

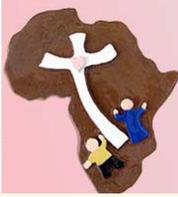
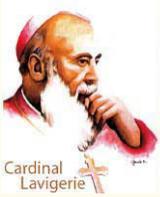
MISSIONARIES OF AFRICA

(WHITE FATHERS)



August 2023

Issue No. 462



Mary
Queen Of Africa
Pray for Us.



Missionaries Of Africa

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Editor's Word

This issue of our Magazine reflects life today and perhaps life as it has always been. There is sadness with the death of Sr Pat Kent, worry with the continued absence and no news of Fr Ha-Jo Lohre, and frustration and horror at the situation of so many young people in Nigeria.



Fr. Michael Heap MAfr

So much bad news. What can we do? Death comes to everyone eventually. There is wickedness in the world. Human beings hurt and oppress other human beings. This is particularly obvious and shocking when it comes to clerical abuse of vulnerable people, children and others.

Yet even when evil appears apparently in the very heart of the Church, there is hope. Not a forlorn or desperate hope, but a confident hope based on Christ who came amongst us to live with us in our world of wickedness and selfishness. It is based on the love of a Father who allows and sends his Son to die for us and for our world victim of its wickedness. It is based on an Easter cry that, Death is not the end, evil shall not have the last word.

We see the efforts to counteract abuse, with reforms which are meant to protect the vulnerable. We see those who are willing to go out to wherever the Good News needs to be proclaimed, no matter the culture or the language or the situation.

Many of the young Nigerians who leave their homes for themselves, or for their families' sakes, do so in desperation. They, like all people, need the hope that comes with knowing Jesus Christ. People who have been abused or hurt in any way by those calling themselves Christian, need to be able to feel the hope and love which should have been theirs. Each of us needs to realise that we are loved by God and that nothing at all can separate us from God loving us, and each of us needs to show this love to others.

When Home is no longer Home

by Fr. Victor Domshiwe Shehu MAfr

The huge numbers of young Nigerians queuing at various embassies and High Commissions in Lagos and Abuja and at various land borders to neighbouring countries gives a clear indication that all is not well in Nigeria. Why does everyone want to leave? Is Nigeria no longer home to Nigerians? Why risk everything to get out of your home? There are multiple reasons



Typical young Nigerians preparing to leave

why Nigerians are choosing to leave their country. From what I have read, and having spoken myself with young Nigerians in Ethiopia, Kenya, Ghana and Germany, there are multiple reasons why so many young people are desperate to leave their homelands and

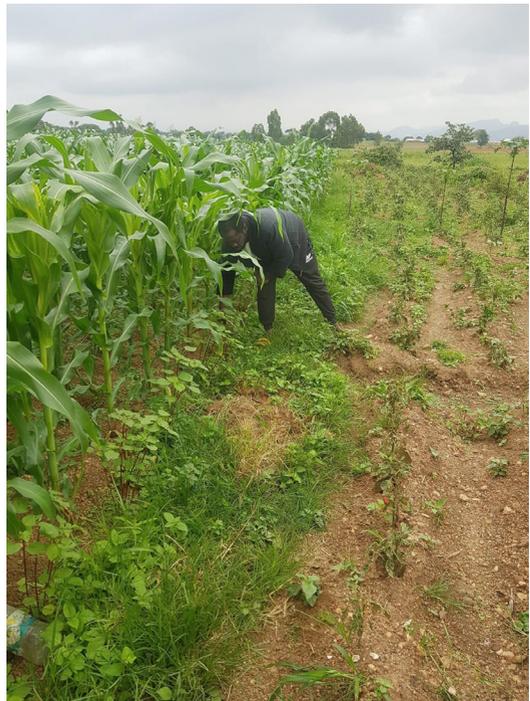
somehow most of them seem interconnected. There is increasing inequality and poverty because of unemployment, and unemployment because of political corruption and mismanagement as well as overpopulation. Others mention the marginalization of the young, with conflicts between generations about family and marriage. Then there is the widespread violence. This can be caused by a personal struggle for wealth (criminality), or group struggles for resources (herdsmen-farmers clashes in North-Central Nigeria), Islamic insurgency (Boko Haram in the north), other struggles around religion and ethnicity. Migrants rarely name just a single reason or trigger for migrating, and indeed motives and aspirations often change and evolve in the course of their journey. Suffice it to say that most of the reasons are economic or



