

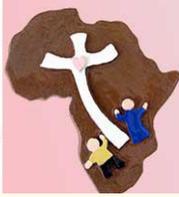
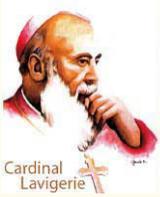
MISSIONARIES OF AFRICA

(WHITE FATHERS)



St. Anthony Novena Edition

June 2018
Issue No. 438



Mary
Queen Of Africa
Pray for Us.



Missionaries Of Africa

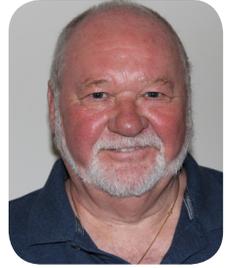
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Editor's Word.



Fr. Michael Heap MAFr

As I wrote in the last issue of the Magazine, this year the Missionaries of Africa and the Missionary Sisters of Our Lady of Africa (MSOLA) are celebrating 150 years of mission in Africa. This is a celebration of generosity.

The generosity of so many young (and less young) men and women who have given their lives (sometimes literally) to share with the people of Africa. What they have shared is what they received freely from God – His love. They have embodied God's generosity. But they could not have done it without the generosity of others.

The generosity of so many families who have accepted that their sons and daughters leave home to work for others. Not having children of their own and not continuing the family line.

The generosity of so many people who have prayed for the Mission and the missionaries. Who have supported them by donations when they are away and by encouragement when they come home sick or discouraged or infirm.

The generosity of so many Africans who welcomed the missionaries, put up with mistakes made because of a sometimes imperfect knowledge of the local language or customs. Some like the Martyrs of Uganda have shared in the Mission unto death. So many have risked exclusion or even persecution from their own people because they trusted in the God of Love preached by the missionaries.

The Mission has not ended, it continues. There are almost 500 young men studying to be Missionaries of Africa. How many will continue to the end only God knows. But each of them is already sharing in the generous love of God. Each one is taking a risk, counting on the promises of Christ. Any donations sent with the prayer requests presented to St. Anthony during the Novena will be used to pay for the formation of these young men. Our generosity is a support for their generosity, be it financial or spiritual, by praying for them.

We share what we can because God shared with us first, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son", then asked us through Jesus to "love one another as I have loved you". Each of us in her or his way - married/single/old/young /religious/lay/other - shares in the life of God, the love of God, the Mission given by God.



EVEN HERE IN KIPAKA GOD LIVES AMONG HIS PEOPLE

By Fr. David Songo M.Afr (Nigeria)

Situated in the heart of the forest of Maniema in the Democratic Republic of Congo is a small village called Kipaka, 187 kilometers away from Kindu, the capital town of the province of Maniema. Maniema is one of the most remote provinces of the country. Ironically, one of the richest in natural resources but the poorest of all in terms of road networks, infrastructure and social amenities. One of her key natural resources is gold. The inhabitants of this area depend on mining and agriculture for their livelihood. The language commonly spoken in this part of the country is Kiswahili.



Kipaka community

It is in this remote area that I have been sent on mission to share the word of God alongside my fellow confrere Humphrey Mukuka (Zambia) and two Missionaries of Africa in formation: Isaac Kinda (Burkina Faso) and Martin Ndiritu (Kenya). The parish of Kipaka was founded in 1957 by the Missionaries of Africa.

Today, the parish counts about 9,875 baptized Catholics. We are blessed with 33 outstations which we visit regularly to celebrate the sacraments. Indeed a place for primary evangelization! Meanwhile the Bible alone in the right hand cannot penetrate deep into the heart of the people without a piece of bread in the left hand in a hunger stricken area like ours. One of the major challenges in our ministry!

Another challenge is the bad state of roads. During rainy season, it is practically impossible to travel by vehicle because of the mud and big holes that can destroy our vehicles. The safest means of transport are motor-cycles or bicycles. Bicycles are commonly used to transport commodities to the market, to travel from one village to another, and also to transport dead bodies of beloved ones. At the beginning I was uneasy seeing corpses being transported on bicycles, but now it has become routine. In some areas we also have to use canoes to cross rivers on our journeys.



Pastoral visit

Despite its riches, the area has a very high rate of



Fr. David and Catechists

unemployment and poverty. The only lucrative job in the area is teaching. Once a young man completes his secondary education he goes out looking for a teaching job in the primary or secondary school. Girls in this part of

the country rarely complete their secondary education before being given in marriage. It's almost impossible to see a girl of 20 in Kipaka still in her parents' home or still pursuing her education. Even when they do, it is with the intention of enriching themselves because once an educated girl is married, the father of the girl will include in the payment of the dowry, the number of years he has invested in the education of his daughter. We are still struggling to convince parents in this part of the world to send their girls to school since they believe that a woman's place is in the kitchen.

