

MISSIONARIES OF AFRICA (WHITE FATHERS)



February 2021



Mary
Queen Of Africa
Pray for Us.
Missionaries Of Africa



Contents

Page

Editor's Word	2 - 3
Changing Experiences of Missionary Travel	4 - 8
Joys of Missionary Animation in Nigeria	9 - 12
Work Apathy in Africa	13 -15
Fr. Stanley Dye MAfr	16 - 17
Ten New Confreres	18 - 22
Blessed are the Peacemakers	22 -24
Your Hands	25
Ways to help fund our Mission	26
Data Privacy Notice	27
Parents and Friends	28
Prayers for the Dead	29
Information + Gift Aid Form	30-32

Please note: We pray for all our readers and benefactors every day at Mass in each of our houses in London, Liverpool and Rutherglen, but if you have a special intention, send it and it will be placed upon the altar and added to our prayers. Please do not feel obliged to enclose a donation.

Editor's Word

Lent begins 17th February this year. It might seem that with Corvid and all the deaths, lockdowns, and financial problems associated with it, we are already living a particularly harsh Lent.



Fr. Michael Heap MAfr

It is true, things are difficult for everyone and for some people who have lost loved ones, jobs or schooling, the losses have been very great indeed. But perhaps we can take this opportunity to look at Lent and our lives in a different way. During Lent we are not invited to suffer but to Pray (Prayer), to Share (Alms) and to Stop Putting Ourselves First (Fasting).

During our lockdowns most of us have been tempted to fill in our time - some fill-ins have seemed good (new pastimes, Zoom encounters) and some less so (TV, over-eating and drinking). How many of us have set aside regular times for speaking with God? Do we set aside time to listen to God? Do we really believe that He is there, that He cares about us (as opposed to checking up on our behaviour), and that He can and does speak to us? We have had plenty of time to think. For some it has seemed too much time and so we try to distract ourselves, for others we have been pushed to look up and re-contact people from our past. Perhaps there are things from our past that we regret. We can try to bury these regrets or we can thank God for bringing them to mind and either ask pardon from God or ask God's help in pardoning. It might not be possible or advisable to go further, but it is a start.

On TV there are lots of adverts asking for help for animal welfare groups or clean water for people in developing countries or contributions to pay for operations for children. Perhaps we can help financially or perhaps not, but at least we can allow our hearts to be opened and moved by compassion, and look beyond ourselves.

On the front of our Magazine there are 3 pictures from Africa. I invite you to look and see how God may be challenging your preconceptions or hardness of heart. Have a Blessed Lent and a Joyful Easter.

The changing experiences of missionary travel

by Fr. Frank Nolan MAfr

Almost every year between 1878 and 1904, missionaries sailed from Marseilles to Zanzibar, crossed to the mainland and then set off for Uganda. With a hundred or more porters to help them transport tools, hardware, building and liturgical materials, they had a hike of eight hundred miles overland to the south of Lake Victoria. On the map, Lake Victoria may look no bigger than a postage stamp. In reality, it is similar in size to Ireland. A lake voyage in sixty-foot long canoes would occupy several



days as the missionaries crossed it round the coastline from south to north to reach their mission on the northern shore. The whole safari (journey),

from Marseilles to Buganda, would take up to six months and was not without danger. More than one father died of tropical illnesses or exhaustion en route. A Brother Max was killed in an ambush by a spear in the back. Then a new way was opened. Between 1896 and 1901, the British government built the Uganda railway running from Mombasa (on the coast of what is now Kenya) to Kisumu on the eastern shore of Lake Victoria. It was a major engineering feat and was designed to open up East Africa for trade and settlement. An

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early traveller, Winston Churchill, described its construction in picturesque terms. “Through the forests, through the ravines, through troops of marauding lions, through famine, through war, through five years of excoriating Parliamentary debate, muddled and marched the railway.” Marauding lions accounted for at least twenty-eight of the workers during the construction, dragging their unfortunate victims from their tents at night. Once the line was completed, early passengers could admire, from the safety of their carriage windows, thousands of animals along the way: zebra, giraffe, impala, gazelles, wildebeest in their thousands, elephants, sometimes the big cats. Snow-capped Kilimanjaro and Mount Kenya were visible on the distant southern horizon. An observation platform, attached to the front of the engine, provided seating for favoured passengers.