The young hear about possibilities abroad

are inherently tied to economic reasons. Young Nigerians have a vision of the possibilities of earning in other countries, but they are not alone, they are often pushed by their families and their family concerns to take huge risks. In Nigeria migration is

often associated with remittances, money sent home by family members working abroad. So young people are often sacrificed, or sacrifice themselves, for the greater good of the family. This household strategy to maximize income is not limited to Nigeria. In many developing countries, for the less well-educated population, migration is more or less synonymous with a survival strategy or as a way to gain social prestige. The preferred destinations were Europe and America. More recently, however, Nigerian migrants seem to be scattered across the world, particularly in Central and Western Asia, although at the regional level, Nigerians are ubiquitous in all the countries of Africa, particularly Ghana, South Africa and Kenya. For those going



Because of cattle herder incursions, farming has become dangerous in many places



A young and energetic population

ling through the desert, they become dehydrated, hungry and may fall sick and die. Sometimes, sick migrants are thrown off the truck and left to die or be eaten by wild animals. During the journey, migrants are subject to robbery, kidnapping for ransom, sexual violence against women and in some cases being sold into slavery by smugglers. Deaths occurring in the Mediterranean have made up 73 % of the total number of deaths

to Europe, crossing the desert to Libya was favourite. But because of instability in Libya and reports of torture and enslavement, many now try to enter via the Eastern Mediterranean. No matter the route chosen, right from the start, crossing the border into Niger there are extortions from border management agencies from migrants for not having the required travel documents. This diminishes their cash, making them more vulnerable to smugglers. The journey from Niger to Libya is even more chaotic. People are loaded onto trucks like animals and could fall off the truck at any time. Travel-



Good arable land for food production

at sea globally. The increase of sea crossings to Italy has been accompanied by a rising death toll. In 2013 around 600 migrants lost their lives, in 2014 an estimated 2,993 migrants died attempting to reach Europe and in early 2016 the annual number was estimated to be close to 4,000 migrants and so it goes on. And what of Africa? The recent xenophobic attacks in South Africa had Nigerians more targeted than any other nationality. From my personal experience of visiting several African and other countries, when you visit prisons in the neighbouring ECOWAS and other African countries, you will be greeted with a growing population of Nigerian migrants. Nigerians are widely associated with crimes and there is a general fear of Nigerians in what could be best described as “Nigerophobia”. Despite this, Nigerians still prefer to live as second class citizens elsewhere than to be first class citizens in their country as mentioned earlier. The question now is what can be done to reduce the out flux of Nigerians to other countries? In my opinion, the Federal Government should take drastic measures to combat human insecurity and provide a peaceful environment where people can feel secure. The Federal Government could also tackle rising unemployment among youths by increasing efforts at fighting corruption and nepotism in the public sector. The issue of the basic human needs (such as electricity, health, food security, education, good roads) could



“E go better one day!”

be seriously taken and tackled by the Government. Our formal education should not only teach our youths how to look for “white collar” jobs but also to use their talents and gifts in order to earn a living for themselves. Meanwhile, people struggle and say, “E go better one day!”

In Rome studying at the Orientale

by Fr Paul Reilly MAfr, an American Missionary of Africa.



Fr. Paul in St Peter's Square at the Vatican

I am happy to share with you my experience as a student at the Pontifical Oriental Institute in Rome. Prior to arriving here to pursue a licentiate degree in Eastern Ecclesiastical Sciences, I was serving in our White Father mission in Adigrat, Ethiopia, where I had been working with disadvantaged youth, as well as doing some ecumenical outreach with members of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church. After civil war broke out in late 2020, it became very difficult to continue our activities in northern Ethiopia and the M.Afr. superiors decided to appoint me to specialized studies here in Rome. From June 2021 I have been in Italy as a member of the 'Studentato' community on the third floor of the M.Afr. Generalate. We are



The Coptic Patriarch presiding a celebration in Rome

normally around twenty students, mostly M.Afr. confreres, but some diocesan priests from Africa as well, all studying at different ecclesiastical universities in Rome. The 'Orientale' where I am



