

# MISSIONARIES OF AFRICA

## (WHITE FATHERS)



Rt. Rev. John MacWilliam, MAfr  
Bishop of Laghouat (Algeria)

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# Editor's Word.

Since our last issue of the Magazine a lot has happened in our UK sector of the White Fathers/Missionaries of Africa.



Fr. Michael Heap MAfr

There have been “events” such as our brother John MacWilliam’s ordination as Bishop of Laghouat by another of our brothers, Archbishop Michael Fitzgerald and yet another Missionary of Africa, Bishop Claude Rault, the former bishop of Laghouat. There have been quieter events but no less momentous, like the celebration of the Diamond Jubilee of Priesthood of our brother Fr. Peter Kelly. Quieter and less momentous events like the re-election of our brother Terry Madden as Provincial Delegate for a further 3 years.

There has been growth. The Archbishop of Liverpool has accepted that a team of Missionaries of Africa take responsibility for an inner city parish in Liverpool. It is hoped that there will be the opportunity to reach out in dialogue to the numerous migrants and to the local Muslim community, as well as being there for the Catholic population.

In the UK generally, there have been terrorist attacks in Manchester and London, the appalling tragedy of the fire in West London, an increase in acid attacks etc. Yet most people get on with their daily lives. They are saddened or upset by the news, but carry on trying to make ends meet. In Africa it is the same. Terrible things happen, good things happen, but most people have to get on with their lives.

In this edition of our Magazine I have continued to include articles written by Missionaries of Africa or those who have been in contact with them, offering brief glimpses of Church-life in Africa or in UK. Some seem forward-looking, some not. Some articles seem hopeful, some less so. This is life!

Please remember in your prayers all those mentioned in this magazine. We are all brothers and sisters in Christ and depend upon one another whether in crises or in our humdrum, day to day lives. May Our Lady of Africa pray for us all!



## 60 years a missionary priest - Fr. Peter Kelly, MAfr.

Born in Tunbridge Wells in 1932, Peter studied with the White Fathers in UK and the Netherlands and was ordained priest 15th May 1957.

Sent for further studies (Maths and Science) things did not work out because of health problems, so he was sent to Sutton Coldfield to do Promotion work. However, after 4 years he began to suffer from depression, so he was sent to teach in St. Boswell's junior seminary in Scotland. This was putting the cart before the horse, since it was only the following year he went to St. Mary's Twickenham for Teacher Training as a mature student. Having returned to teach in St. Boswell's, there was a terrible fire and everyone was moved to Danby Hall. Only after a further 2 years he was at last sent to Africa.

In 1965, Peter arrived in Uganda and began to study the local language in a parish, however after a short time he was appointed to teach (in English) in the seminary. He was very disappointed because by now 34 and not being very gifted for languages, his hopes of language learning were dashed. He was in Kampala at the time of Pope Paul VI's visit.

However, Peter spent a very enriching year studying at the Gaba Institute in Uganda, then as school chaplain in Mbarara. Then the Tanzanian army invaded Uganda and there was chaos! Peter spent a short time in different houses of Philosophy but was most happy walking in the mountains of Ruwenzori. The depression started again and he returned to England. After 3 years of treatment in UK and a three month spiritual session in Jerusalem, he was back in Uganda as a chaplain and retreat-giver. A sudden infection, resulting in total deafness in his right ear, meant a definitive return to UK. He packed his bags for the last time in Africa, and after visiting his sister (a missionary sister) in Zambia, he said his good-byes.

Back in UK there was no job for him, so he went to St. Beuno's in Wales (the Jesuit retreat centre) to follow a course in Spiritual Direction and ended up staying there on the team for nine years. In Wales he could walk in the mountains again in his spare time.

Then he was asked to go back to Sutton Coldfield as bursar. But this time he was also able to help with retreats in St. Beuno's and in different convents.

In 2012 he had major heart surgery from which he has never really completely recovered. He moved to our house in Ealing, and now at the age of 85 continues to live the community life of a Missionary of Africa.

## Looking Back by Fr. Peter Kelly, MAfr.

Looking back over my life on the occasion of my Jubilee, one important thing stands out: It is God's loving care and providence throughout my life. Perhaps I was not always aware of it at the time it was happening, but looking back, as I grow older, it becomes ever clearer. I will give you some examples:



*Fr Peter with confreres*

On one occasion, in Uganda, I was working on the lighting on a school stage. I was standing on the top of

a stepladder above the concrete floor of the stage. There was a bare electric wire and I received a severe shock, which knocked me backwards off the ladder and instead of landing on my back on the concrete floor, I found myself sitting on a small table at the bottom of the ladder, unhurt. I had placed the table there to put my tools on. Psalm 90 "For you has He commanded His angels, To keep you in all your ways", came to mind. During my early days in the junior seminary in Uganda, a group of students approached me and asked me to help them with a play they had chosen. It was a big three act comedy by Moliere: The Man Who Wanted To Be A Gentleman. I was not an actor and had no experience of acting or drama, but did not want to discourage their initiative. So I agreed to help them, but on the condition that we did it properly and it would need a lot of rehearsal and drilling in English. It turned out to be a great success and we travelled with it to other schools. It led to five years of drama in the seminary. I discovered I could produce school drama and it became a very rewarding experience. A time came when I was asked to leave Uganda, although I felt very well and quite capable of carrying on working there, so I was very disappointed and upset. I found myself back in England, where there seemed nothing for me to do. Then through a whole series of providential circumstances and unexpected appointments, I found myself on the team of the Jesuit retreat house of St. Beuno's in North Wales. I was there for nine years. These nine years turned out to be the most rewarding pastoral experience for me. Once again, looking back, I felt it had been God's loving providence at work. These and many other experiences of God's providence have given me greater trust in God's loving care and providence, helping me to trust Him, especially when things get difficult or seem to go wrong.