President Roosevelt upfront

When former U.S. President Teddy Roosevelt occupied it in 1909, the train was halted at the sight of a lion or gazelle and the animals were hunted. The driver would be rewarded with a leg of venison for holding up the train. In Roosevelt’s progress through East Africa, he personally shot no fewer than 296 large animals, including 15 zebras, 13 rhinoceroses, 8 elephants, 9 lions, 8 warthogs, a crocodile, 5 wildebeests, 6 monkeys, 2 ostriches and 3 pythons. Some of the more edible were consumed

by his companions, others are still visible, stuffed, in the Smithsonian Institute in Washington. The railway was a boon to the missionaries, replacing the long walks on foot. For the incoming young missionary to Africa, the train journey was still an exhilarating





rating adventure in itself. In the early days, four mornings a week a steam engine puffed out of the palm trees and baobabs on the outskirts of Mombasa and headed westwards leaving the moist heat of the coast for the thin cool air of the highlands. But the journey was quite unlike the smooth regular service one would expect to-

day. It was supposed to arrive in Nairobi just twenty-four hours later, and sometimes it did. To climb the steep slope of the Rabai hills, made slippery after rain, the train would reverse, build up steam and then charge at the gradient at full speed (30 kilometres an hour), the driver hoping the momentum would carry it to the top. Stops had to be made for water and to cut wood to heat the boiler. At the beginning of the twentieth century, Nairobi was the headquarters of the railway. (The name comes from the Masai language for a water hole Enkare Nairobi “place of cool waters”.) Initially a city of tents, it was very different from the metropolis of today with its high-rise office blocks and a population of four million. Back in the old days, from Nairobi the train



on for another twelve hours to Kisumu. Then the missionary set out on a voyage across Lake Victoria aboard one of the little steamships of 800 to 1100 tons which had been brought from Paisley or Glasgow in kit form, to be assembled in Kis-





Room for the animals to pass

mu. The missionary might sail north to Buganda, west to Bukoba and thence to Rwanda or Burundi, or to Mwanza on the lake's south coast. From Mwanza, those destined

for Tabora continued their safari for two hundred and thirty miles on new-fangled machines called bicycles. There were no roads, only narrow footpaths through the bush which was far more extensive than it is today. Overnight, they enjoyed the hospitality of the widely spaced missions established and run by their predecessors. The whole journey from Europe took less than a month. Travel on the railway improved over the years. Creature comforts like restaurant and sleeping cars were added. More powerful diesel engines replaced the old steam puffing billies. But the track, only a metre wide, which wound its way upwards serpentlike to a plateau five thousand feet higher than Mombasa, continued to restrict the speed. Since 2017, however, travel between Nairobi and Mombasa is a different experience. A new standard gauge railway has been built with Chinese help. It passes over ninety-eight bridges. Through the Tsavo national game park it is raised to four metres above the ground so that wild animals can cross below it at many points. The intending passenger at Mombasa or Nairobi first presents his or her suitcases to be sniffed at by a drug-seeking spaniel, and then is permitted to enter a large and modern airport-like terminal. Tickets pre-ordered online are downloaded from machines. There is an abundance of helpful and smartly uniformed staff everywhere, assisting even at the lifts and escalators. In the departure area, seating space is ample, separate for first and second class passengers. Shortly before departure, a signal is given to the passengers to entrain and take the pre-booked seat marked on the ticket. Moving smoothly and quietly on a new broad gauge line at a speed of seventy miles an

hour or so, the journey takes less than five hours to cover the 360 miles from Mombasa to Nairobi. The trains are sixteen coaches long with comfortable seating and kept meticulously clean. Refreshments at reasonable prices are available in a buffet car and on a trolley service which passes through the train several times during a journey. However, the experience for the incoming missionary was rather different. After the Second World War, a company called Raptim was formed to fly missionaries out to East Africa in war surplus Dakotas, operated by KLM. The DC3 (Dakota) was a twin-engined propeller-driven plane which droned along at a speed of a hundred and eighty miles an hour. Its range was limited. From Amsterdam it flew to Marseilles, refuelled, and after crossing the Mediterranean, it landed again at Cairo. Flying southwards over Egypt, it followed the Nile to Wadi Halfa in the Sudan. There an overnight stay was made by the thirty passengers, either in the single hotel or in a river boat on the Nile, usually in a temperature of forty degrees. (Today, neither the town of Wadi Halfa nor the old airstrip exist. They disappeared under Lake Nasser after the Aswan dam was built). The next morning the plane flew on to Entebbe in Uganda and, after a brief stop, crossed the lake and continued to Tabora. It flew at only a thousand metres above the ground, so when the pilot saw a herd of elephant he swooped down to give his passengers a closer view. At Tabora, the crew lodged overnight in the seminary before leaving next day for the return flight to Amsterdam. Today, of course, Dakotas have been replaced by modern jets following commercial routes. The modern missionary arrives in East Africa in comfort after only ten hours. The hard work starts after arrival.



