

# Missionaries of AFRICA

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## Appeal for Orphaned Children in Ethiopia!

*“What do you want to be when  
you grow up?”*



L-R. Ziada Haimanot Fana

*This* is a question often asked of children by concerned parents, doting grandparents and curious neighbours. And the answers are classical, even predictable: an engineer, an accountant, a doctor, an IT specialist, an astronaut.

These answers most often reflect the hopes and aspirations of children who enjoy security in their lives. All their basic needs are met: they have a solid roof over their heads, an abundance of clothing, are assured 3 meals a day, attend a good school and have access to good medical care. Given such security, they are free to dream - even to dream of the impossible.

But what if you do not enjoy such security? What if you are living on the streets because of poverty in your family? What if you are orphaned and have no relatives to care for you? What if you have run away from home because you are being abused? What are your hopes and dreams for the future?

Sadly, there are many thousands of children who do not enjoy security in their lives. For them, the issue is not so much, “when I grow up...” as “If I grow up...”

In 2003, the Missionaries of Africa in Ethiopia opened St. Mary's Children's Home for children living in situations of insecurity. We offered them their basic needs of shelter, food, clothing and medical care. In addition we encouraged the children to pursue their education to the best of their ability, with our full support, because a good education would offer them security and hope for their future.

St. Mary's is however more than a refuge, a 'safe port', for those living in vulnerable situations. Inspired by the Holy Family of Nazareth, we have endeavoured to create a Christian home environment within which Gospel values such as love, forgiveness, acceptance, respect would be lived. The staff members serve as guardians and mentors to the children who, in turn, learn to accept and care for each other as brothers and sisters.

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# WHO PACKS YOUR PARACHUTE?

**When** I was a student in London I would volunteer during the Summer in the Cheshire Homes. I was lucky to meet their founder, Leonard Cheshire. He was the lead pilot of the Dambusters and the official British observer when the A-bomb was dropped on Nagasaki. When he'd come back from a successful bombing raid he would gather together the hangar cleaners, the parachute folders and the mechanics and thank them for their part in his mission. I'm not sure if he is the originator of the phrase : Who Packs your parachute ? but he certainly lived its spirit.

He was also an amateur photographer and enlisted me to bounce the light beams off the ceilings and walls when he was shooting his photos. I was having a vocation crisis at the time and he, forgive the pun, took me under his wing, and treated me as his son. In spite of his fame he was so unassuming and was an extraordinarily kind and caring man.

So, who packs your parachute ? There you have my suggested question for Lent. Who are the unrecognised "nobodies" in your life who bless and provide you with what you need to get through the day ?

Who puts bread on your table, who does your laundry, who cleans your streets, brings your mail,

fixes your car? Who blessed you today? Who blessed you yesterday? Who packs your parachute ? Name, bless and thank them.

There's a corresponding Lenten question : Whose parachute have you packed or failed to pack ? Who did you bless or fail to bless ?

We all fail in the small but important things like saying hello, giving thanks, congratulating, and affirming, being kind for no reason. Lent is a time to acknowledge our failures. To admit the times when we have failed to bless others, failed to show them compassion, failed to heal and forgive.

John of the Cross says : "At the evening of life, we shall be judged on our love ". Parachute packing can be a very practical way of loving.

Fr Charlie Timoney



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## Appeal for Orphaned Children in Ethiopia!



**Two boys enjoying lunch**

Since 2003, many children have passed through St. Mary's Children's Home and been reintegrated into mainstream Ethiopian society. They appreciated the secure Christian environment that freed them to focus on their education and dream what was once the impossible dream. Today, some of them are

electricians, mechanics, welders, taxi drivers. Others are accountants, medical personnel, engineers, IT specialists. All are fulfilling their dream of what they wanted to be when - and not if - they grew up.

