

Missionaries of AFRICA

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HARD TIMES WHEN / WHERE

Fr. Eddie Brady M. Afr.

“You never had it so good” was a political slogan in Britain some years ago. Such is our economic plight in Ireland today that many would say “You never had it so bad”.

But I can recall as a boy in Cavan in 1939 that times were hard and life was harsh. The land was poor and people had little money. Electricity was a luxury confined to towns while we in the countryside had only turf for heating and cooking. The second world war saw the introduction of rationing. We were allowed ½ oz. tea per week; one gallon of paraffin oil per month and 40 coupons for clothing for the year (a pullover was 10 coupons). Sugar was very scarce and we ate mostly potatoes, cabbage and turnips. Bananas, oranges and tomatoes were unheard of.

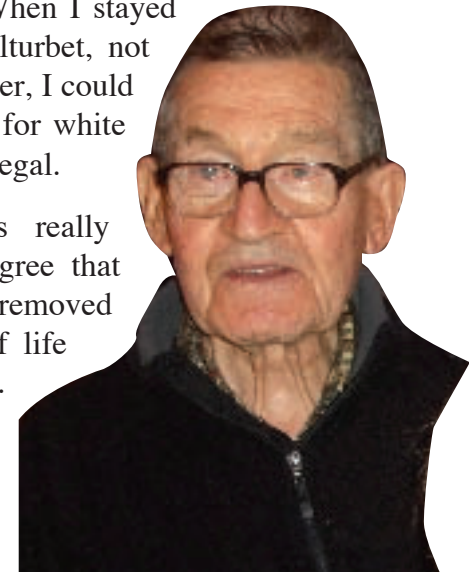
The social welfare system was slowly being introduced and 1940 saw the introduction of Children Allowance. Medical cards too were beginning to appear but only for the very poor. Our recreation was mostly football, hurling and tug of war. On Sunday nights there were dances, ceilies and the cinema. I remember too that in the cinema in Clones, the boys sat on one side of the centre aisle and the girls on the other. Smoking was not considered a health hazard and a five packet of Woodbine cost only two old pence. No one could really afford alcohol but some did drink as Guinness was relatively cheap. Flour was in short supply so bread was scarce. Our part of Cavan produced poor wheat resulting in coarse,

black lumpy flour. When I stayed with an uncle in Belturbet, not too far from the Border, I could cycle into the North for white bread, but this was illegal.

Have time times really changed? All will agree that life in Ireland is far removed from the hardship of life in my young days.

However, in many countries in Africa where we work, poverty is still today a harsh reality. There are modern thriving cities. Yet these cities can exist side by side with impoverished shanty towns. But by far the greatest number of people still live in rural areas. Living of the land is very hard and life is a constant struggle. Social Welfare is unknown and there are no such things as medical cards or children allowances.

But there is great hope in Africa. As in Ireland of old there exists a spirit of great sharing and the warmth of the sun is reflected in the hearts of many. As missionaries we hope to live this African spirit echoing Jesus basic message: **“when I was hungry you gave me to eat; when I was thirsty you gave me to drink”**. We hope that in the harshness of life we can hold hands and care for each other while facing the challenges together. I thank you, our friends and benefactors, for providing us with the means that allows us to share in the warmth and the generous spirit of Africa as I return to Tanzania at the tender age of 83.



Malawi, the Heart of Africa

Fr. Brendan O' Shea M.Afr.

Mua

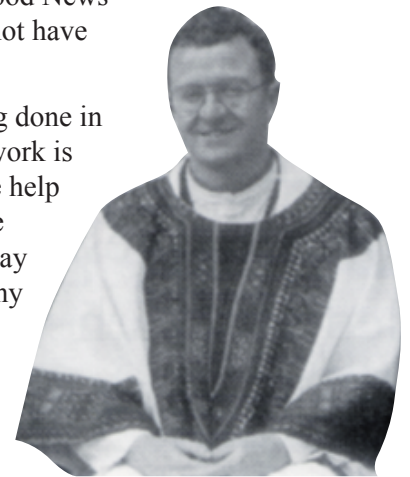
Mission was founded in 1902 in Central Malawi.

Since then Missionaries of Africa have been busy building the Parish and serving the people. As was usual practice for many such parishes they were quick to build schools and a hospital which are still helping the sick. Now the Parish has 24 churches, many schools and several clinics. I am living in a community of five Missionaries of Africa at the moment. Claude is from Canada and has been in Mua for over 40 years. He is also a renowned artist and has established Kungoni Cultural Centre as a means of preserving the local culture and gaining a deeper understanding of its many meanings. There are two curates Paul Namono from Burkina Faso and Sebastian Kalengwe from Congo. We also have a student from The Philippines by the name of Ryan Contamina (his first name was given to him by the Irish nun who helped give birth to him). It's a mixed community but very enjoyable with lots to keep us busy.