Nairobi modern railway terminal

The Joys of Vocations Animation in Nigeria

by Fr. Victor Domshiwe Shehu MAfr, a Nigerian who worked in Ethiopia.

I must confess that working in Nigeria as a Vocations Director could



Fr. Victor with candidates. Some continued as missionaries, some moved in a different direction

be tedious, but it was also fulfilling and certainly memorable. Nigeria is a very religious country which has its over two hundred million population almost evenly distributed between Christianity and Islam. With a bulging labour force and shrinking employment opportunities, vocations to religious life are experiencing an exponential rise and need to be understood not just

within religious and spiritual contexts but also within economic, cultural and social realities. Determining the true motives of religious vocations then becomes a very tricky task for the Vocation Directors because they can so easily get it wrong. Discernment to any specific vocation hinges on the fact that each of us was created with gifts and talents geared towards a particular purpose and way of life. A call by God to serve Him and humanity through the Church as an ordained minister or consecrated religious is a life changing decision and must not be rushed through. We have to understand that a religious vocation starts with God's love for us. He calls in a gentle and loving way and invites us to respond in freedom.

One of the things that shocked me when I took over as the Vocations Animator in Nigeria in 2014 was



Numbers and enthusiasm

the number of applicants seeking to join the Missionaries of Africa. I was greeted with over two hundred and fifty (250) application letters



on my table! My job description was divided roughly under three headings. 1. **Contact** involved replying to enquiries and following up those who seem interested in becoming missionaries, inviting them on visits to our community and visiting them in their families. The further follow up to those who are really serious involves deciding whose names should be put forward for further training, supervising their medical check-ups and arranging for them to start Postulancy in Nigeria.

Vocation Directors on an outing with young people

2. **Collaboration** involved working with Vocation Directors

of other congregations and Orders organising events, rallies and visits to schools throughout Nigeria. Since we in Nigeria form one Province with Missionaries of Africa in Ghana and share the Formation House (in Ghana) where their students and ours study Philosophy together for 4 years, the Ghanaian and the Nigerian Vocation Directors collaborate closely.

Finally 3. **Other!** This involves all the practical stuff like having fliers and T-shirts printed, keeping superiors in Ghana and Rome up to date with what we are doing, etc.

This may all appear to be very far from Mission, yet the very love that I had for the mission made it easier for me. The number of applicants never diminished throughout my six-years in office. From the many applicants I would usually invite around thirty aspirants from different parts of Nigeria. These 30 young minds would be introduced to the



Smile! God loves you

history and charism of our Society as well as improving their English and knowledge of Current Affairs and Church History. It was essential that I get to know the candidates very well before admitting them into the postulancy program. To do this I would organise at least three sessions of the “Come and See” program. They would come and see us in community and we would see them reacting and relating with others over several days. The first “Come and See” program usually took place in December. Of these 30 applicants, 15 would be

subsequently invited to a further “Come and See” before Easter. These fifteen would need to pass all the medical tests and demonstrate a high capacity for community living. At the end of the final session 8 or fewer applicants from these 15 would be recommended for admission into the First Cycle (Philosophy). Why so few? Lack of space! These 8 or so are joined with the similar number of Ghanaian applicants for 9 months before they go to Ghana for Philosophy Studies. What are the criteria for choosing the aspirants?

1. Personal Growth and Maturity: These include good general impression, emotional stability and expression, being able to relate within to others, sense of responsibility, dedication, initiative, creativity, honesty and truthfulness. We are looking for a good person and not a saint.
2. Intellectual Ability and Performance: The aspirant must have at least 6 credits in WAEC including Maths and English. We also encourage creativity and intellectual dedication.



Different congregations but one Church

3. Prayer and Spiritual life: creativity and dedication in participation in the liturgical activities. Taking time for personal prayer, meditation, and spiritual reading.

