

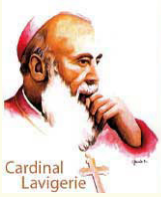
MISSIONARIES OF AFRICA (WHITE FATHERS)



St. Anthony's Novena 5th - 11th June

May 2023

Issue No. 461



Mary
Queen Of Africa
Pray for Us.



Missionaries Of Africa

Contents

Editor's Word	3
Mission is where you are.	4 - 6
Sr. Marion Carabott MSOLA	7
Limited Smiles in Katakwi	8 - 11
Aylward Shorter's Funeral	12 -15
One more step together	16 -18
Br. Moses Simukonde MAfr	19 - 20
Goma, Suffering upon Suffering	21 - 23
Parents & Friends Association	24 - 25
Ways to help fund our Mission	26
Data Privacy Notice	27
Fr. Ha-Jo Lohre MAfr	28
Prayers for the Dead	29
Information	30-31
Gift Aid Form	32

Parishes please note: In the 2023 **Desk Diary** there is a mistake in the **NOTES, pages 122-127**. Because of Leap Year all the dates from 28th February 2024 onwards are out by 1 day. Sincere apologies. Ed.

Editor's Word



Fr. Michael Heap MAfr

In this issue of our Magazine, we hear various stories of Missionaries. One is working with young people whose daily life is one of poverty, with poor prospects for the future. What should they choose? Escape by deadening their feelings, their hopes, or committing themselves to working with, and for, others? Another is working with migrants and refugees, even though he is himself a migrant, a foreigner. Another has been kidnapped and held for months and no-one really knows why. Another was shot down in the street by mistake. A senseless loss. Two others, a priest and a sister, have gone to their rest with hope. Each of them has found meaning in their life in the service of others, following Jesus Christ. How can all people achieve hope? In his article, Fr. Justin speaks of his experience working with young men who are studying to become Missionaries of Africa. This is not something to be embarked on lightly. The life can only be lived if it is shared with Christ whose "burden is light". It is only liveable if there is meaning. For so many people in our world, there is little meaning "quick fix pleasure". So many migrants are looking for better lives. They naturally want security and "a good life", but once we are in a safe place, once we have food and medication, what then? We Christians, following our Master, claim we know the secret to a good life. Accepting the unconditional love of God, sharing this love with others and, as children of God, entering into eternal life. Missionaries have no other job than this.

On 5th June we begin the Novena to St. Anthony. We pray daily until St Anthony's feast day for all those whose prayer requests are deposited before the altar in our communities. The prayers are for the intentions of those who have asked. Any donations will be used for the formation of those preparing to become Missionaries. We are one family. We are concerned for one another. This concern includes most importantly the present and eternal well being of all our brothers and sisters throughout the world who have little or no hope.

The Gospel is a light. Let it shine in our lives.

Mission is where you are!

by Fr. Peter Ekutt MAfr

Some 4 years ago, I left Mahagi Parish in Eastern Congo where I had been parish priest for some years and returned to Nigeria for my normal 3-months home-leave. I had been appointed to a project in Belgium, but first Covid-19 got in the way, then there were administrative problems, then finally the project was closed. Making the best of the situation, I helped out in a parish in Nigeria, waiting for the visa that never came. Working in my own country was a great experience, but that was not what I was ordained for. I am a missionary. Eventually, I was given a new appointment, still in the European Province, but in Germany, so today I find myself in multicultural Karlsruhe, Germany, north of the Black Forest, close to the French border. In my missionary life I have met challenges, many of which have become blessings. Languages, cultures, people, they all need to be faced with open eyes and an open heart. Working in Africa, there was sometimes insecurity and poverty.



My first Baptism in Karlsruhe

Now, in Karlsruhe, Germany, it is very, very different from Mahagi, Congo. Everything is new and different, even in community. As a newcomer, I am between two communities – in one I am a language student, in the other

I am working as a

Missionary of Africa. As Missionaries of Africa, respect for people and culture is very important. This includes language learning. German is not easy but I am getting into it – slowly! Our “student community” consists of 4 pastoral workers who are also learning the language, 2 Indians and 2 Africans. We follow an introduction to German culture, the German Church and, of course, the language. By next year, I should be more actively involved in pastoral work.



