

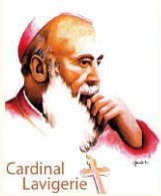
# MISSIONARIES OF AFRICA

## (WHITE FATHERS)

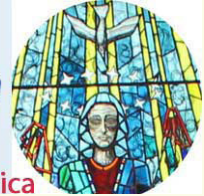


SAINT ANTHONY  
NOVENA EDITION

Issue No. 434  
JUNE 2017



*Mary  
Queen Of Africa  
Pray for Us.*  
**Missionaries Of Africa**

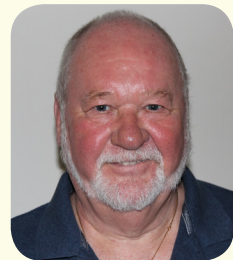


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## Editor's Word.

The yearly Novena to St. Anthony is already here again. We invite you to send your petitions. We will place them unread before his statue at Mass for the nine days of the Novena. We will join our prayers to yours and to those of St Anthony that God may hear us and bless us. We cannot buy God's blessings. But any offerings sent with the petitions are used for our missionary work, the Church's missionary



**Fr. Michael Heap MAfr**

work, your missionary work.

However, St Anthony's Burse is different. Money sent to this Burse is used only for the education and formation of students who are training for the African mission.

In the editions of the Magazine, I have begun to add news from our students, to show what they are doing. Some students realise that God is not calling them to be priests or brothers, and they continue to live their Christian vocation in different ways. Therefore I add stories of ex-students who have been influenced by the spirit of the Missionaries of Africa and who continue to answer God's call as laymen, married or single. Your money spent on their formation has definitely not been wasted.

Then there are the "oldies". Supporters of the missions have contributed to their work over the years. But what happens between leaving Africa and returning to the Lord? In the past, most missionaries died on the missions. With better sanitation and healthcare, we are all living longer. How do older missionaries adapt to life away from Africa? What are the challenges they face?

Finally, we hear so much about the threats of militant Islam, and of huge numbers of Africans and people from the Middle East fleeing to Europe. These can be presented as a threat. How should we react? In this and other editions, I try to bring news of what we, Missionaries of Africa and others, are doing to help integrate migrants into Europe, so that they can contribute to the life of our countries, bringing their own specific gifts, as opposed to being seen as violent invaders.



This month a British Missionary of Africa, Fr. John MacWilliam, will be consecrated Bishop of Laghouat, a huge diocese in Southern Algeria. He will be consecrated in Worth Abbey on 20 May 2017.

I will give more news of him in the next issue, but as a foretaste I have added an extract from a travel journal by Fr. Frank Nolan written when he visited Algeria 10 years ago.

It was a time of violence, killing of innocents, people fleeing for their lives. It was also a time of hope, love, risking one's life to

live in peace with others because that is what Jesus did, and continues to do through his followers, his brothers and sisters.

"Jesus looked at his disciples and said, 'For human beings it is impossible, but not for God; for God all things are possible.'"

*Mark 10:27.*

All this is what your prayers and your contributions go towards.



# A Visit to Algeria in 2006.

*Ten years ago, our confrere Fr. Frank Nolan visited Algeria and noted down his experiences. Our confrere John MacWilliam is to be ordained Bishop of Laghouat, Algeria in May 2017, so I thought that this edited extract from Fr. Frank's journal would be appropriate. Editor.*



[The Cathedral, Algiers.](#)

Arriving in Algeria, the first thing one notices is the security. Tough looking men in black uniforms supervise (from a distance) the disembarkation from the plane, security police with automatic weapons stationed at crossroads, etc. Algiers has suffered a great deal of violence since the arrival of the French colonial forces whose punitive raids in the 19th century caused starvation when they burnt villages and crops, through the road to Independence in the 1950s and 60s, then the revolt of the Islamists in the 1990s which occasioned the deaths of 200,000 civilians. So now the priority of the government is peace and security. Under the eyes of the police and armed forces, life has returned to normal and one can travel round the country without any sense of danger.

I passed quickly through the formalities and after an excellent meal of couscous, chicken and vegetables at the White Fathers' house, I set off East for Tizi Ouzou, with Olivier, a Burundian stagiaire. After a journey of 90 minutes by bus (about 90 pence for 60 miles), we arrived. Tizi Ouzou is in Kabylia and the people are Kabyles. Their language and culture (and even their physical appearance) are different from the Arabs although since 1980 the common medium for education is Arabic. Zidane (the footballer) although born in Marseilles is of Kabyle ancestry.

In the White Fathers' house I met the community, ranging from a young Congolese to an elderly Kabyle confrere. At one time the White Fathers

and White Sisters ran a number of schools there, but all were nationalised after Independence. Thanks to the country's oil wealth, all education, up to and including university level, is now free, hence the presence of numerous students from sub-Saharan Africa.

In 1994, the General Election was won by the Islamists. The results were rejected by the government and there was much violence. Many European settlers and workers fled, as 200,000 Algerians lost their lives including 10% of the clergy and religious (foreign and Algerian).

