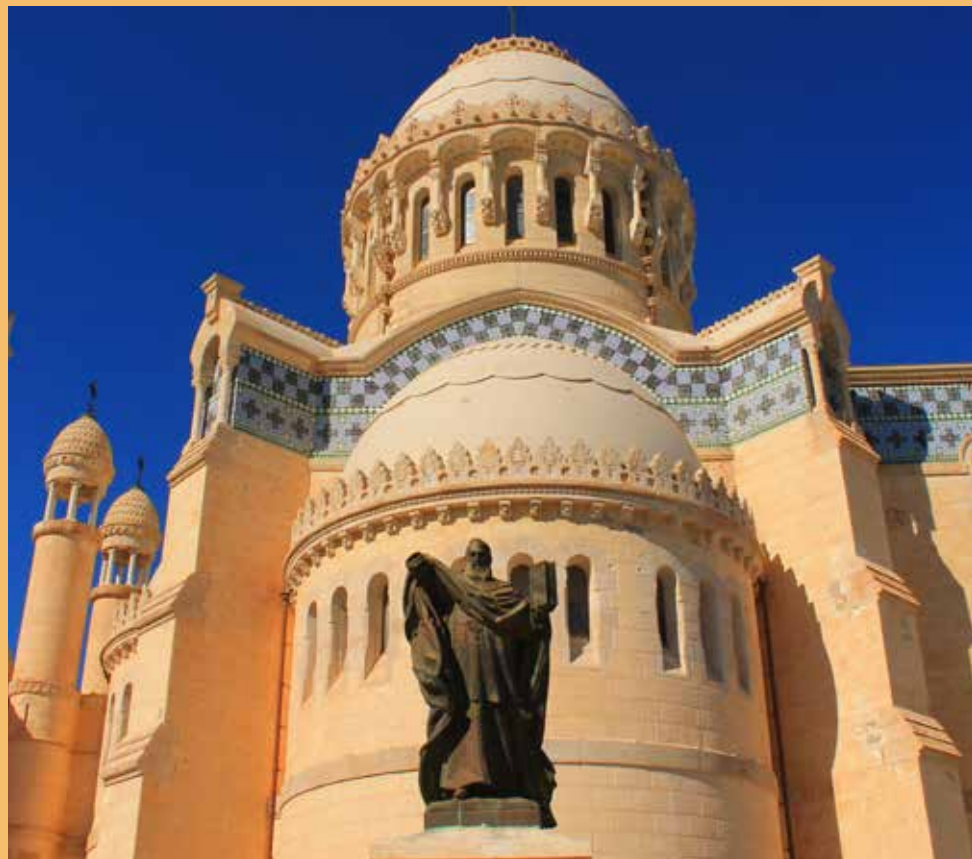


MISSIONARIES OF AFRICA

(WHITE FATHERS)



August 2019

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that is what they are by their very Baptism. They/we have received the life/love of God and in order to live it, we must share it with others, simply by loving. As an elderly or young person, abroad or at home, well or sick, we are all given the opportunity to love. This is our Faith. Don't keep the Faith, Live it, Share it.

Editor's Word

On the front of this magazine there is a photo of St Louis' Basilica in Carthage. In front of it is a statue of Cardinal Lavigerie. In his left hand is a book (the Bible), in his right there used to be a cross, raised up, stretching Southwards, out towards the continent of Africa. After Independence this was removed because people objected to what was considered a colonial and proselytising message. It is easy to see why that should be so. In many people's minds the coming of the European powers and the coming of the Church to much of Africa were linked together (including in the minds of some Christians and missionaries). There is still some whiff of that in Boko Haram – Western Education is Forbidden.



Fr. Michael Heap MAfr

Yet when we read the history of Cardinal Lavigerie, we see a man consumed by love of Africa and the people of Africa. His aim was to bring the Good News to Africa. This Good News is that God loves each and every one of His children, no matter the colour, no matter the customs and no matter the religion. This love shows itself most perfectly in the life, death and resurrection of His Son, Jesus Christ. It would be strange for us to proclaim that God loves each of us, and yet not work for the well being of these same children. Thus, education, peace-building, healthcare etc. all come within the work of a Christian. If the "cross" (the religion) is refused that in no way negates the obligation to love. Christians are called to love because they are loved by God and in responding to that love they/we must love all those others who are loved by God, whether these others see it or not. But for love to be love, it must be freely given. In the first article in this issue we hear about the many people who have been touched profoundly by the White Sisters over the years in North Africa. Of these, 99.999% would never consider becoming Christian yet they have been touched by love. If we really believe what St. John writes, "God is love", then wherever there is love, there is God. God is present in any situation where there is love. Because of perceived associations with colonialism etc., many young people never even consider the idea of becoming a missionary, and yet

(continued across on page 2)

Women, Africa's Driving Force.

