) to supper. This was all in the mission diary. They don't make missionaries like that anymore (nor leopards?)!



Sir Roger Casement and the Congo

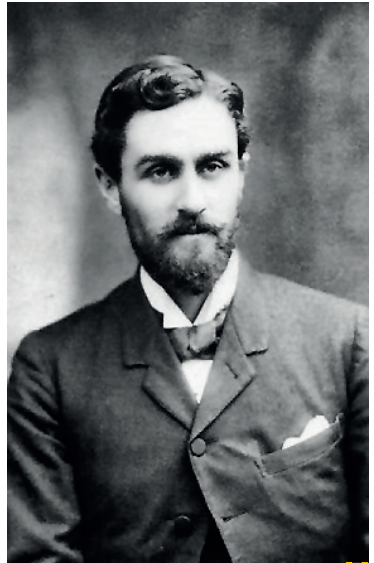
A hundred years ago this year, Sir Roger Casement, was executed, hanged.

Some remember him as a martyr of the 1916 Easter Uprising in Dublin. He had helped to get arms for the freedom fighters/rebels who held out in the main Post Office on O'Connell Street.

For others he was a traitor, a British subject who was in touch with Germany during the First World War, aiding and abetting the enemies of Britain at a time of great national danger.

For yet others, he was a homosexual at a time when homosexuality was vilified and totally illegal.

But there is also another side to Roger Casement, he was a “whistle-blower” who had an effect upon the history of Africa.



Late in the 19th Century certain European powers, to avoid unnecessary squabbles amongst themselves and “promote trade”, decided to divide up amongst themselves (and without reference to any Africans) the African continent (still being “discovered”). This meeting was known as the Conference of Berlin.

At this Conference, Leopold II of Belgium was able to obtain the region which is now the Democratic Republic of the Congo, by convincing the other European Powers and USA that he was involved in humanitarian work for the good of the Africans (also he would not tax trade!). Using the International Association of the Congo as a front, he was able to lay claim to most of the Congo basin. On May 29, 1885, the king named his new colony, his personal property, the Congo Free State. This state would eventually cover the area of the present –day Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Leopold's reign in the Congo eventually became infamous due to the increasing mistreatment of the indigenous peoples; forced labour, maimings, etc. Leopold extracted ivory, rubber and minerals in the upper Congo basin for sale on the world market, even though his official purpose to be in the region was to help the local people and develop the area. Under Leopold II's administration, the Congo Free State became one of the greatest international scandals of the early-20th century.

The report of the British Consul, Roger Casement led eventually to the arrest and punishment of white officials who had been responsible for killings during a rubber-collecting expedition in 1903.

Casement had worked in the Congo for Henry Morton Stanley (of “Dr Livingstone, I presume” fame) and for the International African Association from 1884, supervising the building of a railway, bypassing the lower 220 miles of the Congo River, and thus avoiding the cataracts. It was at this time that he first met Joseph Conrad, the author.

Casement later joined the British Colonial Service as a clerk in British West Africa, before transferring to the Foreign Office in 1901 and becoming British Consul in French Congo and then in Boma in the Congo Free State. In 1903 he was asked to investigate alleged human rights issues in the Congo Free State. King Leopold of the Belgians had set up a private army to get revenue from the people of the territory by harvesting rubber and exporting. But the exports from Belgium to the Congo seemed to have consisted mainly of guns, whips and other materials, shipped in chiefly to suppress the local people. He travelled for weeks in the upper Congo Basin interviewing people, including workers, overseers, and mercenaries. In 1904 he delivered a long, detailed eyewitness report to the Crown that exposed abuses: “the enslavement, mutilation, and torture of natives on the rubber plantations.” This became known as the Casement Report.

The loss of life and atrocities inspired literature such as *The Heart of Darkness* by Joseph Conrad and raised an international outcry. Debate is still ongoing about the number of deaths in this period. The upper estimate of deaths caused directly or indirectly by the forced labour system is 20 percent of the population. Leopold denied everything. During the subsequent propaganda war, European and US reformers exposed the atrocities in the Congo Free State to the public through Congo Reform Association founded by Roger Casement and the journalist E.D. Morel, and through Arthur Conan Doyle’s book, *The Crime of the Congo*. By 1908, public pressure and diplomatic manoeuvres led to the end of Leopold II’s rule. The Belgian Parliament bought the colony from him and it was henceforth known as the Belgian Congo.

It is said that Casement’s experience of Imperialism and Colonialism in Africa made a very profound impression on him.

He died some 8 years later, hanged by the country that had commissioned him to investigate human rights in a colonial setting.



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Mrs Mair O'Leary
Mr Mark Taylor

28th July 2016
August 2016
16th November
30th May 2016
August 2016
1st September
April 2016
26th April 2016

May 2016
4th August 2016
Oct 2016
Sept 2016
29th August 2016

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May they rest in peace



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