Finally, there is also a high rate of insecurity in our area, living as we do side by side with rebel groups who seize control locally so as to exploit the natural resources with no concern to the local population. Humanly speaking, we live in fear; although we derive our strength and encouragement from the words of our founder Cardinal Lavignerie who has called us to be "ALL THINGS TO ALL PEOPLE". We also find joy and encouragement from the hospitality of the people and in Jesus' words of hope in Matthew 28, 20: 'Do not be afraid for I am with you always.'

Despite these challenges, we are happy to be in Kipaka and to work side by side with these simple people of God



Greetings from Kipaka

with whom we have become a family. We count on your prayers for peace in Kipaka and in the whole of the Democratic Republic of Congo.

What can you say about Tapac?

Olivier Uwayesu from Rwanda did 2 years of his missionary training amongst the Karamajong people in Northern Uganda, a Nilotic people famous for their fierceness and cattle raiding. I asked him to write down a few impressions of his time there. He is now in his second year of Theology in Abidjan, Ivory Coast.

Editor.

The joy of teaching catechism to Tepeth (Karimajong) people! It was a real challenge for me.

I believe that the most precious gift to give to someone is something that they



A catechism class in the bush

themselves can't afford. I also believe that nobody is important except being for others. That's why Missionaries are important not for themselves but because of those to whom they are sent. For me that

meant being in the parish of Tapac in the highlands of Karamoja in Uganda. I was there for two years, working with the youth, altar servers and missionary childhood. But then the Parish Priest invited me to help with the people he wanted to form in order to become 'catechists'. They could not read or write, but they were to instruct children in prayers learnt by heart. Then the Parish Priest and Brother (Me) would go around visiting different groups located in different kraals up in the mountains, teaching them the basics of the faith. This involvement in Catechism is what I want to focus on in this sharing of my life in Karamoja.

The Parish Priest asked me to prepare young and old people for Baptism, whilst he took care of infants, their parents and those preparing for Confirmation. He used to help me also because I couldn't cover all my areas alone. There were so



Lots of women catechumens but no men

parish centre. We would meet in kraals or a convenient area in the bush. Often I would to get lost on my way as there are no signposts.

many young women, but few men. Often in a group of 200 catechumens the number of boys could be counted on the fingers of one hand. Few men came to church. There were groups of catechumens from each outstation and from the

Did I enjoy teaching? “Yes” – but only to some extent, because things did not go always the way I wanted all the time. There were days I got frustrated especially when I travelled all around in the bush looking for the people, without finding them or with them arriving so late I was already exhausted, and couldn’t give what I had prepared. Frankly, I needed so much patience and perseverance, because the seed of the Word of God that we were trying to sow showed no hope of bearing fruit any day soon. Some children we considered leaders, being more committed to learning, would suddenly stop coming to classes. No explanation given. Others showed great enthusiasm at first and then later came when/if they felt like it. It was hard setting out with joy to teach people and then finding that all of them were still in their farms and showing no signs of coming soon. I realized later that



Line of catechumens waiting for “scrutinies”

to learning, would suddenly stop coming to classes. No explanation given. Others showed great enthusiasm at first and then later came when/if they felt like it. It was hard setting out with joy to teach people and then finding that all of them were still in their farms and showing no signs of coming soon. I realized later that

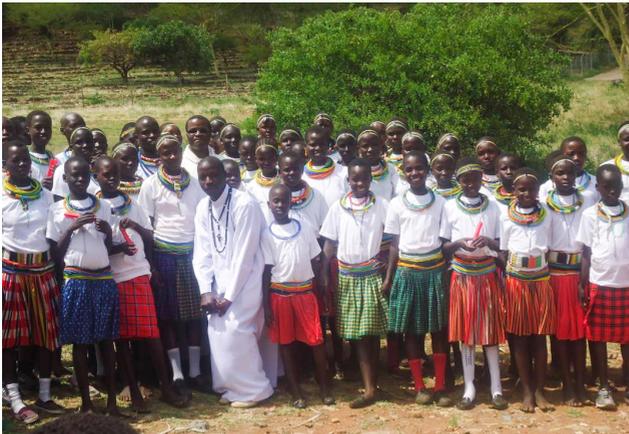
although we agreed to meet at 4 pm, if the sun was still hot they wouldn't come because they measured time by the sun. It was hard to know whom to rely on. At times I wondered why I kept going when all the best students had left. Where did I get the energy to go back into the bush to continue teach the rest? I think loving what you do helps not to feel the cost of the energy.



At last the Baptism

I had to learn patience and hope because in the end, those I expected not to finish training, ended up getting baptized; whereas those I judged worthy failed me – God's way is not ours; He touches hearts in his time.

Did I lose hope and meaning? "No". Although I did not master the Karimojong language as I wished, I was able to compose and memorise what I had to teach people in a language that they understood. Sometimes I needed a translator but I could not depend on boys accompanying me all the time. Sometimes they did accompany me and help, but only out of respect. They really didn't want to go off



Group photo of newly baptised

into the bush. Anyway, I had to face the fact that I had people waiting eagerly to be given basics of the Faith in Christ, so I kept moving. Struggling with the language, preparing lessons I realized that the best way to learn was to teach. I did not have all the answers and spoke Karimajong from the books; but

they used to correct me and help me reformulate the answers. It was a great joy and relief when I saw people were willing to help me to help them.