Ethiopian Mass at the Vatican

studying was founded in 1917 by Pope Benedict XV as a specialised research institute for Eastern Churches. In general, the term 'Eastern Churches' refers to those which were originally located in the Eastern part of the old Roman Empire. Our courses focus on the unique theological, spiritual, and liturgical backgrounds of these Churches, both Orthodox and those in communion with the Church of Rome. The institute also offers a wide variety of ancient languages (Church Slavonic, Syriac, Greek, Classical Ethiopian) and is very ecumenically minded. The student body is quite diverse, with priests, sisters and laypeople coming from all over the Eastern world (Ukraine, Romania, Armenia, the Balkans, India, Egypt, Lebanon, Iraq, Ethiopia, etc.) as well as a few Westerners such as myself. Due of my missionary experience in Ethiopia, I try to take as many courses as I can related to the Church-



Ethiopian Liturgy

es in Ethiopia and Eritrea as well as in Egypt, which traditionally had very close links with the Ethiopian Church. While it may seem somewhat out of the ordinary for a Missionary of Africa to study Eastern Churches, we should remember our Society's long association with the Basilica of St. Anne in Jerusalem and our confreres' involvement in the formation of Arabic speaking Melkite priests at the seminary there until 1967. The White Fathers have also been instrumental in the formation of the Ethiopian rite Catholic clergy in the diocese of Adigrat, Ethiopia since the late 1960s. While relations with Eastern Churches may not lie at the heart of our M.Afr. charism, they are very much a part of our history and continue to play an important role in our ecumenical



Two Students, Frs. Paul (USA) and Fidelis (Ghana) at a Papal Audience

outreach on the African continent and beyond. Living and studying in Rome has been a very enriching experience for me personally. Over the past two years I've been fortunate to participate in numerous Eastern rite liturgies, visit ancient Roman basilicas which were home to Eastern Christians before the Great Schism of the 11th century, and attend conferences and ecumenical gatherings with some of the world's most distinguished scholars and ecclesiastical leaders of the Christian East. Rome is of course, the centre of Western Christianity, but if one expresses enough interest, one easily recognises the historical footprint and notable presence of our Eastern brethren in the eternal city even today. As someone who feels called to help bring healing and unity to the divided Body of Christ, I can readily affirm that being part of this community has been the privilege of a lifetime. I still have one more year before finishing my licentiate degree; after that, I look forward to returning to our M.Afr. missions in the 'East' to continue the journey of faith with our brothers and sisters there.



Missionaries of Africa studying in Rome before returning to Africa

Safeguarding the Vulnerable

by Fr Stephane Joulain MAfr (worked in Lebanon,
Jerusalem and Kenya)



Fr Stephane Joulain



Early meeting in Nairobi, getting started

Over the past thirty years, numerous scandals in the Catholic Church have revealed the human frailty and lack of integrity of certain clergy and religious. These cascading revelations have shown the extent and persistence

of the suffering caused to many victims. A side effect of this situation is a gradual loss of confidence in priests, but also in religious. By trying to prevent further abuse and also to seek ways of reparation and possibly bringing some peace to the victims and survivors, it has become essential to take measures which will meet the challenges.

In 2006, the Society of Missionaries of Africa asked four confreres to reflect on this painful reality and to help the Missionaries of Africa equip themselves with effective tools to prevent and intervene in situations of abuse, as well as educating their members. It was a real and difficult change of culture, moving from a culture of blind trust to one of responsibility and accountability.

In 2008, we introduced an abuse prevention policy. This policy was a first step in the right direction, taking into consideration the changing understanding of this issue. Our Missionary Society was equipping itself with intervention protocols and was also be-



Discussions within the Society

gining a long road of training for its members and candidates. The challenge was to make of our places of mission, safe spaces for all, particularly for the most vulnerable. Whilst this policy introduced new responsibilities for those in leadership, it also involved every single

member of our Society, with obligations and duties such as reporting these crimes.

In 2012, a new version of this policy was published, and new responsibilities were created. This gave rise to the Child Protection Delegates, whose primary function is to ensure that in a particular territory the issue of safeguarding is taken seriously by all our confreres, and that our parishes, mission centres and all other activities comply with the highest standards of prevention of all forms of abuse. At that time, the notion of abuse was limited to sexual

abuse, but as this reality has evolved and as the Church has also evolved, today abuse of conscience, abuse of authority and spiritual abuse are equally considered to be serious areas of abuse. Since then there have been two further reforms to our



Including non-confreres



Learning from others

policy, one in 2015 and the other in 2022.