4. Community life, Social Relations: concern and consideration for others at meals, participation in community activities,

relationship with fellow postulants, formation staff, employees and other people outside the house. In short, we are looking for a missionary who can be “all things to all people”; and who can be a witness of Christ wherever he is. In 6 years of vocations animation in Nigeria I have had both bad and good moments. The time my brakes failed and I ended up the trees; the times my car broke down leaving me stranded in the middle of nowhere; all too frequent sounds of gunshots from scenes of robbery or kidnapping; petty harassments from police personnel demanding gifts or money. But then there were great moments. “Come and See” programs, living in a community full of lively young people; the encouragement and support from my community members; visiting the families of aspirants and confreres for marriages, anniversaries and even funerals left me fond memories that are simply indelible and timeless. Mission in Nigeria was melodramatic, pleasant and difficult, but the joys outweigh the challenges.



Since finishing as Vocation Director in Nigeria, Fr. Victor has spent several months in Nairobi updating before his next appointment

What next?

Work Apathy in Africa

by Promise Frank Ejiofor M.A, M.Phil.

Promise, a Nigerian ex-student with the Missionaries of Africa who continued his studies in Philosophy, Politics and Anthropology at CEU and Cambridge, shares thoughts provoked by ideas he has met concerning Africans and Work which sometimes appear in the West.

In 2014, Okonkwo Achalla released a song in Nigerian creole entitled “No Food for Lazy Man”. Apparently amusing, yet anyone familiar with Nigeria would likely agree that the sentiments of that song can be seen in everyday life. You will find notices expressing similar ideas on commercial buses but also in bars, restaurants, and motels throughout Nigeria. If Nigerians (and other Africans) understand the absolute necessity to work to survive, why is work apathy apparently so widespread? Why the generalised disinterest in work when the people understand work as central to personal and national economic development? The first answer to this conundrum which might come to mind is that Africans are lazy, as shown by their poor attitudes toward work. But this reasoning would be faulty because it is clear from the sentiment in the song mentioned above that Africans clearly cherish work: they know that without it they would lack food. If anything, Africans’ work apathy cannot be explained from some natural, almost inherited, laziness but from the broader context—particularly, the malfunctioning political institutions that do not honour the social contract. In other words, people do not profit fairly from their labour.



A grandmother working hard in Kenya

Since independence from European powers, many African states have still not been able to develop strong political institutions owing particularly to corruption and the lack of fair distribution of resources. While the few members of the political class continue to enjoy state resources that should be evenly shared, the



Working in Burkina for the common good

poorest citizens struggle to eke out a bare existence. African states have been captured by political elites for private gain. Consider, for example, Angola which is one of the richest states in Africa in terms of natural resources but which has a poverty rate of 41%. It was recently revealed that Isabel dos Santos—the daughter

of former Angolan President José Eduardo dos Santos—transferred money from the state account to private offshore accounts in Portugal. We can find similar spectres of corruption in Uganda, Kenya, Mozambique, Nigeria, Mali, Egypt, to name a few. As I see it, ordinary Africans spend most of their time working but getting very little from their work. Low wages are rampant in the continent so that many have to do two or three more jobs to provide for their families. High school teachers in Africa are usually not just teachers but market traders. Professors have to teach in about five different universities in order to make ends meet, even though the result would be that their output and commitment to students would ultimately be insufficient. Some Africans no longer find value in western education as they see how university graduates are either unemployed or poorly paid. Others resort to dubious activities, including drug trafficking, prostitution, oil bunkering, illegal gold mining, and even cyber fraud. Yet others resort to informal work like hairdressing, market trading, butchering, tailoring, and street hawking to survive. It is no coincidence, then, that Africa has the highest number of informal economies in the world since many cannot access worthwhile jobs in the formal sector. For the few—the very few—who can access education in the West, such an opportunity presents them the opportunity to excel, and they frequently do excel. But, in most cases, the well-paid jobs in Africa are reserved for politically connected people. Lacking health insurance and unemployment benefits normal with the western model of the welfare state and which provides benefits for its citizens, the ordinary