In Tapac I had materials to help me as a catechist. I also had people willing to help me, including the Parish Priest, who knew the language well. I learned more than I ever expected. In the process of teaching, I evangelized myself. In helping



More baptisms

others to know about Jesus Christ, my faith came alive. I came to realize that one of the major benefits of being a catechist is that prayer and liturgy, even my own relationship with God became more vibrant and meaningful. Of course I enjoyed practical things like teaching young women to make bracelets

and Macramé (for self employment) but it never gave me satisfaction as when I was sharing my faith with warriors.

Did I get tired? “Yes, many times”. I don’t remember how many times I had tyres of the motorbike torn apart with punctures. So I learned how to repair the bike and keep going. Sometimes the sun was burning, the color of my skin was becoming darker and darker, but I did not fall sick. I kept on going, then I felt great joy when the Parish Priest called in Catechumens for the “scrutinies” to select those who would go to the next level in preparation of their baptism.

Travelling to Moroto to buy food was not easy. I was always afraid of having a problem with the car in the bush alone. I had faith in God and He did not disappoint me. I was right to keep on trusting in Him.

But what of my confreres in the catechetical work? One would volunteer to drive a car and fetch water, another to carry firewood, another to organize groups of catechumens and help find places to sleep for those coming from far away. Together we were on Christ’s mission. Looking back I am moved. Then those people who did not even know how to read and had to teach others what they memorized in catechism classes. Teaching people about faith and helping them establish a personal relationship with God means so much and has no cost. Give it a try; you will never regret it.

Alain Olivier Uwayezu

Moms Against Guns.

Fr. Tom Reilly, MAfr, having retired from work in Zambia and India continues to write about his new “mission” in USA protesting and calling for a change in the gun laws which affect the lives of so many young people there. Editor.

I went on the March for Gun Control 2018 with a group wearing red t-shirts. On the front of the shirt in large print, “MOMS’ DEMAND ACTION for Gun Sense in



Four Moms and a Father

America”. On the back of the shirt, “EVERYTOWN For Gun Safety”

As I told you last time I wrote, MOMS was founded by one of the mothers of the children murdered at Sandy Hook Elementary School where 26 people were murdered by a deranged man. Sixteen of those killed were only six years old, four were seven, and six were adults.

Before this he murdered his mother, then after the killing spree, the young man committed suicide!

One of the goals of MOMS is to have it made obligatory for background checks on everyone who wants to buy a gun; this would mean, no felons, no mentally ill people who are dangerous to themselves or others, and no spousal abusers. Spousal abusers are included because, if there is abuse in the home and there is a gun, seventy per cent of the time, the gun will be used on the abuser!

There is a desperate need for a database of all gun owners to be made available to all law enforcement agencies, the FBI and local police. This needs to be digitalized, replacing the scraps of paper presently on file.

Why are we in the mess that we are in? The National Rifle Association (NRA) is quite strong and gives lots of money to support some candidates for public office. Our Supreme Court has ruled that freedom of speech includes donating money to those running for public office!! Cynically, one can say that “Money talks”. And if large enough “donations” are given, then “Money shouts”.

The Second Amendment to our Constitution reads, “A well regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and

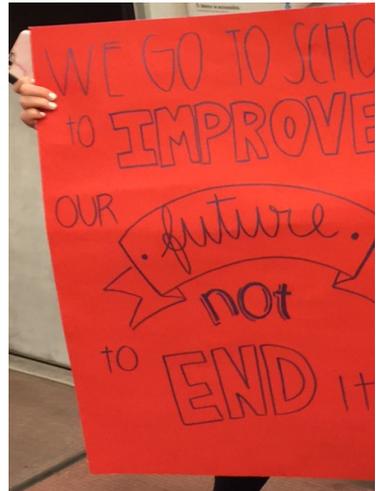
bear Arms, shall not be infringed.”

Recently a retired Supreme Court Associate said that this amendment should be abolished since its original purpose does not exist anymore. We have the Army, Navy and Coast Guard to protect the country. This has only added fuel to the fire of the debate. The NRA (National Rifle Association) claims that background checks are the thin end of the wedge to keep everyone (including hunters and sportsmen) from having guns. Stopping sports' hunters will never in fact happen, but some people believe the NRA's claim. So money flows to those in Congress running for election or re-election to “protect” the Second Amendment! The rest is history, sadly.

But still I hope. The latest massacre (Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School) of 14 teens and 3 adults may have been the last straw. There is now a serious challenge to the NRA dominance on gun legislation. People want change and they are willing to exert themselves in getting change...I hope. The teenagers in this high school have called on the Government to change the law for their protection. The students referred to these government officials as “You Adults” implying a lack of maturity on the “adult's” part over gun control legislation. The students are calling the officials to account for not protecting their lives! Already the State of Florida (where the killings took place) has changed some of its gun laws in this regard. Bravo for these students!