Sr. Paul-Helene of the Little Sisters of the Assumption was killed whilst working in the library. Sr. Esther Alonso, who worked with handicapped children was asked if she was afraid? She replied that no-one could take her life since she had already given it. She was murdered on her way to Mass with another sister.

Sr. Jeanne Littlejohn answered the same question. "We must not be afraid. We must only live in the present moment." She was killed with another sister returning from Mass. Seven Trappists, the Dominican Bishop of Oran, and many more sisters and brothers were killed.

On 27th December 1994, armed men broke into the White Fathers' house in Tizi Ouzou and murdered all four priests there, Frs. Jean Chevillard, Alain Dieulangard, Charles Dekkers and Christian Chessel. Fr Charlie Dekkers, who had taken Algerian nationality, was only there that day because he had come to spend his 70th birthday with Algerian friends.



Fr Frank Nolan

All these men and women were very different one from another, but all were united by their love for the Algerian people.

This is only an extract from the journal of Fr. Nolan. I will try to put more in a later edition of the Magazine. Editor.

## Migrants in Sicily by Fr. Vittorio Bonfanti, MAfr.

“...This year we, the Diocese of Noto, have received a special gift. A missionary community, founded here for the whole of Sicily. It will be housed next to the Sanctuary of Our Lady of Grace in Modica and will help us to develop further a welcoming mentality...” Diocesan newspaper, May, 2016.

Thus was announced the arrival of Srs. Giovanna Minardi and Raquel Soria, and Frs. Gianni Treglia and Vittorio Bonfanti. From four different missionary congregations, they live as one community at the service of migrants coming by sea via Libya.

Libya has a long Mediterranean coastline (1100 miles) facing Sicily and has been used more and more as a point of embarkation for desperate migrants seeking safety and opportunities in Europe. In their thousands they come in dinghies, many losing their lives in the crossing.

Should they come? Shouldn't they? Irrelevant when they have already arrived with nothing. What can we do?

Fr. Vittorio Bonfanti, a Missionary of Africa who spent many years in Mali, writes:

During our first year we just observed, visiting areas where migrants land, reception centres, greenhouses where they work and different aid associations.

We offered ourselves for training meetings for the clergy in local parishes and for young people in secondary schools. But since we are missionaries, we set aside time for daily morning and evening prayer together, weekly *Lectio Divina*, a monthly day of prayer and retreat, and regular organisational and evaluative meetings of the community.

As a community, we aim at meeting immigrants personally. As missionaries, we draw attention to, appreciate and share knowledge of other cultures. We are available to listen to what migrants have been through, offering help and spiritual guidance when requested.

As time has gone by, new challenges have appeared, such as visiting prisons in the area where there are migrants. Another challenge is the arrival, in ever greater numbers, of unaccompanied child migrants. The paucity of structures, organisations and services means that these young people are at risk and a prey to all types of abuse



Our Community



and exploitation.

Yet another challenge is within our community itself. Formed of people who share a common denominator – mission, but coming from different institutes - Consolata Missionaries, Missionaries of the Immaculate, Missionaries of Africa, different spiritualities, different charisms and different missionary experiences.... It is a challenge to be a living sign, being together and at the same time being different.

From the very beginning we have not considered ourselves as apart from, but as part of, the local community, part of the Church in Italy. This has encouraged collaboration and reciprocal respect.

The Canossian Fathers provided accommodation and volunteers saying, “Welcoming migrants becomes an honour and a return, a return of dignity for them and for us”.

The Salesian Sisters in Pozzallo are offering their home as a Youth Centre. Pozzallo, near Modica is known for the numerous migrants landing there. This will be a safe place for unaccompanied minors arriving on the coast of Sicily to play, study and meet local young people.

We collaborate with CARITAS who run courses of Italian For Foreigners, and with MIGRANTES who do great work with the numerous young people.

Last March, a committee was organised where the migrants who work in greenhouses in the area can find help for legal and health difficulties.

Daudà, a young Muslim imam from Mali spoke up, “A person is not poor because he has nothing to eat, but because he cannot live in freedom.”

A Valdese (Protestant) minister remarked, “Like the eleventh hour workers in the Gospel, telling us about the stress of waiting for work, it is the fact that their Employer still calls them, even at the last moment, that lets us know that there is always hope for the ones who are last.”



A typical migrant's dwelling.

# “Work, work, Father! You have the whole of eternity to rest”

Cardinal Lavigerie

**Fr. Tom Reilly MAfr**, *ex-US Marine, ex-San Francisco postman, Missionary of Africa, ex-Zambia and ex-India*, writes about his feelings as a retired missionary living in community with four other “retired” Missionaries of Africa and two Missionaries of Africa doing further studies:

“Where has the USA gone?” Odd question for an American, born and bred. But arriving back in the US, I asked this more than once. Women with tattoos? Growing up I never saw this. And, the vocabulary? I haven’t heard such language since my days as a Marine...and from women too! Am I really home?

My mother was physically handicapped, so I used to shop for her in a small corner shop. The shop I found here after 24 years in Zambia...!? “Gigantic” is an understatement. I did not know that there were so many varieties of bread. Who will eat all this? Has anyone counted all of the different types of cheeses? Who would want to?