What a magnificent day! by Fr.José María Cantal Rivas w.f.

Let's start with the end! At **5 p.m.** the parish choir of Tizi-Ouzou and



Our Parish Choir

the Algerian choir of Nag-am are singing together in Arabic, “ Ya Rabba assalami, imnah qulubina assalam” (O Lord of Peace, give peace to our hearts). The audience applauds and ululates in the North African manner, photos and videos are taken, people dry their eyes. As for me, I am happy that we have man-

aged to organise the 4th Islamic-Christian Day of Mary.

A little earlier, at **1 p.m.**, we had been tasting a delicious couscous together, more than 400 of us, in an atmosphere of good will, under the sun that God had sent to shine on us. We admired the quality of the food and the way the sharing had been organised: tickets, 3 distribution points, special room for the



Visiting Algerian Choir

VIPs, cold drinks, friendly atmosphere, and there we were making new friends just as the Rector of the Basilica had asked us.

Before that, at **midday**, we had all visited the exposition of historical photos which showed the beginnings of the White Fathers and the



Queueing for cous-cous

White Sisters from their foundation in Algiers 150 years before. On 10 tableaux, both in French and Arabic, we read texts written by Cardinal Lavigerie when he addressed the first men and women he was to send out, setting out before them the way they

should live and work. Some of the photos had never been published before and opened up for us a North Africa where courage and enthusiasm were essential for these young apostles. We found it difficult to leave the exhibition, even when they turned the lights off!

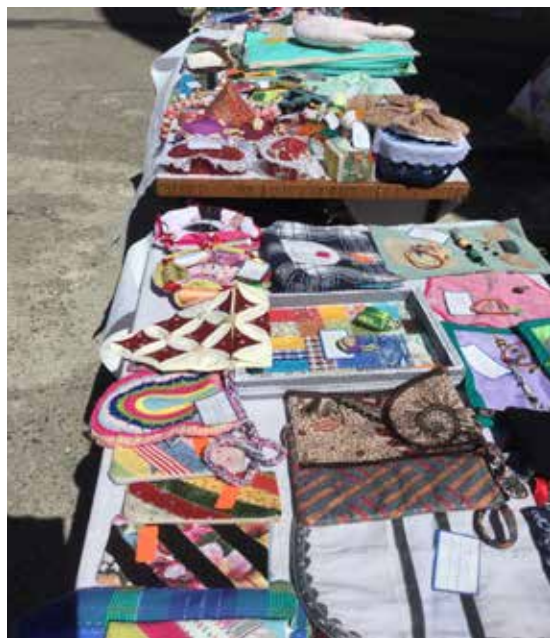
Earlier that morning, from **10.30 a.m.**, we listened to several talks around the theme of the day: “Women, the driving force of Africa”. Since it was the 150th anniversary of the founding of the White Sisters, they were very much to



Photo Exhibition

the fore in the discussions. When it came to opening up the discussion to questions, instead of questions we had one Algerian visitor after another praising the Sisters and giving examples of how the Sisters had been essential in their personal human and moral growth.

Five students from the Algiers National Superior Institute of Music



Artefacts made by local women

played in the background during the break at **11.30 a.m.** with a selection of Western and Algerian music. This music was a way of encouraging the participants, who had just been discussing, to come into another room where various local women artists were displaying articles they had produced. It was a way of promoting their work and showing off what they were capable of.

10 a.m., after the Rector of the Basilica's speech of welcome, the Archbishop of Algiers, Paul Desfarges, said a few words in French and in Arabic about the recent common declaration signed by Pope Francis and Ahmad Taiyeb, the Rector of Al-Azhar Mosque. Then Imam Hamdane of the Al-Oumma Mosque in Bologhine gave us a talk in Arabic reminding us that "Home of Peace" is one of the names for Heaven and only those with peace in their hearts can enter. He insisted that Islam can never be used as a reason to discriminate against anyone or oppress anyone. The imam has always been a faithful supporter of our Islamic - Christian Days in the Basilica.

8.30 a.m., the day begins with the 15 volunteers arriving to collect their badges and taking their places, whilst the 3 White Fathers of the Basilica – Guy, Peter and José - look at one another. They had checked to see that everything was in place and then uttered the most important words of the 4th Islamic-Christian Day of Mary, **9.30 a.m.** on Saturday 27th April 2019,

"Let's open the doors!"

Lavigerie Founds His Congregations. Part 3.

(Continued from May issue) by Fr. Francis Nolan MAfr

In 1868, during one of his visits to Pope Pius IX at Rome, Lavigerie



Lavigerie towards the end of his life

discussed with him the great areas of Africa still unevangelised. The Holy Ghost Fathers and the members of the Society of African Missions were doing heroic work on the coasts of East and West Africa. The Verona Fathers had founded missions up the Nile beyond Khartoum. But in the vast interior South of the Sahara Christ was still unknown. The Pope gave Lavigerie the responsibility of establishing missions there, giving him the title of Apostolic Delegate for the Sahara and Sudan. For this work, Lav-

igerie decided to found new missionary societies of Fathers, Brothers and Sisters.