Back to basics: Language Class

What strikes me the most so far is the prominent place of women in Society and the Church. Women here are not, as in much of rural Africa, limited to domestic work, dependent on their husband. Again, in Germany children have their say and are listened to. In many African cultures,

this is less so. Parents decide for them. To hear a child of 7 addressing his father and mother by their Christian names surprised me. Good or bad? I observe. In Karlsruhe there are big, beautiful church buildings with services on Sunday, at other times they are empty. It seems the idea of a clergy dominated Church is slowly fading away and giving space to others. The Church here is heavily involved in Ecumenism and Interreligious Dialogue, collaborating with other churches and religions.

I have visited Hindus, Buddhists, Baha'is, Muslims, Jews, and Orthodox in nearby places of worship and I have been very impressed by how Christians and non-Christians work together. This is very different



An ecumenical service

from Congo where there was often suspicion and fear of encountering each other. We have just finished an assembly of the World Council of Churches here, with seminars on migration, conflict management, culture and identity. We participated fully in the assembly, and even had some of the participants staying with us. The pastoral approach is very different from what I knew in Africa. It is very collaborative and emphasises working with the laity. We read about the challenges of the synod of the Church in Germany and the serious push towards an inclusive theology. These are real. Churches are not full as in Congo, but the few who are there are convinced of what they are doing. I do not believe that Faith is dead here, it is lived differently. Missionary life is a life of sacrifice, we don't go where we want, but to where we are sent, into the unknown. But there is joy meeting people and the welcome we receive in families, villages and churches. There is also the slog of



Young Ukrainian refugees celebrating their culture

learning languages, and sometimes we meet insecurity, poverty, and suffering but also people's tremendous resilience. Missionary life is a challenge and a blessing., only if we listen, learn and are transformed. In our

Centre, we work with refugees and migrants. Their stories of abuse, violence, drownings at sea, sickness, infections, rejection, etc., can be terrible, but we try to create a welcoming, caring atmosphere. Here is a dark story that needs to be told and I think we must do more to raise awareness about the dangers and risks of migration. The sea has become a cemetery for so many unknown brothers and sisters from villages in Africa and elsewhere, who are victims of ignorance of the risk. Mission is where you are! We are In Karlsruhe. Remember us in your prayers.

Sr. Marion Carabott MSOLA

Sr. Marion Carabott passed away on Easter Monday. She will be very much missed by many, both inside and outside the MSOLA (White Sisters) Congregation. Sr. Marion was born in Valetta, Malta on 11th August 2035 and before entering the Congregation, she obtained her degree in Malta and taught physics in a secondary school for five years. In 1960 she left for England to start her for-



mation as a Missionary Sister of Our Lady of Africa. After her first vows she was sent to Tanzania where she taught physics. She then spent a number of years in formation ministry - first as postulant mistress and was then asked to be responsible for the noviciate. In 1975 she was elected to the General Council and in 1981 she became Superior General with responsibility for the whole Congregation. After this service she was again appointed as novice mistress but this time for a young indigenous Congregation in Rwanda: The Abizeramariya who appreciated her greatly. She then served for many more years in the congregation leadership in Rwanda and U.K. and then as secretary to the Provincial Council until the structure changed in 2014. In her late seventies and into her eighties, Sr. Marion served in ministry for rehabilitating prisoners and later for trafficked women. She continued this right up to the age of 84, when she was obliged to stop due to the lockdown imposed by the Coronavirus Pandemic. Sr. Marion was a woman of relationships. People everywhere responded to her warm friendliness, constant kindness and deep caring, loving concern. She was always ready to give a service and up until her last weeks she was an active and greatly valued member of the MSOLA community in Ealing. Deceased in Maryville Care Home, London 10th April, 2023, she lived her missionary commitment to the full throughout her life.



May She Now Rest in Peace



Limited Smiles in Katakwi *by Fr. Olivier Uwayesu MAfr.*

We believe that young people can be agents of transformation in the Church and in Society. So, we try to share our own God-given gifts and wisdom to prepare them for a life of integrity, credibility and witness to the Gospel of Christ. Here are some of the joys and challenges in our Youth Apostolate.