Some students here in the District of Columbia want to have a town hall meeting later this month, calling it Town Hall for Our Lives (TH4OL). Bills before the US House of Representatives and the US Senate concerning types of guns available (e.g. no military guns), how guns can be adapted (to make automatic weapons), and the age for buying guns (21 and over), will be discussed.

Concerning transparency - when the NRA funds anyone, the amount of money is made public and the candidate's name given, however if the NRA itself campaigns for a candidate, no money will be listed as having been given to that candidate. So money listed for a candidate might not properly reflect the financial help from the NRA. Must go now. Remember me to the confreres. Tom



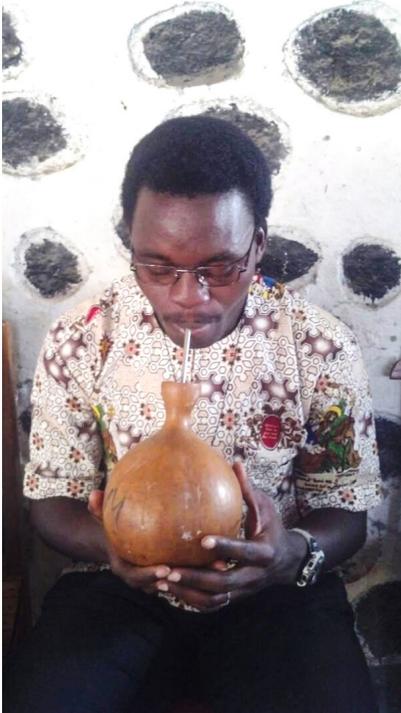
Student Placard

My First Impressions of Rwanda and First Contacts with the People.

By Sarambe R. Célestin

Celestin is a Missionary of Africa student in his first year of Pastoral work (before Theology). He is from Burkina Faso.

Rwanda is known as “Le Pays des Mille Collines” (Land of a Thousand Hills) thanks to the endless mountains in this little country. It is a country of 12.5 million residents, with an area of 26,338 square kilometres. The local language spoken is “Kinyarwanda”. It is a language which imposes itself because it is used country wide. After the genocide of 1994, the general feeling is the spirit of unity; there is no division, no tribalism, and Rwandans are one people, one nation, with one culture and one language. This cultural and linguistic unity which is almost absolute all around the country facilitates the relationship between the people. Rwandans are proud of their country as they say “Imana yirirwa ahandi igataha mu Rwanda” meaning that “God spends the day somewhere else and comes back to sleep in Rwanda”. I landed in this country last year in July for my pastoral experience in Saint Peter’s parish in Kigali.



Celestin sampling the local brew

As a missionary student, I believe that people pay attention to your message if you love them as they are. Consequently, they do the same in return. But this exchange of love cannot be possible if you are not in contact with them. At first it was not easy for me to enter in contact with the people because I did not know much about the local language. However, it became easier after learning the language and the culture. I started going towards the people, visiting them and speaking with them at home or in their places of work. When you try to speak the language, they see you as one of them, someone who has accepted their culture and for that matter, everybody wants to be your friend and to teach you something in Kinyarwanda. For my part, I took the courage to speak.

Sometimes I made mistakes, they could laugh at me, and we laugh together. They are always ready to correct me all the time and I could note down all the corrections. This helped make friends. Again, in Rwandan culture, when you visit someone for the first time, you are offered the local beer or the bottled variety. If you refuse to drink, it automatically means for them that you reject them and that you are not part of them. On the other hand accepting to drink



Celestin sharing a meal with the youth

and to eat what they offer you, means a lot for them. They become proud of you and very open to you. That is how I got many friends who invite me at home and also visit me sometimes in my community. In their culture, a friend's visit is very important as they say "incuti iruta incuru" meaning "a friend is better than the daily salary" this is to say that when you receive a visit of a friend you must sacrifice your daily activities to give him that time. Rwandans like very much their traditional dance called "intore" and there is no social gathering without a display



Intore dance

of "intore" by a group of dancers. Even in the liturgy, the thanksgiving songs are sung with the rhythm of "intore". I observed that during social gatherings at the parish, Christians feel very happy when a seminarian or a priest is amongst them. And once you are there, they will invite you to dance the "intore" and when you dance with them, they are very happy with you. I tried to learn how to dance and now I manage to follow the movement. The youth did not hesitate to give me a Rwandan name "Nshimirimana Célestin" meaning "I

give thanks to God" to tell me that I am part of them.

Rwandans are very religious. "Imana" which means "God" is at the centre of their life. They don't speak without mentioning "Imana" and even in their name there is the word "Imana". That is also one of the reasons why they have a great respect and love for the religious. Those who consecrate their life to God are called "Abihaye Imana". Christianity, specially Catholicism is predominant. They have a great devotion to the sacraments specially the Holy Eucharist and the Sacrament of Reconciliation which they attend regularly. In general, the pastoral experience is moving on well. I am grateful to God and my community members who are so supportive in my missionary training.