The first novitiate for missionary priests was opened in October 1868. The first group who volunteered to join his new Society were three seminarians from the diocese of Algiers. One evening their Rector, Father Girard, popularly known as the Eternal Father because of his great age and long white beard, had spoken to his students of the work of evangelising the Arabs. Three of them went to see Archbishop Lavigerie who told them to continue their studies but to spend more time learning Arabic and at prayer. A few months later they were joined by four other applicants



1st. Caravan to East Africa



Tailoring

and a novitiate was opened in a small rented house on a hill outside Algiers in October 1858. Lavigerie wanted them to adopt, as far as possible, the life style of the Arabs in food, language and dress. A young Sudanese Christian taught them Arabic. They slept on mats on the floor and when a religious habit was decided on,

it was a white Arab gandoura and a burnous or cloak with a red woollen chechia, a hat similar to that customarily worn by Algerian men. In addition the novices wore a rosary round their necks. The original name of the new Society was the Society of the Venerable Geronimo placed under the protection of Our Lady of Africa. (The Venerable Geronimo was an Arab martyr who had been buried alive in the wall of a prison in Algiers.) The name was to change more than once before the missionaries finally adopted the name - Society of Missionaries of Africa. However, because of the white habit, the Fathers were usually called White Fathers.

Lavigerie wrote to his fellow bishops in France appealing for young men of zeal and offered nothing but a life of poverty and hardship. A young priest, Fr. Jean Baptiste Charbonnier, came to join the Society with a testimonial letter from his Bishop. Lavigerie read it and then wrote across it visum pro martyrio - examined and approved for martyrdom. "Do you agree?" asked Lavigerie. "Your Grace," he responded, "it is for that that I have come." He was later to go to the banks of Lake Tanganyika as the first bishop of that region. He died six months



Shoemaking and Repairing



Carpentry

later of malaria and dysentery.

Still in its infancy, the Society and all the other works of Lavigerie faced a great crisis when war broke out between France and Prussia in 1871. Lavigerie depended for financial support on the generosity

of French Catholics and in the turmoil of the war, the source dried up. Lavigerie felt he had no alternative but to dissolve the Society of missionaries. He called one of its members, Father Felix Charmetant, and told him, "You must go and tell your confreres that you are all free to go home any time you please". But Charmetant and his confreres refused to go, and although Lavigerie at first insisted, in the end he gave way and they stayed. All the same, life was hard for many months. The young novices had to supervise the orphanages which were reduced to extreme poverty. Rising at three-thirty in the morning, they went to work for many hours in the fields on very little food: a watery soup, a little porridge, and sometimes a potato. Meat was a rare treat. One novice wrote: "We have just eaten a dead donkey. The poor thing had been dead for three days and the meat was anything but fresh. Personally I prefer the rats, especially the big rats from the quarry. That is the best meat of all." Yet in spite of the hardships, he reported, "We were all very cheerful and no one dreamt of complaining". Eventually the war ended and life in the novitiate returned to normal. In October 1872 the first twelve members of the White Fathers took an oath binding themselves for life to work for Africa. Seven were priests, five were still seminarians. Three months later thirty new novices arrived and henceforth the new Society grew steadily. The mis-



Sisters close to the local women

sionary brothers originally formed a separate society. Lavigerie's plan was that they should occupy themselves mainly with farming to support themselves and help the poor. At first, few candidates were attracted



Medical care

so after three years Lavigerie joined the Fathers and Brothers into one Society. Lavigerie regarded the role of Sisters as of even greater importance than that of Fathers and

Brothers. "The conversion of the Arabs," he said, "if it takes place, will begin with the Arab women." He sent an Algerian priest to look for possible candidates in Brittany in the west of France. Eight young women, two of them only fifteen years old, came in response to the call. They arrived at Algiers on 8th September 1869, the birthday of the Virgin Mary, and were shown to their room. Each had a bare little cubicle separated from its neighbour by a board. They thought sadly of their mothers at home, the long distance they had come,

the strange country in which they now found themselves, and the enormous task ahead of them. "Truly", said one of them, "if there is only us, there will be a fine mess." But they were determined girls and were



Sisters supervising carpet weaving

the strange country in which they now found themselves, and the enormous task ahead of them. "Truly", said one of them, "if there is only us, there will be a fine mess." But they were determined girls and were

not to give up so easily. One of the first group of novices was unable to complete her novitiate owing to ill health. When she returned home, one of her cousins, Marie-Renee, asked her many questions about the work. She described the hard labour of planting vineyards in earth as hard as rock, the long hours of prayer, looking after the many little orphans, washing their clothes and cooking for them. “But, she concluded, “I left my heart there. If I get better I shall go back.” Marie-Renee answered, “I will take your place.” Her mother at first refused but finally was persuaded. Marie-Renee became the first Superior General of the White Sisters with the religious name Mother Salome and



Sisters sewing with Kabyle women

was re-elected to that post for forty-three years. “The conversion of the pagans,” Lavigerie stated, “is only possible if the women are roused by the life of the Sisters, instructed, educated, evangelised.” He saw that the fathers would

never succeed unless helped by women apostles for the women.