Young people making things to sell

Our parish has several vibrant youth groups scattered over 27 outstations. Some are more vibrant than others! Most of the “vibrant ones” are to be found in the village outstations, whereas in the Centre fewer could be described as vibrant. Most of the young people belong to the Xaverian Movement, Altar Boys Club, the Charismatics, the choirs and other lay groups. Meeting on Sunday after Mass or prayer service, they share the Word of God in their small Christian communities and plan what to do together. The Youth Council meets once a month and we celebrate Mass with them in their sub-zones to involve them in the life

of the Church and of Society

Each year all the youth groups meet together at the main parish to plan activities for that year. **Spiritual activities:** Youth Deanery and Diocesan Conferences, Youth Charismatic Conference, spiritual talks, as well as animating Sunday Masses. **Charitable activities:** visiting the sick in the hospitals, and visiting the elderly at home and helping them.



Examples of their handicrafts

Social activities: sports, outings, talent show etc. The youth in town wash cars and put the money earned into their youth account. In the outstations, they have already started Saving Groups to keep money from sales.

All the youth take part in handicraft sales, and make macrame bags, shoes, bracelets, and rosaries. Their current aim is to get enough money to buy a knitting machine to make sweaters. The village youth also have plots of land to grow cassava, groundnuts etc.

But there is a growing gap between the towns and the villages The youth nearer the Centre tend to be more active socially than spiritually.



They are taught the skills necessary by adult volunteers

We organise one day each week for training in different crafts, but in some zones the numbers are not encouraging. Programs fail due to poor attendance and it is difficult to find young adults willing to participate. Some are more interested in drinking the local brews (Ajon and Waragi) than working for the community. Others, although active, are still in school, and only available during the holidays. Young people in town are more prone to drug and alcohol abuse than those in villages. Alcohol amongst our youth here often leads to other problems. Our parish is in the town of Katakwi, whilst the outstations are out in the country. The young people in the isolated villages are more disadvantaged, with limited access to social facilities. Children may have to travel 10-15 km on foot to reach the nearest primary school. In the rainy season, roads are very bad, full of sand and swamps. Naturally, in such areas it is difficult to find someone who has actually finished school and who could become leaders in the church. The vicious circle of poverty continues with higher rates of school dropouts, early marriages and teenage pregnancies. **Social media** also is a very mixed blessing. It

can open young people to the world, yet interfere with their local commitments. But **poverty** is at the root of so many of the problems facing our youth. Many of the girls' families are unable to provide their basic needs. So some girls turn to prostitution with resultant infections of HIV, AIDS or other STDs. Then, when a girl becomes pregnant, many are pushed into an early marriage. Many boys are on their own, struggling to earn their daily living, so they have to work on Sundays and so we don't see them in church.

Working with the youth can have more challenges than joys, yet some youths come to learn skills with us and have found a way to survive by themselves, and others are active in the church. There are some also who have stopped using drugs, and need to be closely followed up.

To sum up, we are trying to encourage the youths towards a moral lifestyle and a responsible use of their talents. And we do what we can, remembering, as St Paul writes, "this is not your own doing; it is the gift



Many prefer to drink. They drink with straws from buckets

of God, not as a result of works”.

We believe that with God on our side, we will be able to contribute for the better future of the young people and so assure continuity in the Church and Society.

Sermon given at the Funeral of Aylward Shorter

by Cardinal Michael Fitzgerald MAfr



I am very grateful to Fr Hugh Seenan who asked me to preach on this occasion of the funeral of father Aylward Shorter, grateful because I owe a debt of gratitude to Aylward. We spent some time together in London when he was preparing his doctoral thesis in anthro-

pology and I was studying Arabic. After that he joined the staff of Gaba Pastoral Institute, just outside Kampala, Uganda, and I returned to Rome to teach in the Pontifical Institute of Arabic and Islamic Studies. I had hardly started teaching when I received a message from Aylward: There was a post vacant at Makerere University for Christian and Islamic Theology; would I be interested? I applied





and was accepted, and so, thanks to Aylward, I spent two years at Makerere, two years which were among the happiest of my life. So I have always been grateful to Aylward for the initiative he took.

The readings of this requiem Mass for Fr. Aylward Shorter contain strong affirmations of faith.

Job, in the midst of his tribulations, declares: "I know that my Avenger lives", 'Avenger', that is to say 'Defender' or 'Saviour' or, in the translation made familiar by Handel's aria, "I know that my Redeemer liveth".

Paul shows the same assurance: "With God on our side who can be against us", and again: "Nothing can come between us and the love of God made visible in Christ Jesus, our Lord".





