



EDITORIAL

How do you get to know the Missionaries of Africa in the Philippines? By reading a pamphlet, through Internet or facebook? This may be a first step but the best way surely is to visit and share in our community life! For this reason the Missionaries of Africa team organised (for the second time) a "Come and See!" program from April 10 until May 7, 2011. We were happy to welcome ten high school graduates and young professionals willing to discern a possible vocation as brother or priest.

Rudisel and Alvin, two of the participants, as well as Ms. Vicky L. Abella, their companion and English instructor, will share their experiences in this issue.

It is said "If you do not know where you are going you will end up somewhere else!" To discover one's vocation in life is so important that missing this step in your life might take you to "hell" - as happened to some youths I met on the Fazenda da Esperança on Masbate Island.

Enabling young people to discover and live out their vocation is Br. Lito's concern in Tanzania. As youth coordinator in the Archdiocese of Tabora he tells us about creative ways of youth ministry and formation. **E.L.**

Inside this issue:

"It's time for Africa"	2
Dreams and Reality	3
The Mission that Counts	4
Out of Hell ...	5
Youth Ministry -Tabora	6
Our Founder (3)	7



COME AND

"It's time for Africa!"

Shall I say: The journey towards Africa is about to start? A month-long journey with ten companions from all over the Philippines (Luzon, Visayas, Mindanao). We gathered ultimately for only one reason: to approach "a burning bush" (Ex. 3) and answer God's call for each one of us. This journey became extraordinary with the task set before us to deepen **intimacy** with ourselves and intimacy between ourselves - both rooted in and growing from intimacy with God in prayer. Human formation enables us to know who we are in order to grow in self-knowledge. Mingling with each other with our different personalities we slowly bonded and came to sense an unbreakable unity. During the third week we launched ourselves into five days of family immersion. One group went to Brgy. Cantipay and the other stayed in Brgy. Taptap/Cantipla. This was the time to strengthen our **intimacy with the host families**, being together with them in work and prayer. Meeting different people from all walks of life our expectations were more than fulfilled with memorable experiences that no money can buy. Seeking God was the final leg of the journey. This time we sought to deepen our **intimacy with God during** four days "retreat" or better four days



SEE! 2011

of having an appointment with God. To keep silence for four days enabled us to listen to God's call. It was a time for prayer, a time to ask for enlightenment, a time to answer the fundamental question: *"How can I best serve the Lord?"*

Now that we have just finished this journey some of us will join the formation with the Missionaries of Africa. Others will continue to seek the Father's will and His plan as their life's journey unfolds. May we be bonded in Jesus' prayer: "THY WILL BE DONE!!!"
(Rudisel Alberina, 1st yr. aspirant from Davao del Sur)

Dreams and Reality

Reality seems entirely distinct from illusive dreams. This was everyone's prevailing conviction after our intense immersion in Cantipla (mountainous area along the central highway of Cebu city) from April 24 – 28 2011. As a city guy who is used to living with technology and modernity I found myself suddenly dumped in the mountains of Cebu surprised by the simplicity of life out there.

Indeed, sharing life with people living mostly without the aid of technology, working hand in hand for their own survival was a challenging experience. Drawing water from a distant well, cultivating the soil, and catching Piyo (little crabs) for our meal were experiences that constituted a turning point in our lives.

Ironically, we missionary aspirants were **evangelized by our host families**. They have received little education and yet were able to teach us the real virtues of contentment, fortitude, and steadfast faith in spite of their powerlessness and vulnerability. Listening to their plight and traumatic



experiences opened our hearts and minds to be more sympathetic. Dreams are definitely distinct from reality. Perhaps our exposure to life in Cantipla was a wake-up call for those who dreamt of missionary life as a bed of roses, yes, roses for sure, but certainly full of thorns. In short, the five days of family immersion have left imprints and **unforgettable memories** on our hearts. It was indeed a life changing experience. (Alvin, 1st yr. aspirant from Marikina City/ Manila)

The Mission that Counts

Carry out a random act of kindness with no expectation of reward save in the knowledge that one day someone might do the same for you. (Princess Diana)

I believe that nothing in life happens by accident; there's always a purpose. From the quote I really found joy and contentment seeing a person happy with just a simple act of

kindness. Giving oneself for service is more than a simple act of kindness. This I discovered during my stay with the "Come and See!" activity of the Missionaries of Africa. I never had a good background about Africa. With what I knew from my readings and studies, they are just bits and

pieces of what the continent is all about. This little perception and knowledge widened when I made the one month encounter with some aspirants for the Missionaries of Africa.

To help does not only mean extending monetary or financial contributions but doing what Jesus Christ has asked of each one of us to "be a brother, a sister, a friend to all".

The lay missionaries of Africa have opened my eyes to answer the call. As one grows to understand life less and less, he learns to **love it more and more.**

Why not make life meaningful? I am calling those good brothers and



sisters out there to carry out a random act of kindness by being in the lay aspirants. Let's go out of our comfort zones and become a friend and a brother or a sister of Christ. I made a decision already, what about you?

Vicky L. Abella (a.k.a. Mz. A.)

Out of Hell ...

There is an ancient homily for Holy Saturday which says that Jesus went to hell to search for Adam ... to free him from eternal death: *"I did not create you to be a prisoner in hell. Rise from the dead, for I am the life of the dead."* In a nutshell: This is what happens in **Fazenda da Esperança**, a large hacienda on Masbate Island and home to former drug dependents.