“Little by little, they will influence the whole family, and through the family the men, their children and the whole of society.” In recognising the equal importance of Sisters in the apostolate, Lavigerie was indeed ahead of his time. He intended the White Sisters to go to Central Africa and eighteen months after his death a group was chosen to go to Ushiroombo in Tanzania - the first Sisters of any congregation to go into the interior of Africa. Other White Sisters followed, going to Uganda and many other countries, teaching, nursing and undertaking many services for African women and their families.

(Acknowledgements for black and white photos to L'Eglise de l'Algerie Officiel)

Girls and Women in the Land of the Surviving Warriors.

by Paulin Yameogo (a Burkinabe student now in studying Theology in Ivory Coast)

(Continued from May issue)

Karamoja, located in North Eastern Uganda, has been an isolated region because of a strong resistance to change and of the violence and insecurity caused by cattle raiding which only stopped less than a decade ago. In the last article I spoke about the situation of the boys and men, this time I would like to speak of the situation of the girls and women.



Young girl in a quarry

Each young girl has a destiny that she has to accept. Her traditional education will consist of learning whatever is supposed to be done by women - housework, helping to take care of the family, learning how to build a house (house building here is a woman's

specialty), working in the farms and gardens, and so on.

She does so from being a child up to the age of 11 -17 when she is considered of marriageable age. Marriages of girls are early and forced (arranged) by the relatives who receive a large dowry of cattle.

Around 60% of the boys undergo such a traditional education already mentioned above. A few have the chance to go to school when they are 6 or 7 years, a few more when they are already grown up, 15,16,17. But for the girls it is different. In general they are not allowed to go to school, however those who manage at least to start school are stopped when they are married. Some may complete primary school, or part of secondary school, if they are lucky. Very, very few manage to continue to university studies.

Certainly, the elders are not in favor of modern education (schools). They see it as losing their children. They believe that the boys become

disrespectful and the girls lazy. They do not really see or understand the importance of schooling. They are unaware of a changing world beyond their traditions and lifestyle.



Young men and girls with the Parish Priest

Early Marriages

This is a very sensitive issue and has to be approached with a lot of delicacy and wisdom. People are still attached to their traditional values based on cattle. Early and forced

marriages with the associated cattle dowries are present and will be so for years to come.

Traditionally, girls are given after being requested by a man. The man's social and economic status is taken into consideration. Usually girls are given to the man who offers the biggest number of cattle for the dowry. Since it is usually the old men, elders, who have amassed large herds of cattle, so it is common that an older man of 50 or 60 or more, marries a girl of 13, 14, or 15. She might be in love with a younger man, but this is not taken into consideration. Her wishes do not matter.

If the girl resists, she is seriously beaten until she accept the designated husband. It is the culture, she is not an exception, it was the same for her mother and grandmother. What a hard and sorrowful fate of being born a girl here! The girl has no support from people around her, she has to endure whatever befalls her. The girl stands alone against her whole family and clan. There was a case of a girl who committed suicide as a result of being forced to marry an old man.

Polygamy is very strong here. Having many wives is seen as a sign of prestige, as in in many traditional societies. This practice of early and

forced marriages is related to the possession of cattle. In a society where the survival depends on cattle (not really on agriculture because of poor weather and soil conditions), having more cattle guarantees security, survival and social stability. Nowadays the dowry can consist of between 10 and 15 cows and 30 to 50 goats. The marriage is only considered valid once all the dowry has been paid.

Fertility is also essential in the marriage. A woman found to be barren is sent back to her family and the dowry cattle are returned. Although sometimes a husband may keep his barren wife whilst waiting for another one who is fertile.

Girls can be married off very young. Sometimes it happens that a young girl might be inherited by the son of the one who married her. A son or

brother inherits the women of a late father or brother.



Young girls breaking and collecting rocks

In marriage here, the age and the consent of the girl doesn't matter, only the dowry of cattle.

Young people who don't go to school or those who drop out from school are

pushed by misery to go into the mining area to break stones without any protective clothing or goggles, etc. They receive a pittance after filling a whole lorry with tons of stones.