Since I heard that insurance companies have a new category for accidents – Texting and Walking - I pray for those who cross the street without glancing at the traffic.

As for computers!!

Google everywhere! “I Googled it.” “Did you find this on Google?” When I was a student we had typewriters. I overheard a teenager bragging he had seen a typewriter...in a museum. I feel for the dinosaurs!

Arriving back in the US, I was told “Learn to relax!” What’s that? Here in



Sign seen in Washington.



Sign seen in Washington.



Washington D.C. I try relaxing by walking and observing. When out walking, I like to look at the houses near our community house. Some houses are over 100 years old...like our house. Fascinating!

Just around the corner from us is a house where “The Irregulars” – WW2 British spies - lived. Prime Minister Churchill tasked “The Irregulars” with getting the USA into WW2 to support Great Britain. One of these “spies” - Roald Dahl - married the Hollywood actress, Patricia Neal. He also wrote a book that Walt Disney turned into a film on “Gremlins”. Wow, history “lives” here!

According to “The Irregulars” (written by Jannet Constant), Dahl used “his good looks, wit, and considerable charm to gain access to the most powerful figures in American political life” to draw the US into WW2; subverting companies that did business with Nazi Germany, and assisting the OSS (afterwards the CIA). This is much better than the 007 fiction of Ian Fleming (also in the same spy ring). Their official title was British Security Coordination, but they preferred “Baker Street Irregulars”, hence the title of the book.

Arriving “home” just before the recent elections, I saw that people had put their thoughts on signs just like in Zambia or India. But I found at meal-times, politics are best avoided.

I am not needed in parishes much. Seminaries abound in Washington: Franciscans, Dominicans, Jesuits, Diocesans, and priests at the Catholic University. So who needs a 74-year old missionary? When I do preach, I include mission stories...but do people get the point? God will sort it out. I’m a born optimist!

I take part in prayer groups: Cursillo and Sant’Egidio, as well as working with the homeless: praying, giving encouragement, and directions for possible employment and housing.

I maintain contact with Zambian friends, and support another Fr. Reilly in Ethiopia.

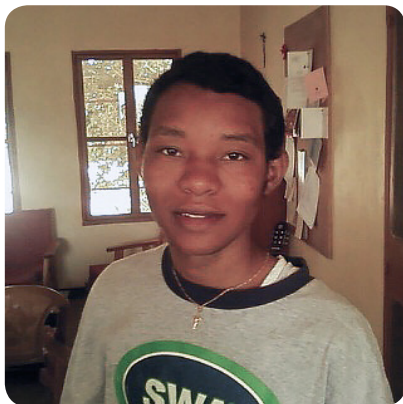
Yes, I am “working” on relaxing for the first time, since I joined the M.Afrs in 1973!



Our community house

## God Writes Straight with Crooked Lines by Diande Tidiane Patrick

The Lord calls us in many different ways and to many different ways of following him. As Missionaries of Africa our task is not to try to “grab” as many candidates as possible, but to help each and every person we meet to listen and discover what God is calling them to. In this way, we build up the local church as our Founder, Cardinal Lavigerie insisted. We are called to work for Africa, not for the Missionaries of Africa. Editor.



Diande Tidiane Patrick

My name is Diande Tidiane. I was born in 1986 into a loving Muslim family in Burkina Faso, West Africa. I had a marvellous father, Diande Arganaba, a strong mother, Diande Safiatou, one brother and five sisters. Then, when I was eight, my father died and, as is often the case in such circumstances, I was taken away to my uncle's village. Suddenly life was totally different from what I had known with my family, with my mother and father and siblings. Although sent to school, my life was one of dire poverty and like many others I was forced to beg for money in the marketplace for a notebook and biro. It was there I met a European who was moved by my tears and my pleas. This was Fr. Joseph Cummins, a Missionary of Africa and my future benefactor. He arranged for my schooling to be financed and when, after primary school, I got to secondary school in the town, he found a Catholic family for me to stay with. The life of faith of this family so impressed me that I wished to become a Christian also. And so I began catechism classes. These were serious and lasted for three years, all told. Finally, in 2001, I was baptised, with the name of Patrick, in Ouagadougou Cathedral, Burkina Faso, and received Holy Communion for the first time.



Patrick with friends

My school and lodgings were very close by the mission and so it was normal that I often came across the priests. I was struck by the way these men lived their lives and by their work. They lived in community and were there completely at the service of the people.

It was at this point that I decided to dedicate my life to following Christ, and I entered the formation programme of the Brothers of the Holy Family. I was given a religious formation and followed retreats with the Brothers, but during the holidays Fr. Joseph arranged for me to follow retreats given by another White Father, Fr. Jean Clochard. Fr. Jean made a deep impression on me, and so, with the help of these retreats and Fr. Joseph's spiritual direction, I continued to ponder on my vocation.

After my baccalauréat, I was accepted at university and after four years hard study, I obtained my Masters degree in Business Law, and started work in a judge's office. A long, long way from begging in the marketplace! All that time I had been reflecting on what God might be calling me to. Eventually, I came to see that God was not calling me to the Brothers nor to the Missionaries of Africa and I contacted the Jesuit Fathers.