In March I had the lucky opportunity to visit this rehabilitation center for drug addicts (alcohol, shabu, etc.)

Through farming, community life and a spirituality of acceptance and forgiveness members of the Fazenda learn a different way of living. The community experience enables them to **begin a new life**.

Celebrating mass with them I was touched to see them playing instruments, singing joyfully and praying together. I surprised myself thinking: Should I encounter the same people in

Carbon market or Colon prior to their rehabilitation I would surely avoid them for fear of getting myself into trouble.

Fazenda makes concrete how a person can come back to a new life. Isn't that what we mean when we celebrate **Easter**?

E.L.



Fazenda da Esperança was founded by Fr. Hans Stapel (a Franciscan priest) in Brasil. There are more than 60 therapeutic communities in 10 countries
<http://www.fazenda-ph.org/>

Youth ministry in Tabora (Tanzania)

Tabora is a town located in central west of Tanzania (East Africa). The first caravan of Missionaries of Africa arrived in Tabora on the 12th of September 1878. They were the first catholic missionaries to reach this place.

Today the Archdiocese of Tabora has a population of 2 million inhabitants. 18% are catholic. It has twenty parishes.

The youth organization is called VIWAWA meaning, Young Catholic Workers. The members' ages ranged from 14 up to 40.

Most of the young members have no work and have stopped going to school because of economic reasons, early pregnancy for women, poor academic performance and other family-related problems. Quite a number of youth try their luck in the metropolitan cities of Dar es Salaam or Arusha where they look for jobs. Rural/urban migration is a serious problem that often leads to human trafficking.

With these alarming conditions a youth developmental program has been designed to improve **young people's** living conditions: to obtain leadership skills, to acquire human and spiritual formation, to learn English and to train in cooking and baking.

This program is in line with the propositions of the Second African Synod which stated: *In Africa today, youth constitute the majority of the population, and are **gift and treasure from God**, for which all Africa is grateful. They ought to be loved, valued and respected.*

A particular goal for 2011 beyond the leadership- and skill training has been the opening of a canteen. Its aims are to provide work, income for those who could



supply vegetables, fruits and meat for the canteen. Hopefully, there will be a bakery as well. Thinking big and looking forward, a VIWAWA Development Center will possibly be erected later.

For me as diocesan youth coordinator there are many challenges which have been made lighter by the support from the Archbishop, priests, religious, Missionaries of Africa, lay people and the youth themselves.

Asanteni (Thank you)!!!!

Bro. Lito G. Doguiles, M.Afr.
Coordinator, Young Catholic Workers

Our Founder Cardinal Lavigerie (3)

How to reward Fr. Charles Lavigerie for his tremendous relief work in Lebanon? This was the question that the French government was trying to answer in 1861 (the year of Jose Rizal's birth in Laguna, Philippines). An answer was found in appointing him to the "Roman Rota" in the Vatican. The Roman Rota was a tribunal and like some other Catholic countries, France had a right to present candidates. Lavigerie was appointed as one of the judges.

He is able to use the opportunity of his two years in Rome to make contacts with many officials in the Vatican and to strike up a personal friendship with **Pope Pius IX**. (1846-1878). Fr. Lavigerie was not eager to stay in Rome and he told the Pope: "I suffer too much here, Holy Father, I wasn't born a diplomat nor a political arbitrator. I was born a priest." After some hesitation the Pope finally accepted to let him go back to France.

Only 38 years old he is appointed Bishop of Nancy in France (1863-1867). The diocese had a population of 425,000 inhabitants served by 830 priests. He is the youngest bishop and has in his luggage a storm of ideas. For his coat of arms he chooses the **pelican** (The bird is believed to feed its starving young with its own blood) with the single word: "**CARITAS**" to express the spirit that will define his ministry.

In his first report to the Pope he wrote:
It seems to me there are two ways to bring



Ch. Lavigerie - Bishop of Nancy

back people to religion. One is charity and the clergy in France are doing it. The second is sound learning and this is badly neglected.

In addition to his focus on the formation of his priests he urged female religious congregations to undergo a



proper training before teaching in schools.

He could be demanding in seeing that his vision for the diocese was realized yet he always showed care and human concern. Once while in a parish he saw that preparations were being made for a splendid feast by the landowner. This was against the rules he had issued. He asked for the address of the poorest families in the parish and ordered that a portion of the food be sent to them...

For information on **joining the Missionaries of Africa** contact:

Fr Bernard Monteron 0908 17 53 155
bamonteron@yahoo.com.ph

Fr Thomas Schwiedessen 0921 32 23 793



molafricavoc@yahoo.com
www.mafrome.org



Pope Benedict XVI
and Fr R. Baawobr

World day of prayer for vocations

"I would also remind you, dear brother Bishops, of the concern of the universal Church for an equitable distribution of priests in the world. Your openness to the needs of dioceses experiencing a scarcity of vocations will become a blessing from God for your communities and a sign to the

faithful of a priestly service that generously considers the needs of the entire Church."

(Pope Benedict XVI - May 15,2011)

How you can help us:

-Above all, please help us with your prayer for vocations and for missionaries in Africa.

-You can spread this « News Letter » through e-mail.

-You can support the formation of our seminarians by sending your contribution by check payable to « Missionaries of Africa Inc».

4 Kalaw St., Sto. Niño Village, Banilad,
P.O. Box 1088, 6000 Cebu City, Philippines
Tel N° (032) 344-06-06 Fax N° (032) 346-27-71