## Simeon Lourdel Mapeera

Dury is a small village situated in Picardy, North-Eastern France, South of Lille, near the Belgian border. It is known as the site of a First World War battle, but it is also the birthplace of Fr. Simeon Lourdel in 1853, one of the White Fathers in the first caravan sent by Cardinal Lavigerie to East Africa in April 1878 (10 years after the foundation of the Society). A month later they disembarked at Zanzibar and after 3 weeks preparation, they set off on foot for the interior of what is now Tanzania. South of Lake Victoria the caravan split up, with Fr. Lourdel (known as “Mapeera” – a local rendering of “mon pere” French for “Father”), and Br. Amans Delmas. setting off across the lake towards what is now Uganda.

Hearing of their arrival in his territory, King Mutesa, the Kabaka, had them taken to a place where hungry and suffering from fever, they waited for 2 weeks. Eventually, in February 1879, Mutesa gave permission for a Catholic Mission to be set up in Buganda

and he sent a fleet of 22 canoes across the lake to bring the other 3 White Fathers (including Fr. Livinhac, later Superior General of the White Fathers) and their people. When they arrived they were treated with great pomp and kindness and given a larger house where the first Mission was set up and Mass celebrated.

For Mutesa the Muslims in his kingdom were representatives of the Arab powers, the Anglicans of Great Britain, and therefore, naturally, the Catholic missionaries as representatives of France. Afraid of the spreading influence of Egypt, he asked Frs. Lourdel and Livinhac to arrange for his kingdom to be put under the pro-



*Statue of Lourdel on Lake Victoria*



*Uganda Martyrs shrine Namugongo*

tection of France. The missionaries explained that they were God's missionaries, not agents of France. In fact, later the Catholics, Anglicans and Muslims would

become involved in politics involving Germany, Britain and the followers of the Mahdi in the Sudan, an involvement which would cost Uganda dear.

Cardinal Lavigerie had insisted on a serious preparation for all those to be baptised and Fr. Lourdel was put in charge of the growing number of people who asked for this preparation. Schooling for children was begun and new food crops introduced. However, with the mutual suspicions of the different religious groups and the personality of the new Kabaka, Mwanga II, violence broke out. The Martyrs of Uganda consisted of 23 Anglican and 22 Catholics killed on the Kabaka's orders between January 1885 and January 1889.



Saints Martyrs Uganda (1885 - 1889)

They refused to deny their faith and the Kabaka saw this rather as disloyalty to him and the State. Lourdel remained in Uganda, despite a short time when the missionaries had to flee because of the dangers.

He died near Kampala on 12 May 1890, possibly of Hepatitis. He had worked for peace in Uganda and for the Gospel. He saw many of his Christians killed and much of his work imperilled, but at his death there were 1,200 baptised Catholics and 10,000 in preparation.

Throughout the year, Catholics come in their thousands to Namugongo, the site of many of the martyrdoms and particularly on 3 July, the Feast of the Uganda Martyrs. Along with the martyrs, Simeon Lourdel is remembered by his people. In the following article we hear about an offshoot of the Uganda Martyrs pilgrimage in Europe.



*Crowds of pilgrims, Namugongo*

## Mapeera Lourdel and Uganda Martyrs Dury Pilgrimage

by Mr Ricardo Mulinda.

Every year in July, thousands of Ugandan Catholics make their way to Namugongo, the site in Uganda where many of the Uganda martyrs were killed. They remained faithful and suffered so that we, their descendants, might know the love of God. On Friday 23rd June this year,



*pilgrims in Dury church*

for the first time another pilgrimage took place, this time in Europe, to honour and pray for the beatification of Fr. Simeon Lourdel (Mapeera) and Br. Amans Delmas, White Fathers who brought the Faith to our ancestors. The pilgrimage culminated in Dury in Northern France, the birthplace of Fr. Lourdel on Sunday 25th June 2017. Fr. Lourdel died in 1890 in Uganda and Br. Amans five years later in Tanzania. Both knew and encouraged the Martyrs personally. Our pilgrimage, the Mapeera Lourdel and Uganda Martyrs Dury Pilgrimage will be an annual event.

Six lay UK pilgrims, two French Missionaries of Africa, members of Lourdel family, villagers and parishioners of Dury, all participated in this first pilgrimage. Those from UK and Paris travelled on Friday 23 June 2017 to Arras and stayed in La Maison Saint Vaast, the former major seminary where Fr. Lourdel studied



*Frs. Lefebvre and Aymot d'Inville in Dury*

prior to joining the Missionaries of Africa. The pilgrims included White Fathers: Bernard Lefebvre and Jacques Amyot d'Inville from Paris and from UK: Ricardo Mulinda, Noel Mbala, John Kyaluzi, Robert Matovu, Rogers Kyeyune and Deo Ntuwa.



Saturday 24 June was a day of great joy. The Pilgrims were warmly received in Dury, birthplace of Fr. Lourdel and focus of the pilgrimage, by the Mayor of Dury, Mr. Marc Campbell, members of his Council, members of the Lourdel family and by the Parishioners. A lunch in their honour, was given by the Mayor. Then the pilgrims visited the former Lourdel family home, the family grave, the primary school attended by Fr. Lourdel and most important - St. Martin's, the church of Dury, where Fr. Lourdel was baptised.