Being there, young people are exposed to alcoholism. Excessive drinking of poor quality of liquors because they are very cheap. Their life is destroyed by both harsh working conditions and alcoholism and HIV AIDS which are also widespread in the mining area.

THE BLACK STONE by Fr. J D'Ambrosio CSSp

Some time ago I received the following article from Fr. D'Ambrosio, a Spiritan Missionary (Holy Ghost Father). He had written it for the Spiritan Magazine (Missionwide) and because, he mentioned the Missionaries of Africa from whom he got the Black Stone, he generously offered this article for inclusion in our Magazine. From the early days of our mission the Spiritans have always lent a helping hand. Much appreciated! Editor.

When I was in Africa, fifty years ago, a nun went out onto the garden path to say her rosary in the cool evening air. A motor bike raced up behind her, and she stepped onto the grass beside the path where she



Most snakes only strike if startled

was bitten by a snake in her foot.

It was a carpet viper, whose name in the local language means “never see tomorrow”. She had only hours to live. Her leg swelled up, and the nuns took her to the nearest hospital which was run by the MMM’s (the Medical Missionaries of Mary). The Italian nun doctor realised it was too late to use serum to save her life, so she cut her leg in three places and

placed three Black Stones on the cuts. Immediately all pain stopped, and her life was saved. That is when I got to know about the Black Stone, which is made by the White Fathers (Missionaries of Our Lady of Africa).

Fast forward twenty five years. One day in another African country, I felt very ill. My eyes were bloodshot, and my tears were like grains of sand: also, I felt very bad in my liver, and was convinced I was going to die. What could I do? Without cutting myself, I placed six Black Stones on the bottom sheet of my bed, and lay on them with my bare back all night. I was cured by morning. Soon after I left with malaria and when I visited the Tropical Medicine centre in St Pancras Hospital in London, they confirmed that my malaria was cured, and also that I had indeed suffered from leptospirosis as I had imagined. Was it the Black Stones

that cured me? Nobody can prove it I suppose one way or another. But I lived to tell the tale!

On another occasion many years before that, I was riding on my motorbike on an earth road, coming back from saying Mass, and the motor cycle skidded in the sand. I landed on my knuckles which were all bleeding and which very quickly turned septic. My hands were suppurating with pus, and I was in great pain. Before going to bed I put a Black Stone on each of my eight pus filled knuckles: immediately the

pain stopped and by morning my fingers were healed.

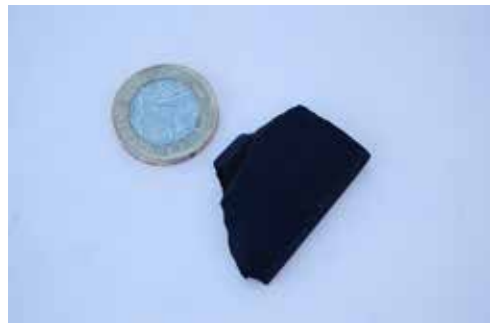


Piece of black stone

So what is the Black Stone? It is just a charred marrow bone of any animal. I have made one myself and it has worked just as good as the originals.

However there is great danger in using the Black Stone. One

day in 1976 I was teaching in a college and I got a message that a woman was dying from snakebite. I went down to where she was. She was conscious but very frightened. She had been bitten by a carpet viper and was bleeding from the wound and also from the nose and the ears because that snakebite makes you bleed from all over: even previous wounds which have healed begin to open again and there is bleeding from the scars. I made a very big and foolish mistake. Instead of taking her to the nearby Catholic hospital where she could receive serum, but probably could not afford to pay for it, I put on a Black Stone. Immediately she felt better and the bleeding stopped. That was at four o'clock in the afternoon. At dawn the next morning a message came that the woman was bleeding again and she was very



Compared with the six pence coin

frightened. This time I put on another Black Stone. A Catholic woman offered to give her blood when the hospital said the woman needed an immediate transfusion, but when the nuns tried to remove the Black Stone sticking to her leg the woman refused: she knew how it was helping her. She was saved. But I had learned two very important and



Scorpions only sting when disturbed

dangerous lessons. **Number**

One: the Black Stone must not take the place of conventional medicine: it must only be used when hospitals are few and far between as in much of Africa.

Number Two: when the Black Stone is put on a wound and after some hours it falls off, it does not mean that the person

is cured. It only means that the Black Stone is full of poison, and when it falls off another Black Stone must be put on immediately, otherwise the person can die despite having used a Black Stone in the first place. You must keep using new Black Stones over and over again, even up to three or four days: only when finally the Black Stone refuses to stick is the person cured. There is also a final thing to say. The Black Stone must not be used on more than one person, because it cures from snake and scorpion bite, and also harmful bacteria. But it does not cure from a virus, such as HIV, so if it is used on a person with HIV virus, and then cleaned and used on somebody else, the second person may get HIV. One person, one Black Stone is the order of the day.