African inhabits an exceptionally risky and unsupported world. The consequence is that many do not find meaning in work in Africa and instead turn toward Europe, Asia, and the Middle East where their skills would be put to better use and where work could earn them a decent living. The differences in development between western countries and African states cannot be explained away by the varying attitudes of their populations toward work. Such an interpretation not only risks putting whole peoples in the same bag based on perceived internal characteristics but also denies to the millions of ordinary Africans who risk everything to make their own lives better, the possibility of improving this life by their own efforts. Most important, the “blaming-the-victim” perspective ignores the context, the political situations, and any analysis of the sources of economic development. Politics drives development so that we can explain the differences in levels of economic advancement from the strength of political institutions. Strong political institutions with good leadership and very low corruption ensure the fair distribution of resources and create positive work incentives for citizens. The truth is that Africans really like work—but certainly not meaningless work that contributes little or nothing to their well-rounded human development. And this is the result of failed and failing political institutions that do not provide any positive incentives. This, I suspect, is the source of Africans’ work apathy. However, we should not think that meaningless work exists in Africa alone. Meaningless work is equally multiplying in the West. This is psychologically destructive and makes it harder to believe the idea that a good work ethic leads to success.



Street trading to make ends meet in Ivory Coast

How then can we persuade our different political institutions to create more meaningful, and less meaningless, work and to provide the basic resources for the most underprivileged members of our communities?

Fr. Stanley Dye MAfr. 1953 -2010 by the Editor

Fr. Stan Dye died on 6th. December in North Wales. He was born in Sunderland in 1953 and was by profession a teacher. It was as a teacher that he volunteered to work in Tanzania and then in Kenya with VMM (Volunteer Missionary Movement - a lay organisation founded by Edwina Gately). I met Stan when he arrived in Dar es Salaam as



Arrival at St. John's

a volunteer in 1974. A friendly, quiet man who seemed to have an immediate rapport with the young people he met. He went off to teach in Rulenge Diocese and the next time I met him was in London in 1986. He had by this time asked to become a Missionary of Africa and after Noviciate in Zambia he ended up in Totteridge, London to continue his studies for the priesthood at the Missionary Institute in Mill Hill. Forward to 1987 when I was honoured to take part in his ordination in Sunderland which he celebrated with his family. Again another year and I met him in Sunderland when we went out for a Chinese meal and he told me all about

his studies of Arabic and Islam. He was appointed to Sudan and was preparing by his studies in Rome. He was full of life and looking forward to his first mission. The next thing I heard was that not long after starting work in the Sudan he contracted a virus which attacked the muscles of his back.





Fr. Stan's sister and friend praying with Stan

Despite several painful operations he eventually came back to UK and was partially paralysed - confined to a wheelchair. Perhaps confined is not the right word. He was made superior of Oak Lodge (one of our houses in London) and got about with amazing agility on crutches and

eventually with an electric buggy. As superior he was particularly kind to the older confreres. Apart from his work as superior he was also part of the Marriage Tribunal in Westminster. A position where empathy and sympathy are always appreciated. He used to get down to the Cathedral for the Tribunal and for liturgies in his specially adapted car in which he could also transport his buggy. Eventually he moved to St. Beuno's in North Wales, to the Jesuit Retreat House where he worked on the staff accompanying retreatants for several years. His quiet good humour and attentive listening were very much appreciated. His end was as quiet and unassuming as his life. He caught an infection of the oesophagus and died. But again "end" is the wrong word. He has continued his life with the Lord. Just as he adapted to a greater life than what he

expected after being infected in Sudan, so now his life has come to fruition, hidden in the Lord. Because of the Coronavirus, his funeral was a quiet affair befitting a quiet man. May he rest in peace.



Final Commendation Kensal Green, London

May he rest in peace.

TEN NEW CONFRES

by Augustine Rotshak Gonsum,
a Nigerian student of the Missionaries of Africa in Abidjan

The love of Christ compels us, makes us apostles and gives our lives unity in the service of the Gospel (cf. 2 Cor. 5 : 14). Driven by this love and open to the Holy Spirit, 10 young men consecrated their lives to proclaiming



ing Jesus and His Gospel. It was a joyful moment for the Society of the Missionaries of Africa to welcome ten new confreres, who took their perpetual Oath on the 12th December 2020. The 10 young men, who are completing their theological studies at the “Institut Catholique

Assembling to take their Missionary Oath

Missionnaire d’Abidjan” expressed publicly their readiness to consecrate their lives for Africa and the African world. This took place in the formation house « Fraternité Lavigerie » in Abidjan, Ivory Coast, with the Provincial of West Africa, Fr. Luc Kola, presiding and representing the General Council. The 10 new confreres officially received into the Society were:

Paul Paipi Chimwemwe (Malawi), Pascal Mare (Burkina Faso), Emmanuel Niyonzima (Burundi), Innocent Iranzi Majune (DR Congo), Paul Agric Gumanoshaba Agric (Uganda), Patient M. Cimanuka (DR Congo), Cyprian Aondoer Chia (Nigeria), Innocent Matata Foto (DR Congo), Vincent Somboro (Mali) and Peter Ijege Ohobu Peter (Nigeria).