*Lourdel's baptismal font*

The Pilgrims found it spiritually uplifting, informally meeting and chatting with all these lovely people of Dury. It was truly amazing for us to see the former house of Lourdel family, the baptismal font in which Fr. Lourdel was baptised in St. Martin's and to find an altar in the Church of Dury with framed pictures of Fr. Lourdel and of the Martyrs of Uganda. Imagine when we arrived to find the Dury parishioners, with a big screen showing the journey and missionary work of Fr. Lourdel, waiting to receive us and participate in our pilgrimage!

At 4 pm, Saturday 24 June, the pilgrims and parishioners of Dury joyfully celebrated together the Mapeera Europe Mass in honour of Fr. Lourdel and prayed for his beatification. The Mass was presided over by Fr. Bernard and concelebrated by Fr. Jacques. MUMADUPE presented its Mission and Calendar to Dury and the first weekend of June 2018 was declared the date for the 2018 Pilgrimage.

On Sunday 25 June 2017, the MUMADUPE concluded their Mapeera Lourdel



and Uganda Martyrs Dury Pilgrimage 2017 with a Holy Mass in the Cathedral of Our Lady and St. Vaast in Arras. (Fr. Ted Wildsmith, MAfr is an unofficial chaplain to the Ugandan group in UK.)

*Praying at Lourdel's grave*

# From Seminarian to Peace Activist

*Ntakarutimana Salvator is Assistant Lecturer at ENS Burundi, and a Peace Architect and Peace Coach for the World Peace Initiative Foundation*

Some 14 years ago I entered the Missionaries of Africa major seminary to become a priest. Later I saw that that was not my calling, but I still felt called to something special. “I was in prison and you came to me.”. That was always my driving force, so I pondered on the best way for me to work for the needy in Burundi and beyond. The following paragraphs tell you about what I found.

## 1. The needy: Burundi and Burundians

As a consequence of various crises in Burundi since gaining political independence in 1962, the 2015 International Monetary Fund ranked Burundi the second poorest country in the world with per capita income of \$306 a year, but since

some have far more, many have far less. Burundi and Burundians need quick action and people of good will to come to their help. I live and work in Burundi as an



Salvator

assistant Lecturer at a public University. Being a lecturer is one of the missions that God entrusted to me but felt that I could do more for the most suffering in my surroundings.



PIK club

organizations in Burundi and formed Consortium for Peace and Merit Africa (CPM

## 2. Realisations so far and a way forward.

One year ago, I gathered a very dynamic team of young people from various youth organizations



*PMA Youth Blast*

houses. 4

generating activities such as (bakeries, farming....)

6 of the clubs have initiated a system by which members put in their monthly or weekly savings and then an individual can receive loans from the common account to initiate their own small business. This system has proven itself very effective with more than 60 adherents testifying that they have improved their living conditions after only one year.

Every three months, we organize a leadership and social harmony campaign among all Burundians. Every year we organize a Youth Blast on Preventing Violent Extremism

We are blessed with the determination of the team we are working with and feel very satisfied with the achievements so far. Note that all these achievements are made mainly from the efforts of the CPM Africa members who give themselves wholeheartedly for the wellbeing of our fellow Burundians. We have more plans for peace and development in Burundi and we are very optimistic that, with God's grace, we shall get enough support to make our dreams become a reality.

Ntakarutimana Salvator

Africa) which aims at joining hands together to campaign for peace and contributing to adequate living conditions for those suffering in our surroundings.

Since then, we have registered the following achievements:

We have created and coordinated 12 youth clubs for Peace, Integrity and Kindness ( PIK Clubs) in various universities and among young professionals in Burundi. With these clubs, we have assisted two orphanages families to build their of the 12 clubs have initiated income



*Building bricks for the future*

## Visiting Hell by Fr Peter Ekutt, MAfr

*Fr. Peter, a Nigerian confrere and director of a youth centre, writes of his visits to the local prison in D R Congo.*

A prison is a world of tears. One sees a certain reality. Human beings suffering, locked close inside four walls.



*Prisoners*

On my first visit I felt, “ This is Hell.” Discouraged, wounded, abandoned, forgotten and hungry people. So why are these young men here? Everybody has a story. Some seem very innocent - surprised to find themselves in prison. Others are only looking for money to get out of this horrible place, lacking water, food and medical aid. Some say that without dollars there is

no justice, no way out!

The most difficult problem in this prison is the lack of food, water, and sanitation. For food the prisoners depend on the generosity of visitors - parishioners, friends or the members of the family who visit their imprisoned children, bringing what they can.

But the food is never kept by the one to whom it is given. All food is shared and eaten by all of them, especially the “old timers” – those who know the ropes. There is no choice and every newcomer is aware. At the entrance to their dormitory is a sign in Lingala (the local language) “AWA YAYO EZA YAYO TE” “What is given to you is not yours, it belongs to everybody.” Sometimes 15 inmates eat what was meant for 5. So everybody tries to eat in secret before getting caught by the “old timers”. Everything goes to the strongest, and the weak grab what they can.

They take what they find growing around the compound, even plants growing wild near the toilets. The sanitary conditions are not of the best. Blocked toilets in the heat of Africa! No showers! One man said, laughing, “Father, when the food we



*Prisoner cooking*



need is not there, what is there becomes our food.” As for sleeping arrangements, the prisoners sleep on the bare cement floor.



*Football*

I managed to get a garden nearby for them to grow something to eat and planted some seeds, beans, and onions. But it is very difficult to get permission for them to work outside since all would escape if they could.

I thought, “Why not share a meal with the prisoners?” so on 8th December last year, with money from a friend. I went with some youngsters from the Youth Centre to the prison,

This small sharing was a big feast for the prisoners. Prisoners who usually had next to nothing even found a bit of fish in their food. “Ata mbisi “ (today we eat even fish!), said one, and they literally jumped for joy and set about helping the youngsters with the cooking. Christmas had come early.