There is one final story. I was visiting our cathedral and the parish priest, a Spiritan told me that a woman had just called him to her house. She had been stung by a scorpion, was seven months pregnant and was frightened that the pain would bring on an early labour and she would lose the baby. Her husband gave permission, we put on the Black Stone, and immediately all pain stopped and the baby came to term. Another success. Although in the old days they said you have to cut the person and press the Black Stone onto the blood, perhaps it works even by just touching the skin as when I had leptospirosis.

What happened to the orphans later?

Lavigerie Part 4 (continued from page 17)

The orphans grew to marriageable age and Lavigerie bought for them a large property where a village was founded. It was called after a great African saint of early times, St Cyprian. The first marriages were arranged practically and expeditiously in a way typical of Lavigerie. The Sisters who looked after the girls chose twelve and asked them if they would be willing to marry. When they shyly agreed, the girls were sent to see the Archbishop. While he was talking to them, as if by chance, twelve youths from the boys' orphanage suddenly entered the room. After introducing everyone, he sent them all out to walk in the garden with instructions to return in pairs in half an hour. Two weeks later twelve weddings were celebrated at St Cyprian. Each couple was provided with a house and furniture, cattle, fields and tools, all solemnly blessed by the Archbishop. After the ceremony, a great feast was held with roast sheep, firing of guns, and dances. Later the White Sisters opened a hospital at St Cyprian to care for the sick there and for the surrounding villages. More orphans married and settled at St Cyprian's until eventually another village called after St Monica was founded.



Boy scouts "Kabyle style"

in Kabylia. Great crowds came to meet him and welcomed him warmly. He told them: "Years ago, your ancestors were Christian; there

Beyond the coastal plain settled by the Arabs, eighty kilometres from Algiers, were the high Atlas mountains of Kabylia. The ancestors of the Kabyles were the early inhabitants of North Africa. They were there long before the Arab invasions. Their language and customs were quite different. Islam had been imposed on them by force after much resistance. In 1872 Lavigerie went to visit their leaders up in the mountains taking with him some missionaries and orphans who had been born

were five hundred bishops in North Africa, many of whom were learned and famous. But the Arabs came and killed the bishops and priests and destroyed Christianity among you.” “We know,” replied the leaders, “It was a long time ago; our grandfathers told us. Now we are Moslems but maybe our sons will become Christian again.” Many of the Kabyles had a cross tattooed on their foreheads. “It is the sign of the ancient way which our grandfathers followed,” one of them explained. “We wear it to bring us good luck.” The Kabyles impressed Lavigerie by their energy and vitality. When he returned to Algiers at the end of his visit, he sent two fathers and a brother to live there. They were received by the village leaders who took them to a little Kabyle hut where they were received by the householder. He spread a mat on the ground and gave them a meal of bread with a little oil. After the meal, he took his stock of food, oil, figs and grinding stone and left the house for the missionaries to live in. The next day, sick people came looking for medicine and three boys came to start lessons. Soon two more communities of missionaries went to live in Kabylia. They spoke with the people in their own language, taught the children, cured the sick. But it was too early to preach the gospel. For the time being the missionaries would simply give the people the services of charity.

The vision of Lavigerie went beyond North Africa, however. Three White Fathers, Paulmier, Bouchard and Menoret were chosen to go to Timbuktu, a city in West Africa on the river Niger. The route lay across the Sahara desert for nearly three thousand kilometres. Many Arab friends tried to dissuade them pointing out the dangers, but they set out accompanied by a young Arab called ibn Bakr as their guide.



Timbuktu: ancient centre of Muslim learning

The last sight their confreres had of them was riding away into the desert, seated on their camels and singing hymns. For five months there was no news of them. Then some ostrich hunters found their bodies. All of them, including ibn Bakr, had been killed by Tuaregs, a desert tribe. The news deeply saddened Lavigerie



Timbuktu- trade centre for salt plaques and slaves

who felt responsible for their deaths. “My poor children,” he repeated, “it is I who sent them. I am the cause of their deaths.” Yet at the same time he admired their courage and generosity. Instead of a Mass for the Dead, he offered a Mass of Thanksgiving for these new martyrs.

After a service in the novitiate, all the novices and fathers present came to volunteer to go to Timbuktu in place of the dead confreres. But Lavigerie refused. It was too dangerous and he wanted no more of these ardent young men to die violently in the desert. Only after Lavigerie’s death were missions established along the Niger.