Our work is very diverse; firstly we have over 30,000 Catholic in the parish which means baptism, first communion and confirmation are big occasions. We often have up to 200 babies to baptise at one go. We don't need to use a water hose but it goes smoothly with all the dancing and singing. Weddings are also in the hundreds and happen once people have harvested their crops. Only then can the celebrations begin.

We are also keen to assist people to find ways of dealing with the constant poverty which they face each day. The average daily wage is just over 1 Euro. Since agriculture is the main means of livelihood it is there that we focus our attention. Irrigation schemes have been established to help extend the farming season. Use of natural fertilisers means less money is spent on buying supplements. We also provide Training for Transformation courses which help people to be able to understand the problems they face in life and find solutions. It is clear that hunger is no longer as big a problem as before, but one has always to be proactive as hunger is never far away from the tables of people. There is no point in sharing the Good News of the Church if people do not have enough food.

All the work that is being done in Mua and other missionary work is only possible because of the help we get from so many people here in Ireland. While we may feel disheartened by the many problems we have around us we should feel proud and happy that we have made a great difference to people's lives. Thank you.



Return to Africa

Fr. Joe McMenamin M.Afr.

2008

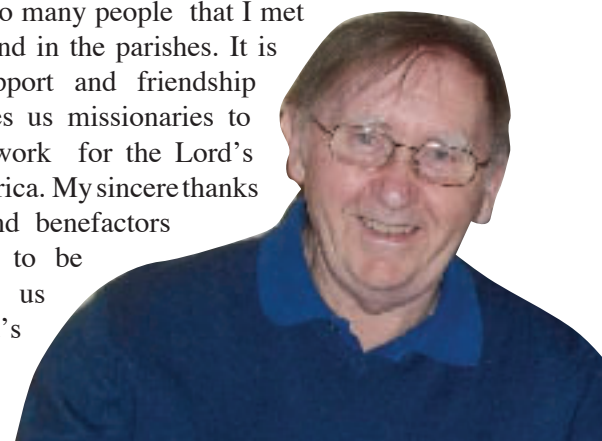
I was appointed back to Ireland to the task of promoting the interests of the Missionaries of Africa. Being uprooted from Africa after 35 years in Zambia was not easy. Reluctant, though I was to leave, one has to say my four years in Ireland has been an enriching experience from many points of view. Meeting up again with old friends and making new ones

My task has taken me around the country North and South. Meeting people in parishes where we made our missionary appeals, collecting mission boxes in shops, restaurants, pubs and working in the office where we are in daily contact with our benefactors who continue to show their loyalty and support.

I now leave Ireland to return again to Zambia. Much has changed there in the past 4 years. Vocations to the priesthood and the religious life are on the increase... most parishes are now under the administration of the

local clergy. I have been appointed to the setting-up of a new parish, in a large township. There will be many challenges..... particularly in caring for the ever increasing number of street kids/orphans and the many who have been infected by the Aids virus.

I take with me many happy memories of my four years here. The kindness, the welcome and the generosity of so many people that I met on my visits and in the parishes. It is this loyal support and friendship that encourages us missionaries to continue our work for the Lord's Kingdom in Africa. My sincere thanks to all you kind benefactors who continue to be partners with us in the Lord's mission.



Our Home in Templeogue

Fr. P.J. Cassidy M.Afr.

I am sure there are a number of people who simply wonder what goes on behind the walls of a convent or within the walls of a religious community. It is in this respect that I would like to put pen to paper and share with you, our friends and benefactors, what we get up to as White Fathers and how we live within the walls of our home. We would love at times to call ourselves a family but to be honest we are not. When I visit families and see how they interpret and respond to life's challenges, we cannot compare ourselves, and that is why we simply have to call ourselves a community living in a home, a rather large home at that.

Some members of the community get up very early in the morning and some of us get up at the last minute, no need to name and shame. We begin our day in prayer and eucharist at 7.45am. In our prayer we remember all our families, friends and benefactors to whom we owe so much. We give thanks to you each morning for enabling us to live as a community within our home. Our day continues with breakfast and a taste of porridge made by Bernie our cook, or sometimes Terry, when Bernie is not around, Terry's porridge has improved down the years!! It is good to hear their voices as it brings a certain life and laughter to our day. As our day progresses, June, Cora, Madeline, Francis and Murial (mostly part timers) arrive and bring the outside world to our home. All of our staff are important to the wellbeing of our home as each one has a function where they go beyond their call at times.