Patrick and a little sister

From that time, whilst continuing my law work, I have been in contact with them and have attended retreats meant for Jesuit Aspirants. What has impressed me most about the Jesuits so far is their approach to God in Contemplation.

I ask all of you, my brothers and sisters to pray for me, for the strength and faith to continue in this path.



# A Sofa for the Night *by Oscar Arturo, MAfr*

Three priests (Santi Rodríguez and Gontxalo Bonilla, Spanish and myself, Oscar Arturo García, Mexican) and one student (Jonas Yamba from Burkina Faso) - that is our Missionary of Africa community.



Our mission is in

*Our community (I am on the left)*

Roquetas de Mar, Almería in the extreme South of Spain, nearest to Africa. We live in a very lively and intercultural neighbourhood. But our neighbourhood also “enjoys” quite a bad reputation in the city, mainly because of the drugs, the prostitution, the economic poverty and the number of immigrants living here. You can find people from all over the place. Just to name some of the lands that colour our neighbourhood, we have: Spain, Senegal, Guinea Bissau, Romania, Gambia, Ecuador, Morocco, Mali, Russia, Egypt, Burkina Faso, Mauritania, Nigeria, Ghana, Ivory Coast, Democratic Republic of Congo, Italy, Bulgaria, and so on and on and...

We are here as Missionaries of Africa in this southernmost part of Spain to welcome the African immigrants, to accompany them and to help them to integrate into the culture that they find themselves in at this moment.

On the religious level, the Diocese of Almería asked our Missionary Society to organize the welcome of the African immigrants into our Christian communities. Therefore, we have set up a catechumenate for those in the area. For the time being, we offer the catechumenate in four different parishes and in three different languages: English, Spanish and Mandjako. This year, catechumens from the four parishes will receive baptism and hopefully, little by little, they will integrate into our Christian communities and offer their own way of being Christians into our local parishes.

But not all are Christian by any means, so at the social level the Missionaries of Africa have set up the « Africa Intercultural Centre ». In this centre we offer African immigrants ways of fitting into the Spanish society by learning Spanish, acquiring computer skills, learning the basics of driving, but also in occasional social gatherings where we can enjoy ourselves, celebrating our own cultural diversity!

We four Missionaries of Africa have decided to make our community house as open as possible for those who come to us. People knock at our door on a daily basis. Some people need to go to hospital and they want someone to go with them because of language difficulties. Other people come in to complain about their harsh working conditions and little pay, or they are just seeking help with the administrative procedures to arrange their papers. Some need a lawyer, others food, yet others come by just to chat and spend time with us. There have been cases of African immigrants who do not have a place to sleep so, since we do not yet have a proper place to welcome them, we put them up on the sofa in our sitting room for a few nights.

We are happy here. We live our mission as best we can. We do it, certain that we are responding to the call to serve Africa, the Africa that is in our midst.

May the Lord continue to bless our ministry and may we continue faithful to the One who has called us.



Learning IT skills

*Fr. Garcia Padilla Oscar Arturo, MAfr is a Mexican confrere who worked in a parish in Ghana for several years. That parish was founded specifically as a point of outreach to Muslims. There were a small number of Christians in the parish so the parish financed itself with a large mango farm. After further studies in Mali, Fr. Oscar was appointed to Roquetas to work with immigrants.*





# Go with the Flow *by Fr. Paul Hannon, MAfr*



**Fr. Paul leading Palm procession**

and James Wani from South Sudan. Last April the community welcomed a young diocesan seminarian, William Kur Ding, from Malakal Diocese in South Sudan who was preparing for his diaconal ordination. We were four to care for this busy parish on the outskirts of the Sudanese capital. Established in 1995, during the time of the civil war in the South (before the split between Sudan and South Sudan), this parish welcomed and provided shelter, food and education for many thousands of displaced people from every region of the South. At one time there were some 10,000 children in emergency schools within our parish, all receiving a cooked breakfast each school day. They lived in very poor dwellings, often

*Whilst teaching in Rome, Fr. Paul Hannon took a working holiday of 3 weeks in Khartoum, Sudan, to renew his residence permit. It took 6 months. So as not to waste the permit, Fr. Paul was re-appointed to Sudan in September 2016.*

*He writes:*

I joined the two confreres who had been working here in the community, Joel Ouedraogo from Burkina Faso

consisting of cardboard sheets and sacking. Since then, conditions have greatly improved. After the Independence of South Sudan in July 2011, thousands of our parishioners left to begin a new life back there in South Sudan. So we closed some prayer centres and schools and our newly opened parish church welcomed smaller and smaller numbers of faithful on Sundays. Peace at last reigned in South



**Blessing of the Palms, Khartoum**

Sudan.

In recent months, however, due to the increasingly fierce fighting between rival ethnic groups in the South, many people have had to flee back to Sudan. Since December 2013, independent South Sudan has, in effect, again been suffering a civil war, this time based along ethnic lines. Therefore we have had to repair and re-open a former school to house some of the many refugees settling again in the parish. Our main church and prayer centres are again full every Sunday and parish activities are in full swing.