St. Anne’s church, Jerusalem

In 1877 Lavigerie was invited to look after the Church of St Anne in Jerusalem. According to a very old tradition, the Virgin Mary was born there. He went to Jerusalem and on the way landed at Jaffa where he met some of the Lebanese children, now grown up, whom he had saved in 1860. They presented him with appetising gifts “as heavy

on my stomach as they were pleasing to my heart.” He spent the day talking about their common memories and their lives since then “It made me indescribably happy”, he said. Lavigerie decided to accept the offer of St Anne’s. It would be a special place of prayer for the work of his missionaries. Later the community of White Father there established a seminary which was to train many priests for the Greek Melchite Church.

The evidence of early Portuguese maps shows that Africans living a thousand kilometres and more inland had been trading with the East African coast for centuries. But little news of these people, their chiefdoms and their customs, reached Europe until Burton, Livingstone and other Europeans travelled and wrote descriptions of the land and its people. Their writings aroused great interest, not least in Lavigerie. With the guidance and help of Nyamwezi and Sumbwa merchants and porters along inland routes, missionaries might reach people far from the coast and bring them the gospel. Lavigerie drew up an elaborate plan dividing east and central Africa into four great vicariates and explaining his plan to send his missionaries. In 1878, the new Pope, Leo XIII, approved Lavigerie's grand design a few days after his election. Within a few weeks ten missionaries left Algiers for the Great Lakes, one group for Uganda, north of Lake Victoria, another for Ujiji near



1898 caravan to Nyanza

Lake Tanganyika. On arrival in East Africa, they organised a caravan with the assistance of the Holy Ghost Fathers at Zanzibar and Bagamoyo. Agreements were made with four hundred Nyamwezi porters and fifty askaris as guards. New languages, the climate, sickness, and thirst during the long stages through thick bush all present-

ed great problems to the inexperienced young missionaries. So did negotiations with the chiefs over whose land they passed, and at one point the caravan was attacked and some luggage stolen. Fr Pascal, the leader of the group going to Lake Tanganyika, fell ill and died mid way. He was buried secretly at night in the forest to avoid the payment of a heavy fine to the chief. The whereabouts of his grave is unknown. But his colleagues safely reached Ujiji in January 1879.

Later, the same year, another group of missionaries set off. Its experience was less fortunate. Three fathers died of tropical diseases. A Brother Max was killed by a spear in an ambush. After arrival In Burundi, two Fathers were killed when they tried to rescue a mission child



Stanley finds Livingstone Ujiji 1871- contemporary print

from slave traders. By July 1881, half of the members of the first two caravans had lost their lives; eight of the original Fathers and three of the four Brothers Nevertheless, when saying farewell to members of the third caravan

leaving Algiers, Lavigerie reported the feelings of all the members of the Society: “We swear together to die every one of us rather than abandon these missions to East Africa.” The survivors learnt from experience and continued the work of the apostolate. They were followed by others, Fathers, Brothers and, later, Sisters. The Word was being preached and the first baptisms in Uganda took place at Easter 1880.

In two long letters totalling sixty printed pages, Lavigerie gave long and detailed instructions to the missionaries leaving in 1868 and 1869. They were based on his assiduous study of the writings of the explorers including Burton, Stanley and Livingstone, from his researches as a historian of the early evangelising Church in Europe and the Middle East, and the experience of Bishop Comboni in the Sudan. The range of topics is extraordinary. He considered the problems of travel - trading goods (there was no currency yet), the maintenance of order and discipline in the management of hundreds of porters, even the care of donkeys. As well as spiritual instructions, (the importance of prayer and charity in community life being a practical witness to the gospel), they concerned physical matters like health (protection against malaria, dysentery, eye infections), the quality of water. The physical siting of mission stations and the production of lime for building Churches. He recommended the sowing of vegetables and planting of fruit trees for wholesome nutrition and of vines (for Mass wine) and wheat (for hosts) to reduce dependency on supplies from Europe. He required the missionaries to make observations of geography, geology and natural history for the benefit of scientists in Europe. The missionaries were

to compose diaries recording the customs, history, lifestyle and culture of their people in picturesque detail. He gave advice on relations with chiefs and the unfailing need for gentleness and politeness at a time when Europeans tended to act as superior beings in their dealings with Africans. As far as the apostolate was concerned, the importance of quickly learning local languages, the study and adaptation of the gospel message to local culture and customs. Medical services and education were to be instituted.

The most important of his advice concerned pastoral matters. There would never be enough missionaries so the African Christians themselves should be agents in spreading the faith. Missionaries would be above all initiators and the lasting work would be accomplished by African Christians themselves. First of all, catechists should be trained. Since then, the village catechist system has developed so that as leaders of the Christian communities, they undertake many of the duties of the parish clergy living in distant parish centres and paying occasional visits). Many people in Europe at that time thought it was not possible for Africans to be real Christians but Lavigerie said, "We are all the children of God, whatever the colour of our faces." Within a very few years the heroism of the Uganda martyrs showed how deep and sincere the faith of new Christians might be. They showed the most extreme loyalty to Christ in their readiness for martyrdom, their leader being speared, the others burnt alive together on piles of wood. As Pope Behedict XIV remarked, "if the new Christians could produce martyrs, they could certainly produce priests". In fact even before his election as Pope, the first priests had been ordained for Uganda, Tanganyika and the Congo. To ensure his missionaries understood and assimilated his instructions, each one was told to copy them out in his own hand.