Visiting the prison was a big and unpleasant discovery for the youngsters.

That “Christmas” in the prison marked all of us. We played music, football and cards with the prisoners. A day of joy and gratitude for that day... One of them said, “Father, I thank you with all my heart. We didn’t expect to have something to eat today, thank you.”

Other friends have helped buy mattresses and other essentials. Never enough, but something!

As a brother, I listen to and to pray with the prisoners. Sometimes I am afraid because there are thieves and worse; people that many locals here would like to see killed. But then I think of the great love of God. Can I not spend some time with them? Is it not right to give them some hope by my presence, listening, helping with small things? Helping them to cope with the desperate situation they are in?



*Written on wall “Jesus I believe, I have sinned, Please forgive me”*

## Ordination of John MacWilliam, MAfr as Bishop of Laghouat

John Gordon MacWilliam was born in Wimbledon on 20th November 1948, the son of an Army officer, the third of six children. Having spent part of his early childhood abroad in Sudan and Somaliland, he was educated by the Benedictines at Worth Abbey, Sussex before himself spending eighteen years as an Army officer, during which he served in Germany, Oman and Zimbabwe, among other places.

Joining the Missionaries of Africa (White Fathers) in 1984, he studied philosophy and theology at the Missionary Institute, London, made his spiritual year in Switzerland and his two-year missionary experience in Tunisia. He took his missionary oath and was ordained deacon in London on 7th December 1991 before being ordained to the priesthood at Worth on 4th July the following year. He speaks English, French, Arabic and Italian.

After three years further studies at the Pontifical Institute of Studies of Arabic and Islamology in Rome, he was appointed in 1995 to Algeria where he worked mainly in educational support as a means of interreligious encounter with Islam. His first task, in Tizi Ouzou in Algeria, was to reopen a White Father community which had been wiped



Bishop John



*Reading out Papal appointment*

out by terrorists the year before (cf. an earlier issue of our Magazine). Further appointments included Algiers (2000-2003) and Ghardaïa (2003-2008) in Algeria and the Institut des Belles Lettres Arabes in Tunisia (2008-2015) after a tragic fire burned down the library. An Italian confrere, who was also the librarian, was killed in the conflagration.

In May 2015 he was appointed provincial superior of the White Fathers in the Maghreb, the post he held until 16th March 2017 when the Holy Father appointed him bishop of Laghouat in the Algerian Sahara. His consecration took place at Worth Abbey on 20th May 2017 and his installation in at Ghardaïa on 24th May.

The diocese of Laghouat (Arabic for the Oases) is approximately 6 times the size

of Great Britain. It covers most of inland Algeria. There are about four and a half million inhabitants of whom only a few hundred are Christian (mainly expatriate workers and migrants). There are 10 parishes served by 18 priests, 33 religious sisters and 23 religious brothers. The first Apostolic Administrator of Laghouat was Cardinal Charles Lavigerie. Bl. Charles de Foucauld lived and was martyred within the diocese.

*Archbishop Michael FitzGerald, MAfr., the principal bishop consecrating John MacWilliam as bishop of Laghouat (Worth Abbey, 20 May 2017), preached the following sermon*

“Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these others do?”

“Yes, Lord, you know I love you.”

Just as Simon did, you, John, have answered “yes”. That day the Nuncio called you, you did not have much time to reflect before answering “yes” to the invitation of our Holy Father, Pope Francis, to accept responsibility for the diocese of Laghouat. As proof of your consent we have the mandate that has just been read out. (Letter from His Holiness appoint John MacWilliam Bishop of Laghouat) Conscious that you have been chosen, and counting on the Spirit of the Lord that has been given to you, you have responded in effect: “Yes, Lord, you know that I love you.”

You have answered confidently, I am sure, because you know that the love of God enfolds you as it has always enfolded you: in this place, Worth, in the years of your boyhood; during your service in the Armed Forces; and throughout all the time you have been serving as a priest in the Society of Missionaries of Africa.

You know with certainty that this love will continue to enfold you, whatever difficulties



*Litany of the Saints*

may come your way. This certainty is founded on the Rock of Christ, the one who “having loved his own who were in the world, loved them to the end”, the one whom we celebrate in this Eastertide, who has gone through his Passion and Death to rise to New Life, life which he wishes to share with all.

You have already held positions of responsibility, not only in the Army but also in the Church, as superior of the community of the Institut des Belles Lettres Arabes, in Tunis, and as the provincial superior of the Missionaries of Africa in the

Maghreb, but now, because of this loving response to the Lord, you are being given a new responsibility. Like Simon you hear the words: “Feed my lambs. Look after my sheep. Take into your loving care the people of the diocese of Laghouat.”

I would like you to notice that Jesus says to Simon: “Feed my lambs. Look after my sheep.” He is saying to you: Look after my people of Laghouat. Your love and your care are to be inclusive, universal. Allow me to quote Canon Law:

A diocesan bishop is to show that he is concerned with all the Christian faithful who are committed to his care regardless of age, condition or nationality, both those who live within his territory and those who are staying in it temporarily (c. 383 #1).

This last category would include not only those who come to work in the oil-fields, but also African students, or migrants who are crossing the Sahara dreaming of a better life.

The same canon goes on to say: He is to consider non-baptized as being committed to him in the Lord so that there may shine upon them the charity of Christ for whom the bishop must be a witness before all (c.383 #4).

Accordingly, as you are well aware, your pastoral care is not to be confined to the few Catholics in the diocese, but is to extend to the population of over four and a half million. If there is to be any preference in the persons to whom you direct your attention it will be for those mentioned by Isaiah in the first reading: the poor, those who are suffering, whose hearts are broken, and those who are



*Incensing the gifts*

in prison or who are bound in any way.