This is the setting into which I returned last September. Since January this year, we are only two White Fathers in the community because Fr Joel left for another mission in the Province and in February, our seminarian also left – rather suddenly abandoning his formation to the diaconate and choosing another way. We wish him well.

So, with the work never decreasing and the needs of the people ever increasing, we struggle on, trying to keep the parish going. Generous donors help us provide relief aid to the poor and the sick and we receive funds to help with school fees.

This is Holy Week with our prayer and meditation focusing upon the sufferings of Jesus

– on his total abandonment to the will of the Father, even to undergoing a cruel death on the cross, for our sake. This evening we shall attend the Chrism Mass in the cathedral, renewing our commitment as priests to that humble service of which Jesus was the perfect model, kneeling and washing the feet of his disciples. Temperatures will soar to 45 degrees Centigrade today.

Please pray that this Eastertime, the peoples of Sudan and of South Sudan might experience God's love for them, his mercy towards them and the joy of his life-giving blessing upon them. May those in authority find ways to reconcile difference and begin to build peace.

I wish you all a very Happy Easter.



**Palm Sunday Mass in Khartoum**

Fr. Paul Hannon, MAfr

# With My Knapsack on My Back

*Fr. Ted Wildsmith MAfr writes:*

Some years ago, Fr. Etienne Renault, our Superior General at that time, visited our young men at St. Edward's, Totteridge who were preparing for mission ministry in one or another country of Africa. One point he stressed with the students was that a missionary must travel light, with his 'knapsack' on his back, prepared to move often. A missionary must be flexible and adaptable. He was right!!

As a young priest, I was sent to Tanzania where I was



a seminary teacher for 16 years, followed by some years of parish ministry in Chemchem in a remote 'bush' area. From this ex-



**Fr Ted**

tremely rural setting, I was catapulted into Kenya, into a parish in Nairobi's industrial and slum area. Nairobi was a city of 3 million people at that time. I was there for 10 years before becoming a mentor to our students at St. Edward's, Totteridge, for 4

years. This was followed by 3 years in a similar role for our students at the Jinja Philosophy Centre in Uganda. So for more than 40 years in East Africa and in UK I moved about, with my knapsack on my back (usually)!

I had had to modify my work-style and workload several times over the years because I suffered from angina, but in 2008 it was finally decided that I should return to UK. I was then 71. But I still had my knapsack! So I joined Fr. Dick Kinlen M.Afr., (who sadly died late last year), serving in St. Anthony's Parish, Preston. I also took on the ministry of Justice & Peace in Lancaster Diocese and The Africa Europe Faith & Justice Network (AEFJN). To this day, involvement with Justice & Peace issues, especially in relation to the countries of Africa, has been a focus for a lot of my energies and time.

Whilst in Preston, on occasion, I joined in the Newman Day activities at the 6th Form College of the same name. Visitors with special areas of interest, were invited to meet groups of 6th Formers and share with them on their areas of expertise. Using Power Point and other visual aids from my knapsack, we thoroughly enjoyed our sessions together. Lancaster Diocese has an active and vi-

brant Justice & Peace ministry, so we shared on Climate Change, The Jubilee Debt Campaign and Migration issues.

Eventually it was time to move on, pausing only to grab my trusty knapsack, I accepted to be chaplain to St. Vincent's Nursing Home, Pinner, (not far from Watford). For 6 years, I carried out this ministry to the best of my ability, with sensitivity, adaptability, patience, understanding and oodles of love. St. Vincent's is not a Care Home, but a beautiful and efficient Nursing Home with room for 60 residents, and although the ethos is Catholic, residents & staff of any /or no faith are welcomed. I celebrated daily Mass in the chapel and during the week, visited people in their rooms on a regular basis. Naturally I was often asked by families to celebrate the funeral of a loved one.

Parallel to my nursing-home ministry, I continued with the Africa Europe Faith & Justice Network (AEFJN). This has entailed trips to Brussels and Cologne as well as meetings and presentations in UK. When I left St. Vincent's (at the age of 80) I carried on this double ministry although now I am chaplain to the Emmaus Retreat Centre in West Wickham, Surrey.

I am still carrying my knapsack, and still waiting for the Lord to tell me, "That's enough, put it down now".



Fr Ted at a meeting for older Missionaries of Africa in Rome



# Saint Anthony of Padua.



Saint Anthony was born Fernando Martins in Lisbon, Portugal. From a wealthy family, he was sent to study at the cathedral school. At fifteen he went to the Augustinians in Lisbon, but because he received too many visits from friends and family, after 2 years he asked to be sent to the Abbey of Santa Cruz in Coimbra, the then capital of Portugal, where he learned Theology and Latin, .

Following his ordination to the priesthood, he was named guest-master, responsible for the abbey's hospitality. When Franciscan friars settled nearby in a small hermitage outside Coimbra dedicated to Saint Anthony of Egypt, Fernando felt drawn to their poverty and simplicity.

He eventually received permission to leave the Abbey and he joined the new Franciscan Order, as Anthony, named after Anthony of Egypt. It was at this time that five Franciscans were martyred in Morocco and their bodies brought back for burial to Coimbra.