The need for secure and hope-filled environments, like St. Mary's Children's Home, continues to this day. At present, we are offering full residential care to 42 children and teenagers; a further 32 who are in college or university are also receiving our support. This ministry is extremely rewarding. It offers hope in the midst of hopelessness; it fulfils the dreams of those who scarcely dared to dream

The future of St. Mary's Children's Home is very much dependent on the continued prayers and financial support of people of good will who see, in its ethos and activities, a reflection of God's love for the least of his children.

Fr. Gerry Murphy



# St Anne's Basilica in East Jerusalem

## A Place Apart!



*Christians gathered to celebrate Christ's Resurrection at the Easter Vigil in St. Anne's.*

***Situated*** 200 metres from the Temple Mount/Haram al Sharif, St Anne's Basilica is located at the start of the via Dolorosa. This is the route that Christian pilgrims follow when they trace the last journey of Jesus carrying his cross through Jerusalem.

For the visitor, the Church has a number of attractions. Foremost are the excavations that date from the time of Herod the Great (36 B.C. to 4 A.D.). Archeologists say with some certainty that the dry pools seen today are the pools of Bethesda mentioned in the gospel of John chapter 5. This is where Jesus famously cured a man who was crippled for 38 years, saying the words 'Get up, take your mat and walk'.

Another appeal of the site is the tradition, dating from the 2nd Century, which asserts that Mary was born near the pools. She is said to have lived there with her parents, Anne and Joachim, until around the time of her betrothal to Joseph. This tradition while not mentioned in the New Testament is revered by both Western and Eastern Oriental Churches.

Around 1130 A.D. the crusaders built a magnificent church in honour of St Anne beside the reputed birthplace of Mary. To this day the Basilica is considered to be the best surviving example of crusader church architecture in the Holy Land. After the defeat of the crusaders in 1187 by Saladin, the

church became a Koranic school for some time before falling into disuse. In recent history, it was restored by the government of France and entrusted to the Missionaries of Africa 140 years ago.

Presently, we are 24 Missionary of Africa priests and students from 14 nationalities doing a variety of tasks. Besides the 10 students studying theology, others are engaged in diverse activities including ecumenism, bible sessions, and caring for a museum. However, the one activity that involves us all is the welcoming of pilgrims who visit the site from all over the world.

A special moment in the life of the Church in the Holy land is celebrated every Palm Sunday. A procession starts in nearby Bethany and makes its way to St Anne's, commemorating the triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem. It is a time when Orthodox and Catholics from the West Bank and Jerusalem walk together with pilgrims from many countries, in a festival of joy and of being Christian in the land of Jesus.

In a city marked by many conflicts, St Anne's can be a place where people appreciate their faith and history that is also shared in some way by others who are different.

Welcome to St Anne's, a truly remarkable site of history and of living faith. Fr Jim Greene

# Beatification of the Martyrs of Algeria.

**On** December the 8th nineteen Catholic Missionaries – both men and women, murdered in the period 1994 to 1996– were beatified in the cathedral of Oran in Algeria. Among them was the Bishop of Oran, Pierre Claverie, seven Trappists monks of Tibhirine, four White Fathers of Tizi Ouzu and seven other Catholic missionary women and men.

If these martyrs are beatified, however, it is not because they were assassinated – remember, some 200,000 people were killed. If they are sanctified, it will be for having remained in place to faithfully serve the Algerian communities, who were aware of how precious their commitment was. Mgr. Teissier (retired Arch-Bishop of Algiers)

Missionaries of Africa (White Fathers) have had a continued presence in Algeria for the past 150 years and the community in Tizi-Ouzu lived out their witness to God's love to the people of the region in humble and committed manner. Our four colleagues choose to remain with the people whom they loved out of their deep love of God and solidarity with their suffering neighbours.



*A stole, worn by one of the priests at the mass during which the 19 martyrs were beatified, is placed on the altar of one of the chapels in which mass is celebrated in Algeria. The picture suggests the inbreaking of the Spirit of the Resurrected Christ to inspire missionaries to witness to God's love for all humanity.*



# The Catholic Church in Algeria a model for the Irish Church?

*The* missionaries who have been recently beatified in Algeria were all passionate about their Church, of which they were zealous servant, and passionate also about Algeria and its people where they had weaved their friendships.