This diocese that is being entrusted to you is indeed vast, and as we know, the desert is your cathedral. You will, as your coat of arms suggests, be piloting the barque of the Local Church on a sea of sand or, if you prefer, crossing the dunes, leading your

people to follow the Lamb that was slain, but is still living. Yet this vast area is no “Empty Quarter”. I trust that you will discover that the love of God has been preceding you everywhere. In saying this, I am thinking of the



work of your predecessors in this See of Laghouat: Charles Lavigerie, Charles Guérin, Henri Bardou, Louis David, Gustave Nouet, among the “ancestors in the faith”, and those I have known myself, Georges Mercier, Jean-Marie Raimbaud, Michel Gagnon, and Claude Rault, your immediate predecessor, who is happily with us today. I think too of all the Missionaries of Africa, both men and women, as well as other priests, religious and lay people, who have contributed to the life and work of the diocese, and those who are present in the diocese now whom you are called to lead, as their Good Shepherd. So I pray that you may grasp the breadth, the length, the height and the depth of the love of God, in order that you may be filled with the utter fullness of God (cf. Eph 3:18) and be able to share this with others.

Our Gospel passage ended with Jesus saying to Simon: “Feed my sheep”. It is good, I think, to consider also the following verses in this chapter of John’s Gospel. Jesus reminds Simon that “when you were young you put on your own belt and walked where you like”. You had that same freedom as a young man, although you committed yourself to obeying orders as a member of Her Majesty’s Forces, and then you pledged obedience to the Superior General of the Society of Missionaries of Africa. Today “somebody else” – and I am privileged to be that person – will not put a belt around you, but will give you a ring, and this ring will be a sign that you are tied, espoused to one diocese, to the diocese of Laghouat. New ties will also be created, with the other bishops of Algeria, with all the members of the Conference of Bishops of the Region of North Africa, and also with the universal College of Bishops with Pope Francis at its head. So your concerns must grow ever wider, to embrace the whole of your diocese, the whole of the country to which you have been sent, the entire region, and indeed go out to the Universal Church.

So, with you and for you, let us pray that your love may grow ever deeper, wider, and yet remain eminently practical and effective, following the example of our founder, Charles Lavigerie, who exercised his pastoral ministry inspired by one all-embracing word:



*Bishop blessing family and friends*

**CARITAS.**

## Conflict Mitigation in Ghana.

*Fr. Prosper Harelimana, a young Rwandan Missionary of Africa was sent to to Bunkpurugu for his first mission appointment. Bunkpurugu has suffered from many different conflicts over the years. He shares with us the approach of the parish team.*

Conflicts can occur as long as there is any interaction between human beings. Sometimes conflicts generate new ideas that bring about profound socio-economic, political and religious transformation. However, conflicts can turn violent when conflicting factions fail to reach a



*Meeting of Elders*

compromise. Thus violence begets violence and destruction, and people end up losing their lives and property. For those who are wise enough, violence leaves them wondering and asking a number of 'why' questions. The moment one dares to ask questions, it is the first step towards solution seeking.

Jesus' teaching, "Happy are the peacemakers for they shall be called the children of God" (Matthew 5:9) offers for me the path worth following. Jesus wanted his disciples to acquire and own skills of peacemaking. He was aware that in one way or another, they would be faced with conflicts in their ministry. He wanted

them to become people who encourage peace among people. Today's missionaries must follow Jesus' approach to peacemaking. As Jesus taught his disciples in Galilee and Judaea, so He continues with us His disciples in Bunkpurugu in Northern



*Girls demonstrating for peace*

Ghana.

Ghana's reputation as a home of peace is justified. However, the Northern part continues to experience violence, leading to destruction of lives and goods. The causes of this conflict lie in the usual human desire for power, ethnic identity, control over resources, and territory. Any attempt to mitigate conflicts and encourage peace in this part of Ghana must take these four elements into consideration. Having worked in this part of Ghana, in Our Lady of Hope Parish, Bunkpurugu in the diocese of Navrongo-Bolgatanga, to be precise, we found it important to follow Christ's approach: being peacemakers in any situation without discrimination, prejudice or bias. Whenever we took part in any conflict mitigation, our source of inspiration had to be the way God Himself treats us, as shown by Christ's attitude in the Gospel. The present parish team is still using the same procedure.

We had three main target groups:

1.Traditional rulers with their elders (opinion leaders inside and outside the local community), 2.Other stakeholders (civil and religious authorities) and 3.Youth. The traditional rulers are powerful and influential. Once they accept peace, their followers accept it also. 'Opinion leaders in the diaspora' (civil and religious authorities) also need to understand how peaceful co-existence is essential for development and good living. The youth



*Elders*

form a bigger group in the community and are among the most vulnerable when conflicts occur. They should be made aware of the need to cultivate a culture of peace for a better future.

Peacemaking is a process. The journey is long. In my next article, I hope to share with you some real experiences of conflict mitigation in Bunkpurugu.

Fr. Prosper Harelimana, MAfr.

# My personal odyssey to the British sector of the White Fathers

by Fr. Justin Barera, M.Afr.

Though a British citizen for 14 years, I have only been officially a member of the UK sector of the Missionaries of Africa since February 2017. I am ever grateful to UK, my country of adoption, to the province of Europe and the GB Sector, (particularly to Terry and the Sector Council) for such openness. This has come about as an ordeal, a rocky road with unexpected twists. Yet it is a story marked by patience, endurance and acceptance, most important, by trust in the presence of God in my personal life experience.