Anthony then himself travelled with another party of Franciscans to Morocco to spread the Good News, but became extremely ill. Sent home to recover, on the return voyage he was blown off-course and the party arrived in Sicily, from where they travelled to Tuscany. Anthony was assigned to the hermitage of San Paolo in Tuscany whilst the local friars considered his health.

Anthony spent his convalescence in prayer and study.

In 1222, some Dominican friars came to visit the Franciscans and there was confusion over who would preach the homily. Dominicans were known for their preaching, so the Franciscans assumed they would preach. But the Dominicans assumed the Franciscans, as hosts, would preach. It was then that the head of the Franciscan hermitage asked Anthony to speak on whatever subject the Holy Spirit might prompt him.

Well-formed by the Augustinians, Anthony delivered an eloquent and moving ser-



mon that impressed both groups. Soon, the news reached Francis of Assisi. In Anthony, Francis had found a friend who was both learned and with a simplicity of life. So in 1224, he entrusted his friars' studies to Anthony.

There is a story that a novice decided to leave the Order, but in addition to leaving he stole a book of Psalms containing Anthony's teaching notes. Anthony prayed that the book be found. It was! The novice brought back the book and was allowed to re-join the Order. It seems this is the origin of St. Anthony's fame as a saint to turn to when things are lost.

Although Anthony occasionally taught at the universities of Montpellier and Toulouse in southern France, it was as an outstanding preacher that he was most effective. His teaching was clear and simple so that people of any intellectual ability could understand him. For this reason he was declared a Doctor of the Church by Pope Pius XII in 1946.

He was only 36-years-old when he died of St Anthony's Fire, or Ergotism (from eating mildewed cereal) and was canonized less than one year afterwards by Pope Gregory IX. He was exhumed some 336 years after his death and although the whole of his body was found corrupted, his tongue was found intact.

Every year we have a Novena of prayer to St. Anthony asking him to join his prayers to ours, but he is also the patron saint of our students' fund, St. Anthony's Burse. He was chosen because he is named after an African saint, he wished to give his life for Africa and he was one who formed students to speak clearly and live simply, which is what we look for in a Missionaries of Africa student .



Saint Anthony's church  
Lagos, Portugal

## Better Late than Never

*Editor. Just a year ago I received a letter from a reader, Patrick Strong, who wrote from Shrewsbury:*

“On a recent visit to Kenya I was given the attached poem written by a young schoolgirl called Rita Bweya who is 16 years old. She asked me if I could find a journal in England/Ireland who might be prepared to publish it. I would be grateful if you could consider doing so in a forthcoming edition of your Journal Missionaries of Africa”. Patrick Strong.

# JUBILEE YEAR OF MERCY



It is the Jubilee Year of Mercy,  
A Year to look out for one another,  
Whether brother, sister, mother or father  
In love we should be bound together.

Love to give a helping hand  
Love to help the weak stand,  
We all should try to understand,  
And have Mercy for the people of our Land.

The Children on the streets,  
Eating the small leftover bits  
But the quest is,  
Are we going to stand there ,  
And watch this while everything goes amiss?

As declared by the Pope,  
We should give the hopeless hope,  
To always help them cope,  
And polish up our acts.

We should do it with our pleasure,  
Without any kind of pressure,  
We should never forget this message,  
Even if we have amnesia.

Vedian Rita Bweya, Form 3, Karen C Girls S.S.Karen.

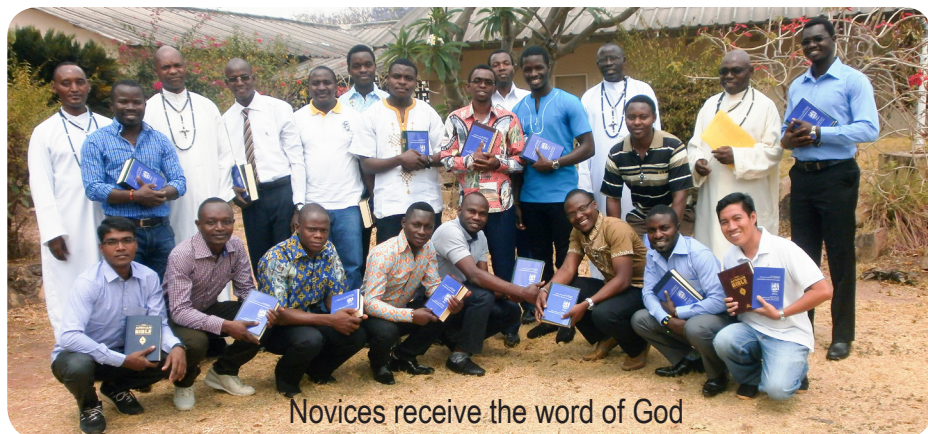
# EXTRAORDINARY JUBILEE OF MERCY

DEC. 8, 2015 - NOV. 20, 2016



"IT WILL BE A HOLY YEAR OF MERCY."

-POPE FRANCIS



Novices receive the word of God

## Formation” seen by a “formator” *By Fr. Justin Barera, M.Afr.*

The perennial question for the Society of the Missionaries of Africa (White Fathers) is “formation”, training future missionaries, priests, brothers and associates. How can “we” ensure that the mission of Christ goes on, as a candidate gradually conforms himself to the Lord Jesus who sacrifices himself for others. And who are “we”?