125 years in Zambia.

Fr. Timothy Bationo, a Burkinabe confrere now working in Zambia describes the celebrations. This article was kindly passed on to us by Fr. Gilles Mathorel, MAfr

Catholicism was introduced into Zambia in 1891 by Missionaries of Africa (White Fathers) who first settled at Mambwe Mwela in Northern Province. Last year, 2017, marked 125 years of the Catholic faith in Zambia. So the Church set aside two days (14th - 15th July) to celebrate this important anniversary in the capital Lusaka. On the 14th July, all the Zambian Catholics who could manage it, made



Arrival of the young people

their way to Lusaka for these celebrations, held in the Lusaka Agricultural Showground where various aspects of Catholic life in Zambia were on show. The different religious congregations and lay movements were on hand to explain everything. This exhibition showed the impact of the various development projects brought to Zambia by the Catholic Church. Among the most important were agricultural, health and social projects (girl child literacy, handicapped and women's empowerment etc.) all of which have also helped the Zambian economy. However, central to the exhibition was the spiritual aspect, marked by the growing number of congregations and lay movements in attendance. **Day 1** was dedicated to catholic youth.



Young people gathered in the Cathedral of the Child Jesus for two talks. First :



Led by the Cross

Youth, Faith and Vocational Discernment. Then: "The Almighty Has Done Great Things for Me". After these two reflections, all the youth, together with their patrons and matrons, entrusted themselves to Mary, the Woman of Faith, and marched to the showground led by two bands.

The procession to the showgrounds was a time for witnessing to our Faith, so more



Marching bands

than one thousand young people, from all the 11 dioceses, followed the cross, singing.

Once at the showgrounds, during a festive Mass, the youth were reminded that they are called to be the Light of the World and Salt of the Earth in their daily lives. After Mass, the Bishops of Zambia spoke on two issues; Ways Forward for Youth Ministry in Zambia and Religious

Pluralism. Archbishop Telesphore Mpundu of Lusaka, in particular, encouraged the Youth to work towards building a better future for the Church. The Bishops then went amongst the stands and spoke with the people and the Youth.

Day 2. The ceremony began at 9 a.m. About 2,000 delegates from all over the country and over 20,000 people were assembled in the main arena already in



readiness for Mass. The Mass was presided over by the Nuncio for Zambia and Malawi and concelebrated by more than 100 priests and bishops. The whole event was colourful, peaceful and joyful, with many notable people in attendance. Among them was the vice president of Zambia, the Superior General of the White Fathers and specially invited guests

from Kenya, Malawi, and Zimbabwe. The homily was delivered, with passion and conviction, by Archbishop Telesphore Mpundu. He described how those of the past generation have done their part. They touched the lives of Zambians through their personal example of a simple lifestyle. Speaking of the early missionaries, he paid "profound homage to the Missionaries, men and women of all religious and secular institutes who devoted themselves without counting the cost to the task of transmitting the torch of the Christian faith. We, the happy inheritors of this marvelous adventure, joyfully pay our debt of thanks to God on this solemn occasion."

The challenge, to keep the flame burning, continues for us missionaries today.

Our communities in India and the Philippines: Their evolution over 25 years.

by Fr. John Gould, MAfr

In the 1980's, as the numbers of missionary vocations declined in Europe and North America, our Society opened its doors to candidates from Africa, and later the General Council decided to look for vocations in other parts of the world.

As a result, communities were set up in Brazil, Mexico, Poland, in the Philip-



Section Council

pines in 1991 and in India in 1992. Some years ago, as part of the re-structuring of the Society, Mexico and Brazil became part of the new Province of the Americas, Poland joined the new Province of Europe. The Philippines and India remained under the control of The General Council.

Then at the Chapter of 2016, the year of the Silver

Jubilee of the Philippines community, it was decided to establish an Asian section in our Society, linking India and the Philippines as one entity. In 2017, the Silver Jubilee year of the Indian community, that decision was implemented by the General Council.

“The Section of Asia” is a rather grandiose title for a modest reality: from India there are seventeen members who have taken the Oath, and from the Philippines eight. Twenty-one are priests, one is a Brother and three are deacons, to be ordained later this year. In addition, there are six ‘outsiders’ appointed to the Section, one in India and five in the Philippines. There are fifteen candidates in formation in Africa, and we hope to have around ten new ones starting formation in the home countries this year.

There are six of us working in India, in formation and vocations promo-



Our Parish Church in Davao



Formation House. Tamil Nadu

tion. We have two formation houses: the original one in Bangalore for the Philosophy students, opened in 1995, and a second house in the countryside about 40 kms south of Bangalore in the neighbouring State of Tamil Nadu. It was opened in 2013 to house the aspirants who have a one-year introductory programme,

focusing mainly on English.

In the Philippines there are five of us: three in the formation house in Cebu and two in a parish which we have just taken over in Davao, on the island of Mindanao. A third priest will be joining the parish team later this year.