Humble and gentle, the Lord radiated from their hearts, in their lives and in their silence. They witnessed to a settled, lucid faith, the faith of those preparing the way for dialogue in their prayer and in their presence.

They are a beautiful image of the church in Algeria: small, a few thousand faithful people. It is a living church which has lost its social power and pomp. Daily, it lives love and service. Thus purified and without ambitions, it can be a bridgehead for dialogue with Islam.

The small Church of Algeria is conscious that it is living a prophetic mission, that of creating for tomorrow the climate for a most peaceful dialogue between the Christian faith and the Moslem faith,

in the certitude that we are all sons and daughters of God...

The prophetic nature of the small church of Algeria will enlighten the horizon of tomorrow. It is not for nothing that these martyrs died with a very great number of Moslems men and women. Together they intercede that our humanity becomes more welcoming, more tolerant, more human and capable of giving glory to God in His diversity.



## Filling the Potholes

Twenty-five years ago I was stationed in a large town in East Africa. At that time the townspeople had two big problems:

First, the terrible condition of the roads and streets – no tar roads, only ‘dust streets’. They were full of deep potholes. There were regularly serious accidents involving vehicles swerving to avoid them and in so doing hitting other vehicles and pedestrians.

It was the duty of the town council to repair these roads in the town but they claimed they could not do so due to lack of funds. They rather encouraged the town residents to take it upon themselves to repair the roads. The locals refused, crying “why should we do it after all, we are paying taxes to the council.”

The potholes got bigger and there were more and more accidents with some fatalities. Everyone was blaming someone else while no one took action.

The second big problem in the town was the large number of youths who roamed the streets begging, stealing and threatening passers-by to give them money. These youths came from broken homes and were largely abandoned by their families and left to

live on their own wits on the streets. The citizens of the town demanded that they be removed from their midst even calling for them to be jailed.

It was, therefore, a nightmare to use the streets due to the potholes and the ‘street-kids’. Then, all of a sudden, something dramatic happened which changed everything: The youths came with shovels and buckets and began to fill in the potholes. They did a marvellous job and the townspeople were delighted – drivers and pedestrians stopped to praise them and give them money. As a result, the boys stopped their threatening behaviour in the town. Business people began to have confidence in the youths and trusted them with jobs for which they were paid.

There is a lesson in all of this that love and compassion can change us all!



Fr. Eddie Brady

# *Please Pray for our Friends who have died*

Fr John Millane M.Afr

Sr Rosaria O'Neill                      Convent of Mercy, Dundalk,  
Co.Louth

Gerard Collins                              Lisnaskea, Co.Fermanagh

Sarah Friel                                      Derrybeg, Co.Donegal

Mary Martin                                   Carrownanty, Co.Sligo

Ms. Mary O'Donnell                      Kincasslagh, Co.Donegal

Mrs Bernadette Conlon                      Ballybofey, Co.Donegal

Mrs Nora Marnell                              Templemore, Co.Tipperary

Mrs Peggie Fitzgerald                      St.Michael's Nursing Home,  
Caherconlish, Co.Limerick

Kathleen Greene                              Blacklion, Co.Cavan

Eileen Browne                                  Kinvara, Co.Galway



**Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again.**

***May they Rest in Peace with the Father***

## **PLEASE REMEMBER THE MISSIONS IN YOUR WILL**

Our legal name is Missionaries of Africa (White Fathers).

A suitable formula is:

***I give to the Society of Missionaries of Africa (White Fathers) the sum of €..... free of duty. And I declare that the Delegate of the Society who now resides at Cypress Grove, Templeogue, Dublin 6W shall be in good discharge.***

*Carry on the good work you have been doing during your life by helping to spread the Gospel after you have gone to the Father.*