I am one of the four “formators” accompanying the young adults, who are in the process of becoming Missionaries of Africa. Ours, in Zambia, is one of four centres for the Spiritual Year or Novitiate: Burkina Faso, Jerusalem, Tanzania and Zambia. The young men are between 22 and 30 years of age and are from eleven nationalities. When they come to us they have already had three or four years of training and have five to six years to come afterwards. A long and demanding time. What kind of trusting and fruitful relationship do I need to develop with them? Is it between a “formator” and someone who is “formed”, “teacher” and “taught”, or between an elder and a younger brother...? What about the challenges which come with technological advancements (smartphones, internet...)? What about all the advances or developments in the social sciences, not to mention theological studies in our world today? All these questions and many others are challenges for us as formators. They can also be opportunities to



Novices growing food for the Novitiate



respond better to the needs of the Church and of society in today's world as we work to deepen the relationship between Christ and these disciples of his in Africa today.

I am a formator in Lualuo Spiritual Formation Centre, in Kasama – Zambia and I need to be constantly asking myself what kind of formation programme we need here so as to be attuned to a changing world? How do I help the candidate for missionary life to undertake an effective discernment process, while accepting that it is the Lord who “deals directly with his child”. What have I experienced myself that I can communicate to these men who in few years will be fully active in the evangelising mission of the Church and of the Society?

Obviously, these healthy, bright young candidates come each with his own background, not like empty vessels waiting to be filled up. They have already done three or four years of studies, community and prayer life, acquiring their own unique human, spiritual and pastoral experiences. It is on this background that we – those admitted to the spiritual year and the formators - build together.

But we have a dilemma! The candidates need be helped to take control of their own growth and yet the formators must evaluate the candidate's progress. I am not at ease with the term “formator”. Which “form” or shape do I give to these young adults? Perhaps I am more a “quality tester” looking to see if a candidate can model himself on Christ to serve his brothers and sisters better?

Yet the candidate is hoping to join a Society with rules and aspirations. It is not simply about the personal growth of the candidate. Can he fit into the formation programme over which he has very little, or no, say? I am part of a dynamic process helping him to live the gospel message of Christ. The candidate moves from one stage to another. The formator encourages the process, always attentive to both the programme and to the promptings of the Holy Spirit. Ultimately it is God who makes a candidate grow into an authentic disciple of Christ, a formator only “plants and waters”.



Ducks in the Novitiate



# If you want Peace, start with yourself

*Burundi is a landlocked country in Central Africa. It shares a border, a very similar language and a similar ethnic mixture with its neighbour to the North, Rwanda.*

*Germany colonised the region in the nineteenth century, then, after the First World War ceded it to Belgium. However, European intervention exacerbated social differences between the Tutsi and Hutu peoples, contributing to political unrest in the region. After Independence in 1962, Burundi had a monarchy, but assassinations, coups and general regional instability culminated in a republic and one-party state in 1966. Ethnic cleansing, two civil wars and genocides during the 1970s and the 1990s left the country undeveloped and its population one of the poorest in the world.*

*2015 witnessed large-scale political violence as the President opted to run for a third term in office, a coup attempt failed and the country's parliamentary and presidential elections were broadly criticised by members of the international community. (taken from Wikipedia)*

## Fulgence, a young man from Burundi writes:

I am a practising Catholic who spent quite a number of years in the seminary. Although being a priest is something I cherished, I saw how I could also serve the Church as a lay man, helping to reshape today's youth who live in a world full of controversy; youth living an almost dehumanized hu-

manity where morality seems to be no more.

I have personally lived in times and places without peace, where hatred and enmity ravaged human lives. I have experienced times when I could find no peace within myself.

Peace is not only the absence of war or con-



Presentation in Accra, Ghana

flict. Peace, as I understand it can also be the inner disposition that transcends worries that cloud our minds, causing us to lose focus.

Despite the wonderful human development and spiritual training I received from the White Fathers (Missionaries of Africa) for a number of years, in order to embark on this mission of teaching about developing inner peace, I



Fulgence facilitating a Peace seminar

had to follow specialized, appropriate training.

I came across the World Peace Initiative Foundation, an institution that trains young people regardless their faith, origin and race. They offered me both online and offline training, inside and outside the country, to become a peace agent, a peace coach, then later

this year, a peace architect in Thailand. Its project is called Peace Revolution with a mission to teach young people about being peaceful within. It is essential to acquire this inner peace before one can share it with others. Their slogan is “Peace In, Peace Out”: We can only give what we have.

We organize workshops in our communities to educate and train people of all backgrounds, adapting our teaching of meditation so as to become calm, peaceful and mindful and, in the long run, happy, by focusing on our daily dealings with compassion. We introduce young people to the values of orderliness both within and without. We teach them respect, avoiding violence (physical or verbal) towards any living being.

During larger workshops on a regional or national level, we invite selected young people for further training on youth empowerment, non-violent communication, human rights, stress management, always using meditation as a tool to calm the mind. We have reached out to thousands of people, the majority of whom are youth aged from 18-35 years, in different parts of the world.