Swearing on the Gospels

The chief celebrant, Fr. Luc Kola In his homily Fr. Luc called upon the



Assembling for Diaconate ordination

Christ. At the end of the celebration, Vincent Somboro from Mali, expressed the joy of the new confreres and their appreciation to the society for the confidence shown to them, accepting them to be members of the society by calling them profess their Perpetual Oath. In addition to Fr. Luc 8 other confreres and Formators took part in the celebration. Then a week after the perpetual Oath, the 10 new confreres were ordained deacons at the parish Saint Jean-Baptiste d'Abobo Avocatier, Abidjan, by Boniface ZIRI GBAYA, Bishop of Abengourou, Ivory Coast. The mass started at 9a.m. with quite a number of people and priests coming from far and near to witness the occasion. The parish priest, represent-

new confreres to be salt of the Earth and light of the World. But what good is salt without taste a lighted a lamp under a bowl? He encouraged them to be shining examples in their missionary work and insisted that apostolic love requires us to be “ all things to all people”, devoted and zeal following



Proclaiming the Gospel



Litany invoking the Saints

ed by his assistant, gave the welcoming speech after which the Rector Fr. Francois Xavier Bigeziki, MAfr, presented the ten candidates to the bishop. The Rector testified that



Promising obedience

their willingness to consecrate their lives in the service of the church. The bishop declared them worthy to be ordained and the whole congregation applauded and sang the Gloria. Then the Bishop reminded the 10 young men that they were accepting to be truly ambassadors of Christ in Africa and in the African world, following the example of their founder Cardinal Lavigerie. They must carry out their missionary work with love and dedication if they were to bear fruits

after inquiry amongst the People of God and upon the recommendation of those concerned with their training the candidates had been found worthy. Then in a brief dialogue with the Bishop, the candidates expressed



Laying on of hands

for the salvation of the world and for the glory of God. After the homily, the young men promised to live lives of celibacy. Then each candidate while kneeling before the bishop promised to obey their bishops wherever they worked. Next the bish-



Congratulating the new deacons

op invited the congregation to pray that God would mercifully pour out his blessings on the candidates whom, in his kindness, he would raise to the sacred Order of the Deacon. The Litany was sung asking for the prayers of all the saints, the bishop extended his hands over all the candidates and prayed the prayer of consecration. Then the rite of ordination concluded



with the laying of hands by the bishop and the placing of the gospel in the hands of the newly ordained. Their new role in

We join the offering of our lives to that of Christ

life was to proclaim this Word of God. As is usual, one of the newly ordained, (Deacon Pascal Mare from Burkina Faso) expressed gratitude to all and sundry for their prayers and support on behalf of the newly ordained deacons. Then Fr. Francois Xavier Bigeziki (the Rector) thanked



the bishop and all those present during the event. Finally the bishop thanked the Society and the parish for the warm reception. We wish our new deacons a fruitful mission, to be apostles and nothing but apostles. May Our Lady of Africa intercede for them.



“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.”

Award given to Card. Michael FitzGerald MAfr in Chicago, 17th June 2020

Pope Francis acknowledged the extraordinary ministry of Cardinal Michael Fitzgerald at his elevation to Cardinal in October, 2019, “The readiness of a cardinal to shed his own blood — as signified by the scarlet color of your robes — is secure if it is rooted in this awareness of having been shown compassion and in the ability to show compassion in turn”. Cardinal Fitzgerald’s life is certainly testament to his extraordinary compassion. Early in his life in Walsall, England, he demonstrated



Cardinal Michael, Fr Bartelemy Bazemo MAfr (USA superior) and staff of the Catholic Theological Union in Chicago

a strong desire to serve as a missionary bringing the gospel to the wider world. His theological studies took him to Tunisia where he began to learn Arabic, thus laying the foundation for a lifetime ministry of inter-religious dialogue and understanding. Ordained in 1961, he became a priest of the Society of Missionaries of Africa (White Fathers).