It is a challenge to create a real sense of identity and belonging between two groups living so far apart in contrasting cultural and political situations. Bangalore and Cebu are separated by 3000 miles, most of it ocean. While the houses

in India are only 40 minutes apart by car, from Cebu to the parish in Davao is an hour by plane and then a couple of hours by road. India is a predominantly Hindu country - Hindus make up 81% of the population. Only 2% are Catholics, and 13% are Muslims. The population of



Students preparing backdrop



Fathers admiring students' work

the Philippines is 80% Catholic, 5% Muslim. Relations between the two countries are not good, so It takes months for Filipinos to get a visa to visit India and vice versa. This makes visiting and arranging meetings extremely difficult, and exchanging Indian and Filipino personnel out of

the question.

In the Philippines it is easy for foreign missionaries to get work permits. I am now in the community in Cebu with a Ugandan doing doctoral studies and an Irishman. In October we will be joined by a Filipino vocation director. In the parish there is a Filipino and a Mexican, and in October they will be joined by a newly ordained Togolese.

The community members in Cebu are involved in traditional ministry: helping in parish on Sundays, celebrating Mass in convents, in colleges and schools, factories, in homes on special family occasions; blessings, devotions and novenas are a part of daily life. Before Christmas and Easter, hours are spent hearing confessions. Our house, which is a converted family house, is used on Saturdays for catechism classes given by a group of women to children from the squatter compound at our back gate. Once a month we host a group from Fazenda , a community set



Sisters preparing the altar



The Celebration

up to help people with addictions and their families. Recently a group of cadres from the Country Club just down the road came for a day's recollection.

It is impossible now for any foreign missionaries to work openly

in India. It is almost impossible for an African to get a tourist visa for more than a few weeks, and as there are fewer younger and active members from Europe and America, the burden of managing our houses now falls on the Indians themselves. In 2009 all our men in India were outsiders. Now five of the six men in our communities are Indians. This situation in India undermines to some extent the witness that we want to give by our international and multicultural communities. From 2010 to last December, I was the only foreigner in the group. Now I have swapped places with a Canadian who has been in Cebu since 2014.

One way priests and religious, including Africans, can get into India is to come for studies. They can then be involved in the formation of candidates and also minister to the African students in colleges and universities here. One of our men from DRC was very active in this ministry during his three years of study here.

Right from the beginning of the project in India, one of the concerns of the community was to offer pastoral support to African students in Bangalore. In the early years, there was only a small group of Rwandans and Tanzanians. But these days there are well over a thousand students at universities in Bangalore, many from Ivory Coast and Cameroon, others from The Democratic Republic of Congo, Kenya, and Uganda. There are clusters of them living in different areas of the city. Our community continues the tradition of celebrating mass once a month with the Africans in a hall provided by one of the parishes in the south of



African Choir

the city. There are also one or two African priests studying in Bangalore who celebrate the Eucharist and provide pastoral care in the north of the city.

The Africans in Bangalore and cities across India are subjected to racial prejudice, discrimination, harassment and occasionally violent attacks. The Archdiocese of Bangalore has set up an office to provide support for Africans and for internal

migrants and to press the government and city authorities to offer them protection.

The African students have set up their own social welfare committee to help students who get into difficulties with finances or into trouble with the police or immigration authorities. We support them in this work. They come to our house for days of recollection and for sports and picnics. They also come every year for our Africa Day, usually held in November around the anniversary of our Founder. Africa Day was introduced to help make Africa and our Society better known and to bring together Africans and Indians who would otherwise never meet socially.

Last year Africa Day was celebrated on 28th October and was combined with the celebration of the 25th anniversary of our arrival in India and with the establishment of the Section of Asia. Fr Ignatius Anipu, member of the General Council who has oversight of India, came from Rome with Fr Andre Schaminee, the Secretary General of the Society, who spent six years in Bangalore as Rector of the Formation House.



Preparing a welcome arch

The preparation of the celebration required a great deal of planning and work on the part of the community in Bangalore. The candidates put in many extra hours of manual work cleaning up the grounds and the house and decorating the dining room. They also prepared a large and very impressive flexi-poster decorated with images of African dancers and musicians that they had drawn and painted. They hung posters with quotations from Cardinal Lavigerie at the entrance and in the dining-room and from the balcony overlooking the courtyard, And there were strings of coloured lights, an essential element of any Indian festival, hanging from the roof all around the courtyard.

For the Eucharist, the chapel would have been far too small for the expected numbers, so a stage was erected at one end of the central lawn for the altar. The stage and altar were beautifully decorated with flowers by the SABS Sisters, our next-door neighbours. Chairs were set out to fill the rest of the space. The guests were our friends and neighbours, members of religious communities and formation houses, L'Arche community where some candidates do pastoral work, and some of the many African students from the city, including some religious sisters. Many more Africans would have liked to attend but could not make it.