And Jesus himself promises us, as we have heard in the gospel passage: “Anyone who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life.”

This was the faith of Aylward, the faith he lived by; anyone who saw him at the daily Eucharist in Little Ealing Lane could notice the intensity with which he participated in this celebration, even if he was not the main celebrant, perhaps the influence of the Benedictine spirit he had imbibed at Downside. It was the faith which he strove to strengthen in others, especially those who were deepening their pastoral experience at the Gaba Pastoral Institute, or those preparing for the priesthood, at Tangaza College in Nairobi or at the Missionary Institute London.

Jesus, who was sent by the living Father to be the redeemer of humankind, reveals that he drew life from the Father. This takes me back to the opening words of John’s Gospel: “In the beginning was the Word; the Word was with God and the Word was God.” Another translation has been proposed for the second phrase of this sentence: the Word was turned towards God, in other words, to the Father who expressed the Word. Jesus was always attentive to his Father, attentive to do the will of the Father; he told his disciples, as we heard last Sunday: “My food is to do the will of the one who sent me”; and he

proved this in the Garden of Gethsemane when he prayed, “Father, if you are willing, take this cup away from me. Nevertheless, let your will be done, not mine” (Luke 22:42).

Aylward was a missionary. Just as Jesus was sent, so he also was sent in the name of Jesus. Just as Jesus was obedient to the will of the Father, so Aylward was obedient to the will of his superiors; this upheld him, strengthened him; it was a source of life for him.

“Anyone who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life.” With this conviction, and with the assurance it gives us, we are gathered here today to pray for Aylward. May the Lord have mercy on him and forgive him his failings. Together with the members of his family who have gone before him, and together with the ancestors of the Kimbu of South-Western Tanzania whose life he shared as he was studying them and helping to make them better known, with all those who worked with him, with those he helped and encouraged, may he, in the presence of the Lord whom he served so faithfully, enjoy eternal life. Amen.



“One more step along the world we go together”.

by Fr Justin Barera Sebakunzi MAfr

Every candidate Missionary must complete a Spiritual Year to prepare himself for the Mission.

“Go further, even if you think you have arrived. The journey has just begun and the path is still long towards fraternity and the horizon of friendship”. The words of the singer John Littleton resonate with the experience I lived in the Spiritual Year together with young adults both in Zambia and in Tanzania. These men between, 22-28 years old, were coming from different countries and cultures. Although called a Year, it was a ten months, intensive, inner journey for each one. The programme was designed to facilitate a process of human growth whereby the young man came to meet Christ in a more personal way, to get a glimpse of what God desires for him and then to respond whole-heartedly.



Young men with formators beginning their journey



Our chapel. The heart of the community.

At the heart of this experience were the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius Loyola, the founder of the Jesuits. These “Exercises”, involving structured daily prayer/meditation and weekly spiritual accompaniment by trained staff members, are unique. They are unique because each journey involves an individual, reflecting and praying each from his unique life history. No telephones or other electronic gadgets to distract them! No going out except for pastoral work on Saturdays or for medical treatment. Each

unique person had to ask himself, “What are my personal convictions about Christ” and “How can I take them seriously”? I accompanied nine different groups of these young men in their search during my nine years as a staff member, and I myself equally benefited from the experience. I learnt to see and respect each individual with his own particular background. It was this that made possible the process of integration into a bigger family without them being swallowed up. As I invited each individual to “go further” and “take one more step” in his life, I realised that I was doing the same myself. I was always going further in my own understanding of particular situations and the complexity of human (well) being. Here was my missionary vocation, but also the experience of every human being. We keep adjusting to life as it comes, but must never forget who we really are and what we want in life. What I realised was that some aspects of my life are familiar because they turn up

and need to be faced and coped with, time and again, when I meet different people in situations over which I have no control. I experienced this in a very concrete way. Each year was new. It felt like an “eternal beginning”, starting all over again with a new intake with young people coming from different nationalities and with different personalities. It is said that, “Nothing is permanent except change”. This fitted perfectly. We three staff members had to adapt to each individual, whether during sessions, or in Spiritual Direction or in community in general. All this might sound very individualistic, yet it was done within a community environment. Jokingly, we used to say that “if you are struggling in your room alone, remember that your neighbour in the next room might be also struggling”, “A struggle shared is a struggle halved”, “You will never walk alone”! It would be wrong to think this experience, fulfilling as it might be, was without bumps, challenges or failures along the way. Harmonising all these cultural backgrounds and personalities into one diverse, coherent and working community took a lot of hard work. But at a personal level, these life challenges, knocking off the rough edges



Our seedlings. Signs of new growth

we all have, shapes the person I am becoming. It feels like a “daily death” but it is a tiny, daily, “personal resurrection”. Life constantly pops up and keeps me moving further towards friendship with myself, with others and ultimately

with God. An African proverb says, “If you want to go fast, go alone, but if you want to go far, go together”.