Cardinal Michael Fitzgerald's full life of service has included his work as a scholar, educator, pastor, author, and diplomat. His life was enriched by his early years in Africa ministering to the Catholic population while fostering communication and understanding with the Muslim community. He served as president of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue and was appointed by Pope Benedict as papal nuncio to Egypt and the Arab League. His being named a Cardinal by Pope Francis underscores the Church's commitment to interreligious dialogue and is a recognition of Cardinal Fitzgerald's unique leadership.

In the words of his friend Donna Orsuto, Director of the Lay Centre in Rome, His unwavering commitment to promote interreligious dialogue, especially Muslim-Christian dialogue, has been an inspiration for many, including myself. His unfailing generosity and availability to be of service in a selfless way, without fanfare is so appreciated. I remember the many times over the years that he has simply spent time "being" with students informally, listening to their concerns and sharing with them his experiences.

For a school of theology preparing women and men for ministry in the church of the 21st century, the values exemplified by Cardinal Michael Fitzgerald stand at the center of Catholic Theological Union's own vision: Impelled by the good news of Jesus Christ, CTU, with its intercultural, ecumenical, and interfaith partners, will be a transformative force in the Church and world for affirming human dignity and the sacredness of God's creation. For Cardinal Fitzgerald these are not abstract values or distant ideals, but virtues that inform the deepest commitments of his life.

The students, faculty and trustees of Catholic Theological Union give thanks for those whose lives witness to the power and beauty of the Gospel. This day we honor such witness in the life-giving mission of Cardinal Michael Fitzgerald, M.Afr., and in that spirit are pleased to

confer upon him the 2020 Blessed are the Peacemakers Award.

Below is a short excerpt of Cardinal Michael's reply to the Award.

I wish to express my gratitude to the Catholic Theological Union in Chicago for granting me this award "Blessed are the Peacemakers". I am sure there are many people more deserving of it than myself, but I do offer my sincere thanks. I would like to take this opportunity of expressing my gratitude to a number of people.

In the first place my thanks go to the Institute to which I belong, the Society of Missionaries of Africa. The decision to send me to Carthage, Tunisia, for theological studies prior to ordination as a priest, set me on the path of interreligious relations. Some Arabic was introduced into the program and of course we were living in a Muslim environment.

But as a final reflection. How can interreligious dialogue contribute to peace?

I do not think that interreligious dialogue of itself can solve problems; I do not see it as a fire-engine which can be rushed to the scene to put out fires. Dialogue can of course be of some help. If religious leaders in an area have made the effort to get to know one another and to build up trust, they can speak with one voice and have a calming influence when conflicts arise. They can encourage their communities to cooperate in bringing about the necessary changes in society so that the rights of all are respected. But I would consider dialogue to be more at the level of preventive medicine, helping to avoid conflict. The more we know people, the more aware we become of their religious belonging, the greater appreciation we acquire of the riches of their traditions, the less we shall be inclined to quarrel and to fight. We can work together to promote peace, not only for ourselves but for all our brothers and sisters, whether they belong to a religious tradition or not.

Peace is for everyone and for all times. Blessed are the Peacemakers whoever they may be.



Prayer poem from a reader in Scotland

by Jpd.Edinburgh.4.9.2020

Your Hands Dear Lord Were pierced by me
Were pierced To hang You On the tree



Though long ago In Roman days
The nails were sharpened By my ways

Older now I see it all
Your Passion cruel For my fall

I see Your hands On Altar now
Pierced and red And now I bow

I see it now The picture clear
My sin it was That cost you dear

You died for me You died for us
cruel death For all of us

Dear Lord Dear Lord I'm wiser now
Before the cross I bow, I bow

WAYS TO HELP FUND OUR MISSION

WHITE FATHERS

IF YOU WANT TO REMEMBER US IN YOUR WILL,
We propose you use this formula:

“I give to the **Society of the Missionaries of Africa (White Fathers)** the sum of free of duty, and I declare that the receipt of the Father Treasurer of the Society in Great Britain, who now resides at 64, Little Ealing Lane, London, W5 4XF, shall be of good discharge.”