Fr Andre Schaminee was the main celebrant and Fr Ignatius Anipu preached, giving a summary of the history of our presence in India. The choir of the African students led the singing. Their exuberance and the harmony of their singing was a revelation to many of the guests. After the Eucharist there was a Power-Point presentation by the candidates on The Society and Cardinal Lavigerie. Then came short, simple (and therefore very un-Indian) speeches by Fr Biju John, the

Rector, and Frs Schaminee and Anipu. Gifts were offered to the two chief guests and the cake was cut. This was followed by a buffet meal and then the evening was rounded off by dancing, Africans and Indians together, and a lot of selfie-taking!



Frs. Biju John and Schaminee

MISSIONARIES OF AFRICA AND JUSTICE, DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE (JDPC) IN THE ARCHDIOCESE OF IBADAN

Fr. James Ngahy, M. Afr.

The Archdiocese of Ibadan, Nigeria, asked the Missionaries of Africa (White Fathers) to implement the Social Teaching of the Church (SCT) at grassroots level in a very practical way by working with the Justice, Development and Peace Commission (JDPC) of the Archdiocese.



St. Thomas Parish, Ibadan

To do this a department of Justice, Development and Peace Committee in Parish (JDPC-Parish) was created in 2010. Long titles, but in practice it means that since then 15 parishes and their outstations have been able to establish their own groups, whose aim is

to look at the reality on ground and how to address issues of concern in a positive and realistic way. And each year the groups come together to make a focused strategic plan as a guide.

In 2017 we organised several activities to see how to empower youths and retirees. Most of the youths in the parishes here are unemployed graduates. This is in part due to unrealistic expectations, too many people who are over-qualified for the jobs on offer. It is for this reason that some of the youths think that life can only be better if they can get to Europe or America, or perhaps even the North Pole (?). So JDPC-Parish tries to provide realistic opportunities for both individuals and groups to acquire skills for self-reliance as in the Social Teaching of the Church. Retirees benefit from small scale projects which serve as complements to their (irregularly paid) pensions. We try to have a holistic vision for our projects, embodying respect for human dignity, health, spiritual issues



Growing vegetables at the Formation house



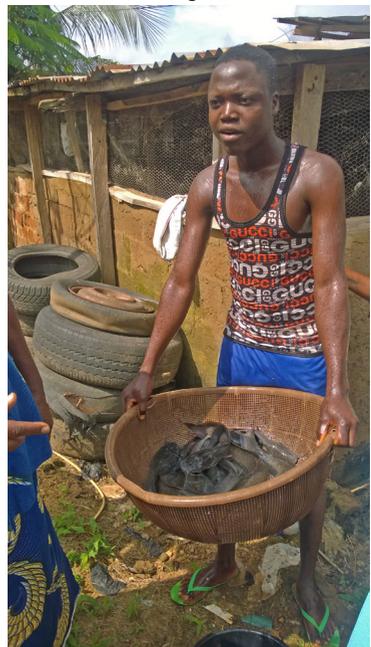
Small scale fish farming

try Production Management, Snail Rearing, Rabbit Production, Bee-Keeping, Fish/Aquaculture, Sheep and Goat Production, Cassava and Vegetable Production. Over 100 participants from different JDPC-Parish groups attended the different training programmes and we already see some positive results from the training. Moreover, some of the young people who were trained between 2014 and 2016 under the umbrella of the economic empowerment scheme or skill acquisition in the fields of tailoring, wire-works, bead-making, inverter making, soap-making and insecticide-making have managed to set themselves up in business. Some of them have even started training other young people. St. Thomas Parish and St. Augustine's Quasi (Missionaries of Africa parishes) are doing sterling work in this respect.

Lack of proper sanitation has been one of the major factors causing the ecological disaster we have in Ibadan. The JDPC-Parishes of St. Thomas', St. Augustine's, with their outstations, as well as our formation house (where Ghanaian and Nigerian students of the Missionaries of Africa begin their training), launched a programme entitled: 'Make Your Compound Clean' (MYCC) by getting together young people from the Altar Servers Organisation, the Legionaries and the Catholic Youth Organisation. This was a way for them to embrace the

and the Integrity of Creation.

One of the JDPC-Parish's strategies in 2017 was 'Empowerment Scheme and Self-reliance.' The aim was to train those interested in different occupations such as Poul-



Home grown fish



Ways to keep the compound clean

spirit of care of creation and self-reliance. Although we do not have much land, planting trees, fruit and flower cultivation where we can, has shown the sense of care for our Mother

er Earth, “who sustains and governs us, and who produces various fruits with coloured flowers and herbs” (LS, no. 1).

Finally, in 2017, Child Trafficking and Child Labour (rampant in Ibadan) were given special attention in the JDPC-Parish programme. We organised rallies, workshops and seminars in both schools and market places in order to address these issues. We also tried to create awareness among parishioners and government officials such as the Police, Customs Officers, Immigration Officers and State Government Women and Children Affairs, highlighting the rights of children.

The twin-evils, Child Trafficking and Child Labour (internationally the most profitable after illegal arms trading and the illegal drug industry) still remain a challenge not only in Ibadan metropolis generally but even in some of the parishes. Therefore, we have rolled up our sleeves and we are trying to mobilise anyone we can, to fight against these social ills.