In 1928, they so impressed Bishop Hinsley as papal visitor in East Africa (he later became Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster) he declared Lavigerie "a genius". Lavigerie's vision of Africa being evangelised by the Africans themselves finds expression today in the number of young men and women joining the White Fathers, White Sisters, and other missionary societies.

Tete in Mozambique

I am Aimé Ouédraogo from Burkina Faso and the first student of the Missionaries of Africa sent to Tete in Mozambique for two years of apostolic experience. In this article, I have the privilege to share with you briefly my personal impressions of Tete. Tete is one of the 10 provinces of Mozambique and is located to the extreme Northeast of the country. Here you meet people from all corners of the world, but most of them come from the neighbouring countries of Malawi and Zimbabwe. Economically, Mozambique is poor and the majority of the people live from hand to mouth, despite this they are a joyful people, expressing their gratitude to God in very many ways. On Sundays, the faithful participate actively in the celebration singing, dancing and sharing the little they have by



Consternation as the river rises

bringing gifts to offer during Mass. I had the joy of working hand in hand with the youth in one parish and was struck by their dynamism. They belong to various groups, each group having its spiritual and physical activities planned out for the year. They meet regularly for

singing practices and rehearsals for the drama for Good Friday as well as training for football matches. They visit other young people from the rural communities, trekking long distances to take part in inter-church football competitions that they organize. This initiative makes it possible for the young people belonging to different Christian denominations to socialize and get to know one another, forming friendships. Life was relatively good until the day the population of Tete woke up to the natural disaster on the 8th of March 2019. Internationally this is known as the Day of the Woman, but for the population of Tete, it was Black Thursday. Around 4 a.m water came from nowhere to inundate the population living on the banks of the Robvubué River. Taken by surprise, the people were helpless: Many houses collapsed and a huge amount of property was carried away by the floodwater. Worst of it all is that the flood claimed the lives

of many men, women and children. The disaster left millions of people



Homes, livestock human lives lost

homeless and desperate. Many no longer had houses to sleep in, others who did have houses, had no food to eat or safe water to drink. This calamity came just before the

next disaster, known as Cyclone Idai, which hit Sofala Province (Beira) in the centre of the country. These two calamities have deeply affected not only Tete and Sofala provinces but the whole of Mozambique, the country and the nation. In fact, the damage caused by these disasters is unprecedented and the consequences tremendous. Yet, even though the millions of Mozambicans were demoralized, they did not lose all hope. Many people of good will across the world heard their cries and did not remain indifferent. From the time of the calamity up to now, people from different walks of life and in different nations have been showing their sympathy both in kind and in cash. Life is gradually, and very slowly, returning to normal.

Needless to say, even though a lot has been done to help our brothers and sisters in Mozambique, more help is still needed to put a smile back on the faces of those who became homeless, helpless and at first hopeless. In one word, only more solidarity will help restore the *joie de vivre* of millions of Mozambicans.



Contemplating ruined homes

Aime finished his 2 years in Mozambique and has now gone to South Africa to complete his studies for the missionary priesthood. Editor.

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Parents & Friends Association

EVENTS

The Annual Reunion of Parents and Friends and White Fathers will take place on Sunday 25th August 2019. There will be Mass at 12 noon at Milrig Road, Rutherglen followed by a 3 course meal at the King's Park Hotel, Rutherglen at 2 p.m. The price of the meal is £15.

We look forward to welcoming you and any family members or friends you may wish to bring along, but please let us know by Monday, 14th August if you are coming so that we can inform the hotel of final numbers.

Fr. Donald MacLeod, MAfr, Superior
Email wfscotland@btconnect.com Tel.01416130209

Your charitable prayers are requested

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



Margaret Kelly

Maldon

Velma Ann Rose Booth

Nantwich
(mother of Fr Julian Booth)

Mary Steven

Kirkcaldy

Thomas McGovern

Coventry

Fr. Armind Nazareth

Belgaum, India.

Fr. Patrick Fitzgerald MAfr.

USA

Fr. Patrick Fitzgerald died in USA on 26th June 2019.

*There will be a memorial Mass for him at the
Missionaries of Africa, 64 Little Ealing Lane , London W5 4XF
on Friday 30th August 2019 at 11.30 a.m.*

*This will be followed by a buffet lunch.
A warm welcome to all those who wish to attend.*

RSVP.

lelsuperior@mafrgb.org.uk or 02087995010

May they rest in peace



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