In 2015, a new position was created, that of Co-ordinator for Integrity in Ministry. Based in Rome, the Co-ordinator is responsible for ensuring that the safeguarding priority is implemented in all our mission areas, as well as co-ordinating the work of the various delegates, and ensuring that they receive the training and tools they need to carry out this delicate mission. The Co-ordinator also acts as a consultant to those in leadership positions.

In 2022, following an internal audit on the implementation of our policy, and to bring us into line with recent developments in Church law, we produced a new version of our policy, which was promulgated by the Superior General and presented at our last General Chapter. This text is available on the Society's website (www.mafrome.org). Today, we can rejoice in the fact that a change of culture is taking place. We are not blind to the many challenges that we still have to face, but we are making signif-



Protection of the vulnerable is everyone's concern

icant progress, as is the Church as a whole, in making mission sites safe spaces for everyone. Certainly there are still things to be done and improvements are still needed, but we can rejoice

that our Society as a whole has become aware of the tragedies that some of our people have caused and of the need to rebuild the trust to which the People of God are calling us. We are committed to finding ways of trying to repair the wrongs and attempting to bring closure to victims. This is a particular challenge in Africa, where many countries are still struggling with legal and humanitarian considerations which have hindered the development of a safeguarding culture.

The support of everyone, clergy and laity alike, is important because only by working together can we respond to the Lord's command to let the little children come to him. Faithful to the Lord's call, we are committed as a Missionary Society to helping all people discover God's presence in their lives, especially the little ones.



A Church which is a blessing

On the Feast of the Nativity of the Virgin Mary

by Fr Oscar Aturo MAfr.

Fr Oscar is a Mexican who has worked in Spain, Mali and Ghana.

On 8 September, 2022, we Missionaries of Africa began our missionary journey in Morocco with a Eucharistic celebration in the Chapel of Charles de Foucault in Rabat, the capital. The Church in Morocco, and its pastor, Archbishop Cristóbal López, SDB, have welcomed us with open arms. The Church in Morocco



Modeste, Albert + Oscar

can easily go unnoticed in the Catholic world. At around 30,000 people, it is small considering that the population of Morocco is around 37 million. However, the Church in Morocco has a long history, the jubilee year was recently celebrated on the occasion of the 800 years of Franciscan presence in Morocco! Regarding the Church in Morocco, there are some aspects that have caught my attention. First, Christian communities here are made



Institute al-Mowafaqa

up, for the most part, of young people; the elderly are the minority. These young people are mainly university students who spend a few years in Morocco to finish their master's degrees or doctorates, and generally come from sub-Saharan Africa, the non-African Christians being the

minority. Naturally they each bring with them their church and fellowship experience learned in their home countries. The care that they take to make our Eucharistic celebrations a time of community prayer is impressive. Second, this church, which at first seems "foreign", is in reality well rooted in the country through schools, libraries, health centres, socio-cultural centres and the work of Caritas. In other words, it is a church that has woven strong ties to serve the Moroccan people that welcome it. Third, the relationship between the Catholic Church and the Protestant Churches has resulted, among other things, in the creation of the Al-Mowafaqa Ecumenical Institute where Christian theology (Catholic and Protestant) and Islamology are both taught. So the testimony and action of this minuscule Catholic Church in Morocco is a sign, perhaps, of the leaven that ferments God's reign.

And so it is to this small church that our community of Missionaries of Africa has come. Albert Kondemodre (Burkina Faso) first arrived in Morocco at the end of 2021 to study "Dialogue between Cultures and Religions" at Al-Mowafaqa Ecumenical Institute in Rabat. Then, mid-2022, I came to here to study darija (dialectal Arabic). Just a week ago, Modeste Cubaka Tebuka (RDCongo) arrived and he is now participating in a seminar on Islamology before starting his studies in classical Arabic. We are the confrères that the Society of the Missionaries of Africa has placed at