*Fr. Justin in Burkina Faso*

In 1999 the ruling government of my native country, the Democratic Republic of Congo, refused to acknowledge me as its own citizen. I was studying in London to become a Missionary of Africa, having arrived with a Congolese passport. However many Congolese believed that all those suspected of Rwandan ancestry, by name or stereotype, should be refused a Congolese passport. My passport was taken away. I was stranded and stateless in London.

The experience crushed me. I spent days asking God for help. "Lord, help me



*Fr. Justin with novices in Zambia*

to make it every day. I am not sure who cares when I cry, but you do not mind even if I called you last, do you, Lord?" For 5 years I could not travel outside the UK. I was trapped, a non-person.

Then a counsellor and two particular families came to my help. They listened to my story and advised me to narrate my ordeal to the Home Office. It paid off!

How I breathed a huge sigh of relief the day I received my certificate of naturalisation! Then my first British passport!! By then I was a resident in one of





*Fruit picking in Lourdes*

our houses in West London, later on becoming community superior and bursar. I was even able to help out in various parishes when needed. Since then, with my UK passport, I have now had more than my share of journeying, to parishes in Burkina Faso, communities in Canada and now the novitiate in Zambia. Soon to Tanzania.

God listened to my prayers. Many times now, I ask myself what I can do for the United Kingdom for having welcomed me in a time of great need? In 1961 John F. Kennedy said, “ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country”. This chimes in my mind with a sense of collective service. As a Missionary of Africa, this is significant in my personal vocation at the service of others.

Through my experience, God enabled me to accept others even those whom I perceived insensitive to my painful experience. Jesus’ command to “Go throughout the whole world and preach the gospel to all humankind”, is still relevant today. People still need to hear over and over again about the unconditional love of God, often in painful experiences. One thing that inspires me most is to reach out both to my brothers and sisters and to God, in order to discover who I am. I joined the White Fathers to follow Christ at the service of God, for others, with others and wherever.



*Relaxing in Paris*

“Lord, I pray that I may go on  
Step by step, building up my Yes  
In confidence and determination to see You  
And never to go back.”

## Caritas Bakhita House



*Time to relax*

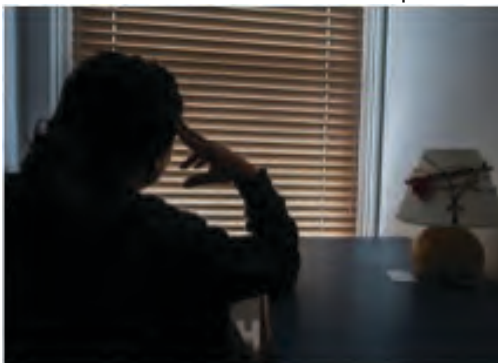
*Last June Mr Andrzej Wdowiak, Assistant Director Caritas Westminster and Sr Silvana Dallanegra RSCJ gave the UK sector of the White Fathers a talk on the work of Caritas Westminster. Mr. Wdowiak (formally a White Father student) kindly agreed to write a few words on Trafficking.*

In early 2015 Pope Francis described human trafficking as 'a plague on humanity' and encouraged the Catholic Church to 'liberate victims, rehabilitate the excluded and unmask the traffickers'. Pope Francis personally asked Cardinal Vincent Nichols to lead on this issue, and the Diocese of Westminster responded by opening Caritas Bakhita House in June 2015 as an emergency safe house for rescued female victims of human trafficking in the UK.

There are estimated to be more than 14,000 victims of human trafficking and modern day slavery living in the UK today, with 70% passing through or remaining in Greater London. 55% of trafficking and enslaved victims are women. Sadly, there are still large gaps in the care and resources available to help victims upon being freed. Caritas Bakhita House aims to meet this current gap in care by helping rescued female victims of human trafficking who have no access to public funding and support.

When the guests first arrive at Bakhita House, they are often very traumatised, having been enslaved, abused and kept, often for long periods of time. The transition into a peaceful and welcoming house relieves their anxieties and helps them to relax. There are enough rooms to accommodate up to 14 guests at a time, with one extra room available for victims rescued by the Metropolitan Police in emergencies. Guests can stay at the house for up to three months, which is twice as long as the 45 days provided by Government funded schemes.

At Bakhita House guests receive pro-bono legal advice and assis-



*Safety in anonymity*

tance, counselling, medical help, translation, one-on-one English lessons, wellbeing & arts therapy, cooking & ICT classes, education and employment training and pastoral and spiritual care, provided by professional staff, religious sisters and 33 volunteers. The quality of these relationships, and the engagement with the Catholic community, has delivered an experience for the guests which optimises their restoration and rehabilitation, and is a foundation for lasting hope in their lives.

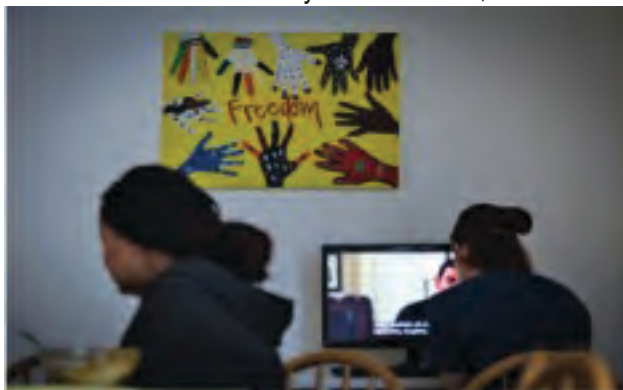


*Bakhita House kitchen*

Caritas Bakhita House exists as part of the unique working relationship between the Catholic Church, the Metropolitan Police, the UK's Anti-Slavery Commissioner and law enforcement agencies across the UK. The global network of the Catholic Church has allowed the work done at Bakhita House to serve as a model of practice for replication elsewhere throughout the world. So far five international embassies, and a number of other UK Catholic Dioceses, have visited the house to see how this model works in reality. By serving as a model house, the hope is to motivate other organisations and countries to set up similar safe houses to help victims in need. Since opening in June 2015 fifty-eight women, originating from twenty-four countries, aged between 17 and 66, have been received into Bakhita House. Without Bakhita House, these women could have easily slipped through the UK's care and law systems, and ended up back in the trafficking situation they had originally escaped from. Bakhita House gives these women the love, care and support they need to take their first steps on the road to independence, eventually leaving Bakhita House with the certainty of a better life, and the knowledge that they are cared

for in this world.