Registered Charity in England and Wales No. 233302
Charity registered in Scotland No. SC037981

SUPPORT OUR APOSTOLATE:
PLEASE USE THE DONATION FORM OVERLEAF

Above all, please help us with your prayers

Please complete the Gift Aid declaration overleaf and send it to:

Missionaries of Africa (The White Fathers), 15 Corfton Road, LONDON, W5 2HP.

or in Scotland to:

Missionaries of Africa (The White Fathers), 9 Milrig Road, Rutherglen, GLASGOW, G73 2NG.

Please notify the charity if you:

1. Want to cancel this declaration.
2. Change your name or home address.
3. No longer pay sufficient tax on your income and/or capital gains.

Tax claimed by the charity:

- The charity will reclaim 25p of tax on every £1 you give.
- If you pay income tax at the higher rate, you must include your Gift Aid donations on your Self Assessment tax return if you want to receive the additional tax relief due to you.

If you would like to make donations by Standing Order, please tick below and we will send you the appropriate forms: []



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You may view our full Privacy Policy on
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You can **OPT OUT** at any time, stop receiving this magazine and have your name and address removed from our mailing list by:

- writing to us by post at
**15 Corfton Road,
LONDON, W5 2HP.**
- email to
corfton@mafrgb.org.uk
- using the contact submission form on our website:
www.missionariesofafrica.org.uk
- using the Fundraising Preference Service website:
<https://public.fundraisingpreference.org.uk/>

The Missionaries of Africa (White Fathers) is a registered charity in
England and Wales No. 233302
and in Scotland No. SC037981.





Our latest lockdown began 14th September 2020, Feast of the Exaltation of the Cross. From that day onwards our “parishoners” have been unable even to cross the threshold due to the Government regulations. We have to meet and greet them at the door.

Our Promotion secretaries are both considered vulnerable persons and work from home, but we are very grateful to them and the cook and domestic staff for their unstinting service.

As for us, we continue to meet in our “bubble” for daily Mass and prayers but of course no-one from outside is allowed in. Otherwise, we get out for walks and some shopping. Anything else is done on Zoom or the Internet. Five of us have received our vaccination so far, Fr Donald is due in February and Fr William Crombie is still waiting.

As for the Parents and Friends - we can no longer invite anyone to daily Mass, and get-togethers and bingo-sessions have all been cancelled.

Despite everything, we continue to remember all Missionaries working in Africa and elsewhere and pray daily at Mass for all Missionaries and departed members of the Parents and Friends Association who have left us for their heavenly reward. May God bless all you, our supporters and friends. Please continue to keep us in your prayers just as we keep you in ours.

Fr William Crombie MAfr. Rutherglen

Your charitable prayers are requested

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



Lawrence Ludden

Ronald Fitton

Mrs Isobel McNeillis

Michael Patrick McDonell

Gerald Price

Terry Maffia

Mrs Patricia Smith

Fr Stan Dye MAfr

Penketh, Warrington

Windermere, Cumbria

Edgware, London

(Wf. student 1948-58)

Cheltenham

Isle of Wight

Worcestershire

St Beuno's, N. Wales

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
15 Corfton Road,
LONDON W5 2HP

THE WHITE FATHERS
9 Milrig Road,
GLASGOW G73 2NG

Every letter or donation receives a personal acknowledgement.

Please make cheques and Postal Orders payable to:
'The White Fathers.'

***You can now donate online. Have a look on our homepage
<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:

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Find out more about us at:

www.missionariesofafrica.org.uk

Gift aid form available on our **website**

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

White Fathers in England & Wales
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Charity Registered in Scotland No. SCO37981 ISSN 0262-1061

GIFT AID DECLARATION

Name of Charity: The Society of Missionaries of Africa (aka The White Fathers)
In England & Wales, Registered Charity No. 233302
Charity registered in Scotland No. SC037981

I want the Charity to treat

[] The enclosed gift of £.....as a Gift Aid donation; **OR**

[] The enclosed gift of £..... and any donations that I make in the future or have made in the past four years as Gift Aid donations.

✓ Please tick the appropriate box.

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Date:.....

By signing this declaration, you agree to your details being held securely by the Society of Missionaries of Africa and being sent electronically to HMRC. They will be used for processing Gift Aid and for no other purpose, apart from informing an individual you wish to benefit as and when you send a restricted donation. Your details will be retained for as long as required under the relevant Finance Act.

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