Fr. James is originally from Tanzania. He is now working in Ibadan, Nigeria as PP in the parish adjoining the Formation house of the Missionaries of Africa. Fr James also has a doctorate and lectures in the major seminary in Ibadan on Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation.



Fr. James' crop of cassava

Snippets from here and there.

Ponda, young girl, promised to an old polygamous village chief. She refuses in spite of both families and old people. Various people try to persuade her, in vain. Arguments followed by violence. In vain. Her mother meets her coming from the mission. So, you prefer foreigners to your parents. Strikes her and tears off her the beads round her neck, wrists and waist. She stays at the mission village and is baptised on the feast of the Assumption. Next day she marries a young Christian of her choice. From 1909.

Stefano Kaoze (later the first priest to be ordained from the Eastern Congo) learns that he is to receive the tonsure. When he heard the news two weeks ahead, he says he could not sleep and he could hardly eat. "I received the soutane and almost tripped up on it three times."

A young man told his parish priest that he wanted to take a second wife because the first has not borne him any children. "So who will weep when I die?" The celibate missionary asked, "And what about us Fathers?" "Oh, you are different. When you die all the people in the parish will weep. The forest itself will shed tears". From Mozambique RA 1949-50

It was Christmas night in the village of Consegela in the Malian bush about 30 miles from a city. A young boy, Antoine, was sitting under a tree. He was very sad. His parents had gone to Christmas Mass in the city and he was left alone with his little brothers and sisters. There was no priest and no Mass in the village. He tells his story: "We prayed together but I was frustrated at having to spend Christmas without Mass. I asked myself whether I should become a priest so that other children could have Mass on Christmas Day. My father used to read from his Missal on Sundays and explained the gospel to us. My mother was a Moslem but took us to Mass when the priest came to the village. At school we were considered as unbelievers because we were Christians and pig eaters. So I wanted to know more about our religion. The ways of the Lord are mysterious. I became a Missionary of Africa, the first one from my diocese, called to live at the frontier of cultures and religions. There, primary evangelisation is, in my opinion, the great priority.

From Petit Echo 2015/2 related by Fr. Otmar Strzoda, MAfr.
(Slightly edited).

Otmar's own story in the same article:

I come from East Germany which was a communist state after the Second World War. Only 4% of the people were Catholic, among them my family in spite of the hostile anti-religious background. When we went to Mass on Sunday, our neighbours jeered at us and at school we were taught that God did not exist. He was an invention of capitalists to exploit the working class. When I was fourteen years of age we were required to swear a solemn oath that there was no God. All my classmates took the oath except me which meant that in my school report I got zero for conduct even though in other subjects, including Russian, I was top of the class. I was not allowed to go to University because of my faith. I accepted this knowing that God was with me, thanks to the deep and lively faith of my family. When I heard God calling me to become a Missionary of Africa, it was not possible to study for the priesthood in East Germany. To realise my vocation the only course of action was to flee across the border, despite the barbed wire and land mines. Before going I asked my parents for their blessing knowing that my departure would risk my father going to prison in an attempt to force me to return. My father told me "I should have liked you to stay here. But if you believe that God is calling you, and if I today refused to let you follow your vocation for fear of a communist prison, how could I explain that to God tomorrow?" We parted believing that we might never see each other again in this world. In the goodness of God, I became a Missionary of Africa and He tore down the Berlin wall. I have been able to visit my family again. Without the deep faith of my parents, I should never have become a missionary. (Slightly edited.)

My friend had a long safari on an African bus. In his bag, he had two bottles of coca cola. After a time, he took one out and drank it. A little later, the woman sitting next to him took out the two bottles which she had brought, and in true African fashion, offered him one.

When I was first in Africa, a very poor woman offered me three eggs. I felt unable to take a gift of food from so poor a person so, unwisely, I refused them and suggested she had more need of them than I had. She went away and later I heard she was very angry. So she took her revenge. Taking the eggs home she put them under her hen. One hatched out and after a few months and grew to be a fine fat bird. Then she brought it back to me and said, with a smile, Here is your chicken. This time I had the good grace to accept it.



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EVENTS

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Friday 7th September 7.30pm

Friday 16th November 7.30pm

150th ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS:

Sunday 26th. August 12.00 Mass at St. Columbkille's Rutherglen,
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May they rest in peace



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Information

The White Fathers Missionaries of Africa

In England & Wales:

The White Fathers
15 Corfton Road
London W5 2HP
email: corfton@mafrgb.org.uk
tel: 0208 601 7900

In Scotland:

The White Fathers
9 Milrig Road
Glasgow G73 2NG
email: wfscotland@btconnect.com
tel: 0141 613 0209
tel: 0141 613 0039



Enquiries concerning the Magazine should be addressed to:

The Editor,
MISSIONARIES OF AFRICA (WHITE FATHERS)
15 Corfton Road
London W5 2HP

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