*Caritas Bakhita House is entirely reliant upon philanthropy - to find out more, or to support Bakhita House, please visit: <http://www.caritas-westminster.org.uk/bakhita-house.php>*



*Freedom*

# Impressions Working in the Church in South Africa

by Fr Lamec Ciza, MAfr

Originally from Burundi, sent on Mission to South Africa, I would like to relate my three-year personal experience of the Church in South Africa, a country with a special history. Upon my second arrival in South Africa (2014), it felt different.



*Fr. Lamec and Christians*

Our parish is in the KwaZulu-Natal Midlands, 110 kms from Durban. Parts are rural, others semi-rural, and traditional leaders exert a very strong influence.

On first contact experience, it is a multi-coloured and multi-cultural Church, a congregating and energetic Church, with a deep hunger for the preached Word. Liturgical and very “Roman”, (especially on solemnities and Diocesan celebration), universal indeed, colourful in its diversity (races and cultures) and dynamism, singing is at the heart of any celebration, especially in our Zulu speaking Parishes.

After some time in the pastoral field, I came to realize a Church that has strengths such as human resources, with older people being more accessible, the younger generation being rather reluctant. A dynamic Church, with much assimilation to the Revival type of Church Denominations. This constitutes an asset in working with other Church denominations, especially in fields such as Ecumenism.

At the same time I felt there is desired a sacramental life that goes beyond mere routine. Sacraments seemed to be levels of promotion and acceptance into the “praying community”, and the growth of the Church was expressed by numbers rather than the quality of life together, mutual love and esteem. In fact, it was a priest-centred Church more than it was Christ-centred! And what was our reaction?

With much encouragement and support from our Superiors and our Archbishop, Wilfrid Cardinal Napier, this pushed us to reflect on our pastoral plan: working towards re-awakening and initiating Small Christian Communities in order to keep the bridge between Word and Sacraments on the one hand, and between the vertical and the horizontal dimensions of faith experience: God and the neighbour.



*Parish council*

Working as a community has always born its fruits. After sometime, the Cardinal proposed to the Missionaries of Africa two additional pastoral responsibilities (two neighbouring parishes) of which (after



much discussion with the Sector and Provincial authorities), only one was positively responded to. Yes, it is worth being a priest; it is worth being a missionary.....despite a few challenges!

There is difficulty working in the field of Justice and Peace because of an unquestioning attachment to traditions, including those that deny human rights for women and children. There is a male-domineering culture where a gang rape of a pregnant woman is the woman's fault and responsibility for being at a wrong place at a wrong time! There is a continuous need for advocacy and awareness building. This we try to address in Small Christian Communities.

The "divide" between the older and the younger (born-frees) generations is an other challenge. To the "born-frees", the concept of "Rights" is by far too developed than the concept of "Duty". As a consequence, there is a divide between parents and children: the latter are so much aware of their "rights", including the "right to misuse and abuse of alcohol and drugs (woonga and nyaope) at an early age as at 13 with the pick at 15 years olds. (...drugs are made out of a mixture of local products and medicinal drugs... cheap and locally made...accessible!). This situation breeds a culture of violence and crime, abuse of women and teenage pregnancies! One chance: Pope Francis' emphasis on the visible works of mercy in the Church, our Archbishop decided to build a Rehabilitation Centre that would help address this challenge.



*Christian community*

At other times, it has been draining for me to hear from one faithful parishioner that one other faithful parishioner is a witch (umthakathi), and other concepts that are "dissonant" with my cultural background and psyche of a baptised! There, I remember the good advice of a prominent anthropologist: on a foreign ground, "take off your shoes"....!

And we forge ahead...in the near future, we plan to continue addressing the above mentioned challenges through: strengthening faith-formation and catechesis ; running workshops in view of initiating and reviving the Small Christian Communities ; training for transformation in Justice and Peace, and caritative expressions of faith ; opening ourselves towards encountering the local culture with a deeper understanding ; promoting a youth ministry that includes those on "existential peripheries"

From a missionary perspective, the Church in South Africa is still in its phase of growth. The presence of Missionaries and Religious is indispensable to the life of the Church in South Africa.

June 25 was a kick-start Celebration of the bi-centennial jubilee of the Church in South Africa. A lot has been done in the lives of the people of this land ( especially the prophetic role played in the Apartheid era and today). A lot has still to be done yet in order to instill a missionary spirit. God bless South Africa!

## Illiteracy in Serenje Parish, Central Zambia.

Zambia is a huge country, but it is sparsely populated. Its land is mainly unfarmed and unoccupied. The villages in Serenje (our parish) are widely scattered and one can travel for 10 to 15 kilometres without seeing any habitation at all. So, despite great efforts from the Government, the government schools in rural areas, are still often inadequate and scattered. For instance, in one of our sub-parishes, the nearest basic school is about 15 kilometres away. The consequences on literacy levels are dire. Children can only begin school when they are old enough to walk these long distances to and from school. But through delaying so long, the desire for schooling can easily fade away. In Serenje area, the school dropout rate is high.