Moses Simukonde MAfr †



Brother Moses Simukonde MAfr

On Wednesday evening, 29th March 2023, Br Moses Simukonde MAfr was returning to his community in the centre of Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso. He was driving on a well-lit main road that was usually peaceful and safe, near the Presidential Palace. Unfortunately, Br. Moses was caught in the crossfire between the police and a suspect, and was killed. Br Moses, born in Zambia in 1988, has been a Missionary of Africa for 6 years and had already served in Niger before coming to Burkina Faso. He was buried in Ouagadougou.

May he rest in eternal peace.



Moses' parents came from Zambia and parishoners wept with them



His fellow missionaries turned up in numbers to pray and mourn



Members of the police mourned with everyone else

Goma, Suffering upon Suffering

by Fr. Cyprian Chia MAfr

Still recovering from last year's volcanic destruction, now the city of Goma is threatened by rebel troops. The resurgence of the rebel groups in the eastern part of Congo has brought immense suffering to the lives of the people, especially the children and the women. The rebel group (M23) has made serious territorial gains in Eastern Congo which has become the battleground of the proxy war over precious mineral resources. Local and foreign-backed forces are waging deadly attacks and counter-attacks in



Ordinary people having to live in squalor

especially the children and the women. The rebel group (M23) has made serious territorial gains in Eastern Congo which has become the battleground of the proxy war over precious mineral resources. Local and foreign-backed forces are waging deadly attacks and counter-attacks in

this mineral-rich area and this has triggered more waves of displacement and a mass flight of men, women and children towards Goma. Naturally, the cost of living has sky-rocketed. Much of the essential food comes from Uganda, but since the border roads have been taken over by the rebels, food is very difficult to find, and what there is, is hugely expensive. The M23 rebel group's attempts

to capture territory, has resulted in massive killings, rapes of women and forcible recruitment of youths into their militia. If any youths refuse, they are immediately killed and their property taken. The rebels tax the population in areas under their control. In a nutshell, the powerful feed on the weak and vulnerable. Now millions of Con-



Waiting for the arrival of essentials



Some food gets through despite the rebels

golese face a severe food crisis. Children and women are the most affected. The refugees are infected with, and affected by, various diseases, and everything is made worse by the serious shortage of water and food. We can only turn our eyes to God and to people of goodwill for help.

We, Missionaries of Africa in Goma, form part of a team that works for peace and for the huge numbers of people suffering in the refugee camps. We are trying to respond to Pope Francis's call for solidarity: "you are part of a greater history, one that calls you to take an active role as a builder of communion, a champion of fraternity, an indomitable dreamer of a more united world".

His words echo Christ's, "For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you gave me shelter, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you cared for me, I was in prison and you visited me".

At the time of writing this article some 3 weeks ago, whilst Fr. Cyprian and his brothers were struggling to find food and shelter for the refugees who had fled to Goma seeking safety, the M23 rebels were closing in. They were at the outskirts of Goma and everyone, priest and people, was very afraid for their lives.



The food there is has to be stored and distributed



People are still waiting

Since then, the Congolese army managed to drive the rebels back a few kilometres. This lessened the immediate danger, but doesn't help with the hunger, thirst and lack of shelter for the people. Now in addition, there have been reports that some of the very "saviours" of the people have in their turn begun looting. Editor.



People are still homeless through no fault of their own



Parents & Friends Association

On the 23rd April, 50 members of the Parents and Friends Association gathered together in Rutherglen, the home of the White Fathers in Scotland, to celebrate and remember in prayer all the deceased members of the Association and to thank God for all the help and support they have given to our missionaries during their lifetime. This Mass of thanksgiving had to be suspended during the time of the pandemic, so it was with great joy that families could come together once again to pray, ask for God's blessing, and meet each other, catching up on news over sandwiches, cakes and a cup of tea.