The Cathedral in Rabat

the service of the local Church in Morocco. We are here, but we still don't have a house where we can be together. We all living in Rabat, but in different places. We hope that during this year we can find a place where we can "put up a tent"; a place we can call "our own". For now, little by

little, we are getting involved in the pastoral care of this Church that welcomes us and gives us the opportunity to live our missionary vocation in these lands. Albert is one of the curates in the Cathedral of St Peter in Rabat. From there he accompanies the Christian community, especially the youth, and the Charismatic Renewal movement. At the same time, he is part of the diocese's prison ministry team, visiting prisoners in various places. Albert also gives French classes to Moroccan children, in a small town near Rabat. Finally, he helps with the creation of the Talitha Kum network. This is an international initiative against human trafficking and exploitation, created by the "International Union of Superiors General" (UISG). As for me, the Archbishop of Rabat asked me to take charge of Caritas in his archdiocese. I am part of a team made up of a Frenchman and three Moroccans. As a co-ordination team, our mission is to accompany the Christian communities in their



Albert in the cathedral in Rabat

commitment to people in vulnerable situations. The work is intense and full of surprises, some pleasant, some not. Another of the services that I have been asked to perform in the archdiocese is to accompany one of the “dimensions” of the diocesan synod: the “diakonia” dimension. We are three



View of Central Rabat

in this team and have the task of helping the parishes to deepen our understanding of what God calls us to serve people in vulnerable situations. The challenges are not small, but we are convinced that it is the right question at the right time. Although we are already immersed in the pastoral care in the diocese, it is for us a time of learning. We continue studying the local language,



Seashore of Rabat

as we are aware that it is only through it that we will be able to come into contact with the vast majority of Moroccans. At the same time, we continue to learn how to enter into this local Church, which is both small and significant. We try to approach this with respect, the essential attitude if we are to discover what God is asking of us, White Fathers, in this new mission that our missionary society has just begun. We entrust ourselves to your prayers so that we can bear the fruit desired by God.

MUSLIM MAJORITY TO CATHOLIC MAJORITY: MALI TO MEXICO

by Fr Cyriaque Mounkoro MAfr



A Church solidly based on traditional culture

Fr. Cyriaque is Malian and worked in Nigeria before his appointment to Mexico

Since October 2015, Mexico has become my second home, and mission territory.

Mali and Mexico have in common having a cultural, social life, which is influenced by popular piety.

Mexico is a land of hospitality, solidarity, and celebrations. Birthdays, naming



A Church rooted in family



A Church of celebration

ceremonies, weddings, death, sickness, all are key moments of solidarity in Mexico, as in Mali.

In Mexico meals are important moments of encounter, and fraternity. Meals are also seen as, and

frequently used as, moments and opportunities for reconciliation.

In Mexico I am living an experience of a Catholic Church which is moved and inspired by the hospitality and the work of mercy of Jesus Christ. All activities in churches here are geared toward exposing or making known the welcoming and merciful Jesus to the everyone.

I experience here a Church where rich and poor, black and white, young and old, feel part and parcel of the same body of Christ.

The 19th of March 2023, I was installed as the first parish priest of the first White Father parish in Mexico. So, in addition to the traditional activities of a catholic parish, our parish has its own pastoral priorities like concern for the sick and the aged, concern for asylum seekers, the marginalised, the



A Church of grandmothers, mothers and daughters



A Church of Solidarity

homeless, as well as interreligious dialogue.

Our parish does not only aim at giving lectures on love and mercy. We are not here to spread a philosophy, or a path of wisdom, but like Jesus, to teach by example, and to use words only to

illuminate the meaning of concrete gestures.

After the international health crisis experience caused by Covid-19, our parish chose to embrace and initiate a pastoral project we call “the pastoral of listening”. I thank God, for the solid formation I received at the Missionary Institute of London on pastoral psychology, and counselling skills which are standing me in good stead. Four parishioners who are professional psychologists have joined me to make this listening project a reality.

Some adults, and even young boys and girls here are suffering from addiction to alcohol and other drugs, hence our project of pastoral listening. In a parish set up like ours it is one of the



A Church for the young

most effective ways of evangelising, bringing the Good News.

Many Mexicans and also non-Mexicans ask me, why a Malian missionary in Mexico? And why are the Missionaries of Africa present in Mexico?