As for myself, I am working for peace in Ghana, in the University of Ghana and in the Catholic Dioceses of Kumasi, Yendi and Tamale.

My aim is Africa and beyond.



# THE AFRIKA CENTER BERLIN

*Fr. Frank Rossmann, MAfr., ex-Tanzania, now in Berlin with Fr. Detlef Bartsch, MAfr. ex-Congo, writes:*

Ali from Senegal reached Spain via the very dangerous crossing over the Mediterranean Sea. From there he struggled to find his way to Germany, finally ending up in Berlin. He is still a minor. Knowing no German, and only very little English, somebody advised him to contact the Afrika Center (A.C.). Back home in Senegal, he had learnt French and so we could talk to him. We convinced him to follow German classes and he was accepted in a special program for refugee minors as an apprentice machine (engine) fitter. Now he is about to make his final examination.



**Our team in Berlin**

Every six weeks the Afro-Euro families group meets at our Center. Families with partners from different cultures encounter others with similar problems. Therefore, last year 17 adults and 12 children went for 4 days of holiday-camp outside Berlin. A Kenyan-born psychologist, married to a German, helped the partners in different workshops to understand their cultural differences, how to cope with possible tensions and to discover the values of each person. Racism and violence encountered in daily life was an important topic. The children discover through role-play, music, and dance how to handle racial confrontation and conflicts in school and daily life.



**Practising First Aid**

These are only two examples, of how the A.C. has served the African Community in Berlin from 1996, as it

raises awareness and support for Africans. Years of experience enable our team to provide support and advice for Africans getting accustomed to the social, cultural and religious environment in Germany and Europe.

We network with other migrant organizations, medical institutions and legal experts, to complete our services. Above all, the Center offers an intercultural encounter and exchange of experiences, promoting amongst Germans a better understanding of the cultures, mentalities and religions of Africans.

Presently, we are four permanent team members: Christine Thomas – lawyer Frank Rossmann – coordinator, Theodore Asimeng, from Ghana - general assistant and link with African students, Detlef Bartsch - pastoral care of Africans in prison. (see photo opposite)

During the year 2016 our part time lawyer gave free legal advice to 320 clients on obtaining residence or work permits, entry or student visas. Clients are often living in exceptional situations where they need medical treatment, have lost their passports, been released from prison or are about to be deported in spite of HIV-AIDS status. Others need advice in family matters, finding family members, health insurance for pregnant women, cases of abuse in marriage or legal complications for marriages between a German and an African partner.

As well as a resource centre for German institutions (schools, student unions, Police training schools) we give classes on German language, first-aid (needed for a driving license and some job applications), how to write CVs and job applications, how to behave in job interviews (with video feedback). Afrika Center is also a meeting point where Africans can share experiences amongst themselves and feel at home.

We could give a long list of activities, pastoral, religious and social but fundamentally we are here as an expression of God's love to our African neighbours in Berlin.

The name and the colour and the creed don't matter, we are there!



A day out in Berlin





## Parents & Friends Association

### THE PARENTS & FRIENDS ASSOCIATION EVENTS

Friday 19th May 2017 7.30pm Fundraiser/Bingo

Friday 17th November 2017 7.30pm Fundraiser/Bingo

## Mass for deceased Parents and Friends, Rutherglen.





# Your charitable prayers are requested

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



Fr. Angus Shelton, MAfr. Birmingham  
Mrs. Cecilia Eileen Welsh, (mother of Fr. Peter Welsh) Beckenham  
Mrs. Jean Variava (sister of Fr. Richard Calcutt) Pune, India  
Mrs. Maureen Smith, (sister of Fr. Don Anderson) Cheltenham  
Bernard Finnerty Yorkshire  
Mrs. R. A. Caine, Harrogate  
Mrs. Maureen Lillywhite, East Sussex  
David Conner  
James Michael O'Dwyer, Sileby  
Mrs. Antonia Martignetti, Peterborough  
Mrs W. Simms  
Mrs. E Ashley, Solihull  
Mrs. Brigid Carroll, Hartlepool  
Mrs. Sadie McLean, Bridge of Weir  
Gerry Curran  
Mrs. Patsy Reid, Saltcoats  
Mrs. Yvonne Odette Dupays  
Ian Peace, Malage  
Mrs. Genowefa Tyczynski, Little Hulton.

**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.thewhitefathers.org.uk>***

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

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

White Fathers in England & Wales:  
Registered Charity No. 233302  
Charity Registered in Scotland No. SC037981

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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](mailto:corfton@mafrgb.org.uk)  
tel: 0208 601 7900

### In Scotland:

The White Fathers  
9 Milrig Road  
Glasgow G73 2NG  
email: [wfsotland@btconnect.com](mailto:wfsotland@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

Find out more about us at:

[www.thewhitefathers.org.uk](http://www.thewhitefathers.org.uk)  
[www.africamission-mafr.org/](http://www.africamission-mafr.org/)

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

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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

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The enclosed gift of £..... as a Gift Aid donation

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15 Corfton Road, London W5 2HP

or in Scotland to:

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