Our main celebrant, Fr. Hugh Seenan, is well known in Glasgow, having been ordained there on the 24th June 1989. Since then he has worked in Mozambique, India and Malawi and for the last three years as Provincial Delegate of our British Sector. Fr Donald Macleod, the superior in Rutherglen, gave an encouraging homily, reminding us that it was only in the breaking of bread that the two disciples recognised Jesus, despite having walked with him on the road to Emmaus. After the scripture readings, the names of the deceased members, friends and family were read out and offered to God in prayer. This helped us to remember





that we are all members of not only our own families, but also members of the White Fathers' family, called by the Risen Lord Jesus to spread his Good News and to experience in a new way the words of the Gospel proclaimed: "Did not our hearts burn within us as he talked to us on the road and explained the scriptures to us?" *Fr. John Gerrard MAfr*

The Annual REUNION of the Parents and Friends Association will take place on August 27th 2023



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WHITE FATHERS

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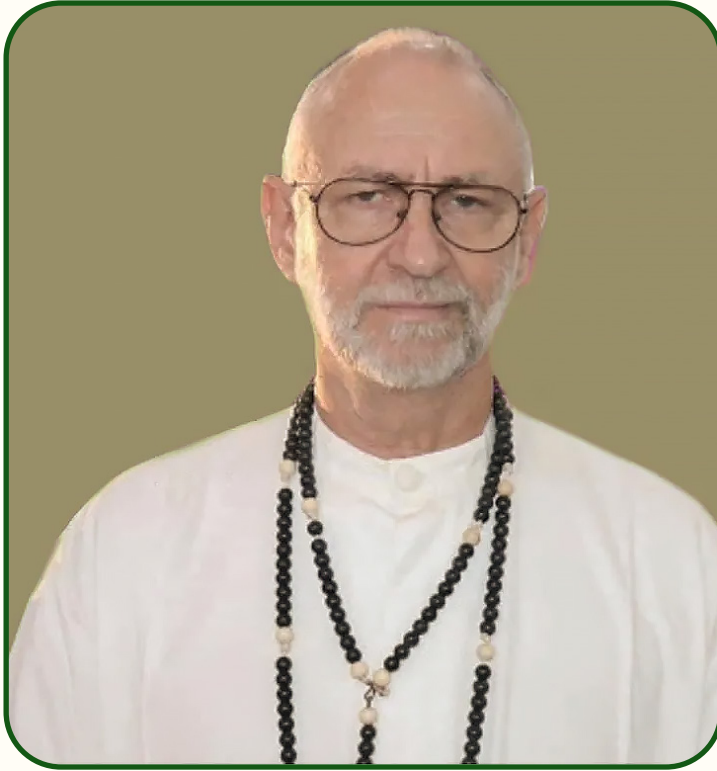
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Fr. Ha-Jo Lohre MAfr, was kidnapped in Bamako, Mali on 20th November 2022 on his way to say Mass.

After 5 months there is still no news of him

Please pray for him in his captivity.

Please pray for his family who are fearful for him.

Please pray for his captors, whoever they may be, that their hearts may be touched by our compassionate and all-loving God.

Please pray for our brothers and sisters, the Church in Mali. May Almighty God strengthen their Faith, their Hope and their

Your charitable prayers are requested

for those who have recently died, relatives, friends and benefactors



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sister-in-law of Br Eugene Leonard M Afr

Joseph Klotz (Armidale, NSW, Australia)

nephew of Cardinal Michael Fitzgerald.

May they rest in peace



St. Anthony's Burse



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

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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.

You must pay an amount of Income Tax and/or Capital Gains Tax for each tax year (6 April one year to 5 April the next) that is at least equal to the amount of tax that the charity will reclaim on your gifts for that tax year, otherwise you have the responsibility to pay any difference.

Donor's Details:Title: Mr / Mrs / Miss / Ms / Other (please state):

Name:
(HMRC do not allow joint donors)

Address 1.....

Address 2:

Postcode:.....

Signature:.....

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.

You may view our full Privacy Policy by visiting www.missionariesofafrica.org.uk

Our bank details

Account name: White Fathers Propaganda Account

Sort code 60-21-07

Account number:82296731