First, because Mexico is a fertile land for religious vocations, and Mexico has a lot to share with the rest of World, in matters of popular piety, Marian spirituality, cultural diversity, art, hospitality, generosity, and above all sense of solidarity and celebrations. We Missionaries of Africa are here to learn from this Mexican richness, whilst inviting Mexican youth to a life commitment to the missionary life in Africa, Europe and Asia with us.

Second, to make Africa known in Mexico. Mexicans know very little about Africa and tend to think of Africa not as a continent, but as a country filled with wild animals. They often have a narrow image of Africa as a place of hunger, suffering and extreme poverty. Our mission in this part of the World is to make Africa's two faces better known: yes, its poverty, but also its richness, and its beauty.

Often on TV, we see stories of drugs, killings and gangs in Mexico. Indeed there is insecurity in some states of the country as in many countries in the world. Nevertheless, I confess, that I am very happy, and feel honored to serve and live in Mexico.



Sr. Patricia Kent MSOLA.

Patricia Mary Kent was born into a farming family in Langton, Staffordshire on 21st February 1932. During her early years the

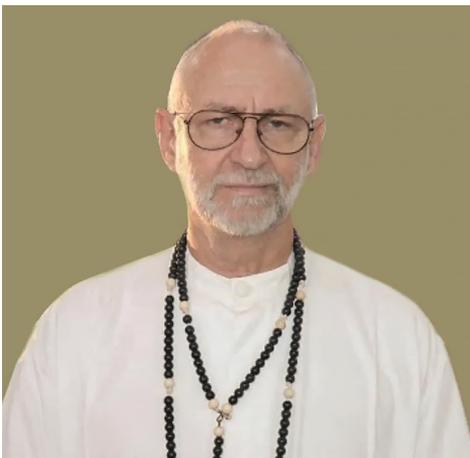


family lived in a village named Swynnerton in Staffordshire. She had one sibling – her brother John who was a few years older than her and whom she loved very much. Later the family moved to Stone - a market town - and Pat continued her education at St. Dominic's Priory School where she was

taught by the Dominican Sisters. She then trained as a teacher at Mount Pleasant Training College in Liverpool. While the young Patricia was reflecting about her life and her future, she came across a book entitled "Leaves from a White Father's Diary" by Father Albert Howell, Missionary of Africa, where she read about our Congregation. She felt attracted by our missionary vocation and by Africa, so after teaching for three years, she applied to enter the Congregation and was accepted for the formation programme in 1955. After her first vows, and a year in Algeria, she was sent to Tanzania where she taught for a few years before becoming headmistress. In 1966 she returned to U.K. where she obtained her B. A. in African History at London University, then returned to Africa - this time to Bembeke Teacher Training College in Malawi where she was first a tutor and then Principal. After handing the TTC over to the Malawian Sisters in 1984, she served for seven years in U.K as a member of the Provincial Council. During this time, she collaborated with Fr. Chris Wallbank in the ministry of Missionary and Vocation Animation. Back in Malawi once more she became Secretary to the Conference

of Religious Sisters of Malawi while at the same time teaching English to some sisters, catechetics in the Major Seminary at Kachebere, and helping in the accounts departments of Lilongwe Diocese. On her return to U.K. in 1996 she became the provincial secretary and also the bursar until 2004. Wherever she was and whatever service she was asked to do, Sister Patricia did it very well with great dedication. She had a deep spiritual life nourished by prayer, study and reading. Not only was she an excellent teacher, administrator, bursar and secretary but she was also a talented singer and dancer besides being a pleasant companion. Her delightful, and often self-deprecating, sense of humour lightened the atmosphere and did everyone good!

She loved our Missionary Vocation and, almost to the end of her life, she was keen to study any documents sent by the General Council, letters, reports of Chapters and other meetings. Although she was 91 and had a number of serious health issues her death on 10th June came as a shock since she had been gradually picking up after being hospitalised for a hip replacement following a fracture. We know though that she was ready to go and we thank God for her and for all she shared with us and with so many in Africa and here.



We continue to pray for Fr Ha-Jo Lohre MAfr who disappeared in Mali on 20th November 2022 on his way to say Mass.

We pray for him, his family, his captors and the Church in Mali.

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.”

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Parents & Friends Association
EVENTS

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

Your charitable prayers are requested

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



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Place

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Miss Adrienne McEnhill**

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May they rest in peace



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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