As usual, it is the girls who suffer most. By the age of 10, old enough to go to school, they have already waited so long to begin that their interest is low or non-existent. Like their mothers, who often had no opportunity of schooling, they end up getting married early. On Sunday, in most of our Parish centres, we see young girls, hardly developed, with their babies in their laps. Such early marriages seldom last; after bearing 3 or 4 children, their partners desert them for younger ones. These girls end up in an endless chain of poverty and illiteracy because, like their mothers, they too won't be able to educate their children.

In the fishing camps areas along the Luapula River, there are virtually no schools. People in these regions, are usually illiterate, unable to read or write. So finding leaders for our communities is very difficult. Recently, a young man was elected as a sub-parish secretary, but stopped attending church. He felt people had "set him up" by electing him, knowing full well he couldn't read or write. Again, if they cannot read, the Bible is literally a closed book to them and Christianity will always remain foreign. Illiteracy hampers evangelization at every level.

It is a real handicap for our people, preventing them from being effective leaders and collaborators in the mission of evangelization. With the vastness of our parish, we, the priests, cannot "smell our sheep" as Pope Francis puts it. We are only able to visit to all centres every three months, so most of the time centres are in the care of lay leaders. They are responsible for conducting prayers on Sundays, and other activities like funerals. But, how to find capable lay ministers?

Finally, illiteracy contributes to loss of lives. Struck by disease, the first question that comes to the mind of our people is: who is caused it? This leads them to witchcraft accusations. Rather than seeking medical attention in hospitals, they go to witchdoctors



for protection. Lives that could have been saved by medical attention, end up being lost. Above all, with witchcraft accusations, families, and Christian communities suffer enormous-

ly, and in some cases, they are torn apart. Then, hearts and minds ache with pain, not only bodies.

As a parish community we aim at establishing basic schools in different centres. These schools will consist of three classes, targeting young children from areas with no government schools. Beginning school early, the thirst for schooling will be high, motivating pupils to proceed to higher classes despite the distances. The progress of a pilot project in the fishing areas has been amazing. Our hope and dream is that by 2020, no child in our parish will be prevented from starting school by distance.

Fr. David Ogato, MAfr

## *Caritas by Sr Silvana Dallanegra RSCJ*

Since its foundation in Germany in 1897, Caritas has grown and spread worldwide, to become the Catholic Church's primary outreach for development, social service and humanitarian relief. Here in England and Wales, for a long time Caritas has been represented by CAFOD, with its focus on developing countries, and more recently by the Caritas Social Action Network (CSAN), which comprises over 40 Catholic charities and a growing number of diocesan Caritas services.

Caritas Westminster began five years ago, and has grown and developed since then. It incorporates some pre-existing diocesan services – the Deaf Service, the St John Southworth Fund and St Joseph's Pastoral Centre in Hendon – as well as starting some services of its own. Chief among these is Caritas Bakhita House, which provides women escaping human trafficking with the safety and support with which to begin the recovery process.

As part of the Development Team, my role is to work closely with parishes, schools and other Catholic groups, to help them to reflect on the situation and needs in their area, to consider how they can best respond, and, where possible, to support them in setting up and managing new projects and initiatives, or giving new life and impetus to existing ones. These can range from alleviating material poverty to welcoming refugees; from fundraising to reaching out to those who are lonely and isolated – a huge issue in such a large, often anonymous city. We also develop partnerships with other local and national charities and organisations, and are available to provide ad hoc assistance and advice, as needed. We each have a geographical "hub", comprising certain deaneries, as well as taking the lead on specific issues or relationships across the diocese.

It was for this reason that I found myself at a meeting of Missionaries of Africa, explaining our work and outreach. As I understand it, Cardinal Lavigerie's vision was for men who would be at the heart of their local Churches, in dialogue with other cultures and faiths; men who would be with and for the poor, bringing unity, reconciliation and hope. And these are things our world so desperately needs, in London as much as Lagos!





## **Parents & Friends Association**

### **THE PARENTS & FRIENDS ASSOCIATION EVENTS**

There will be a Parents and Friends fundraiser on Friday 19th August 2017

The Annual Reunion will take place on Sunday 27th August 2017. Mass will be celebrated at midday and there will be lunch afterwards at 13.30 at King's Park Hotel.





# Your charitable prayers are requested

for those who have recently died  
and our deceased parents,  
relatives, friends and benefactors.



Mrs. Joan Holland of Swafham in Norfolk

Mr. Thomas Higgins of Darwen in Lancashire

Mr. Anthony Mizzi of Banbury in Oxfordshire

Mr. J. H. Forsey of Greasby on the Wirral

Mrs. Eilee Thompson of St. Helens, Merseyside

**May they rest in peace**



## St. Anthony's Burse



By contributing to St. Anthony's Burse for the education of White Fathers, you will be helping to spread the Good News of the Gospel in Africa.

The Bursary Fund is open to donations of all kinds, large or small.

*Donations should be addressed to:*

### THE WHITE FATHERS

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LONDON W5 2HP

### THE WHITE FATHERS

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GLASGOW G73 2NG

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**<http://www.missionariesofafrica.org.uk>**

***Thank you for your generosity.***

***Special thanks to all our faithful supporters who regularly and unflin-  
gly donate by Standing Order, particularly those who are able to Gift Aid  
their donations.***

White Fathers in England & Wales:

Registered Charity No. 233302

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**Find out more about us at:**

**[www.missionariesofafrica.org.uk](http://www.missionariesofafrica.org.uk)**

**Gift aid form** available on our **website** <http://www.missionariesofafrica.org.uk>

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