Our day becomes busy as we answer the phone and respond to our mail which normally arrives by 8.45, thanks to our postman. Everyone heads off to their respective rooms or office, delighted to get a letter or card and once again it brings a certain normality to our day. Our promotion office is busy as it is from there that we prepare our newsletter, raffle cards, diaries and calendars which we send to almost 3600 people. Fr. Tom, an important person in our office, receives, opens and records all correspondences with you our friends and benefactors. Fr. Tom is not the only person who is important to this process, our neighbours add their own time and energy as they come together every two/three months to pack and prepare all our envelopes for posting, many thanks to them all. I forgot to mention that we have a public mass for our neighbours each morning at 8.00am which is appreciated. A sincere thank you to our neighbours and friends of Templeogue for praying and sharing your life with us.

Our home, at certain times of the year is busy, as we receive our fellow missionaries on home leave from Africa and other countries. We collect them from the airport, offer them a room to rest before they travel to their families where they spend time enjoying the company of their love ones. We welcome them with open arms as we receive news from the heart of Africa and again this brings a certain realism to our vocation and call.

At present there are six Irish members in our community (average age 69) along with Pierre (French) who is basically a honorary Irish person, with two Spanish and one Burkina Faso confrere. It is really a mixture of cultures but there is a common entity and that is expressed through our missionary spirit. We come together for a social every Friday evening where we catch up on the gossip and agree to disagree on certain subjects. By the way we also have a new member of the community, our dog called "paws", he only arrived last week and joins us in prayer when he is not otherwise engaged.

We hope you enjoy our photos as they express better than words our home behind the walls of Templeogue. You are always welcome to call in while passing, you never know, you may get a job to walk the dog, blessings for the coming year and may we all be united in prayer.



Please Pray for our Friends who have Died

Mr Walter Geraghty, Castlebar, Co Mayo
Mrs Mary Tully, Moyar, Kingscourt, Co Cavan
Mrs Anna Clifford, Tatteevagh, Lisnaskea,
Co Fermanagh
Mrs Anna Dowling, Foxrock, Dublin
Mrs Maud O'Hagan, Gortnalibret, Glenboy,
Manorhamilton, Co Leitrim
Miss Kathleen Ryan, Alexandra Road, St Luke's, Cork
John Ginty, Inver, Ballina, Co Mayo
Mr James Hanna, Drumkeeragh Road, Ballynahinch,
Co Down
Mr Pat Shields, Killeavey Road, Newry, Co Down
Mrs Frances Caslin, Elphin St. Strokestown,
Co Roscommon

Mr Ben Slatter, late of Typecraft, Sandyford, Dublin
Mr Peter Fitzpatrick, Toam. Blacklion, Co Cavan
Ms Mayjo McGahon, College Street, Cavam
Mr Patrick McNiff, Corrlacka, Glangevlin,
Carrick on Shannon, Co Leitrim
Mr Eamon McAdam, Killynaher, Belturbet, Co Cavan
Mr Tom O'Doherty, Gortboy, Kilmallock, Co Limerick
Mrs Margaret Groeger, St Annes Drive, Montenotte,
Cork
Mr Tony Maguire, Callystown, Clogherhead, Co Louth
Mr Tony Millane, Greenville Court, Enniscorthy,
Co Wexford (Brother of Fr John Millane Mfr.)
Mrs Mary King, Brookwood Rise, Artane, Dublin 5
Mr Conal Hugh Keeney, Port Road, Letterkenny

*Christ has died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again.
May they Rest in Peace with the Father*

Mission Appeals, The Diocese of Galway

It is with gratitude that we begin to do Mission Appeals in the Diocese of Galway this year. During the last week, we had the pleasure of meeting Bishop Martin Drennan (Bishop of Galway). He is very happy to receive us in the Diocese while we collect donations from the different parishes. If you do receive our newsletter within the diocese, please introduce yourself to us as we would be happy to greet you. Once again many thanks for all your donations.

RAFFLE

*"With this issue of the Newsletter you will find some raffle cards for our annual raffle. The money raised will go towards a fund that we established for the care of our elderly missionaries, most of whom have spent many years of their lives in Africa and who one day may require special care. We hope that our elderly friends and those who already help us in other ways will not be offended by being sent raffle cards. **The cards(2) are automatically put into the envelopes. We would like to assure you that if you cannot sell the lines yourself, you should not worry. However selling lines is an ideal way of enlisting the help of a wider circle of people who are not regular contributors.** We thank all of you for your faithful support of our Missionary Society.*

With thanks.

PLEASE REMEMBER THE MISSIONS IN YOUR WILL
Our legal name is Missionaries of Africa (White Fathers).

A suitable formula is:

I give to the Society of Missionaries of Africa (White Fathers) the sum off €..... free of duty. And I declare that the Provincial of the Society who now resides at Cypress Grove, Templeogue, Dublin 6W shall be in good discharge.

Carry on the good work you have been doing during your life by helping to spread the Gospel after you have gone to the Father.

PDF- Acceptance

