



3/2011

EDITORIAL

Make Africa known and loved!" This is the first line of our vision and mission statement as Missionaries of Africa in the Philippines.

How to build bridges between Africa and Philippines and vice versa? Communication of news and sharing of activities are an indispensable way among others. Adding to our presence on facebook we recently opened a new **website** at <http://mafrphil.org> . We hope that you will help us to make it known to all your personal contacts through e-mail or facebook.

As bridge builders our Filipino confreres in Africa will share with you their experiences in mission: Clayb in Malawi and Fr. Dioscoro as National Youth Chaplain for Zambia in Madrid for the World Youth Day. Since building bridges is the opposite of one way traffic Christopher will tell of his experiences with drug addicts in rehabilitation. Christopher recently completed his formation in Cebu. On September 3, 2011 we celebrated his despedida sending him out to Zambia/East Africa for his Novitiate/Spiritual Year.



On the same day thousands of miles away in Nairobi/ Kenya our Filipino missionary

Jame Dela Cerna was ordained **Deacon** after having made a solemn promise on oath, pledging himself to life-long missionary service with the Church on the African continent.

We wish both Jame and Christopher a fruitful mission!

E.L.

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My Pilgrimage to the World Youth Day in Madrid (Spain)

In 1995, the World Youth Day was held in Manila. I was one of the 4 million participants at that event. This time in Madrid/Spain we were around 2 million.

I went with a group of 19 participants from Zambia and coming from different Dioceses of Zambia. Unfortunately we did not know each other as we met only the day before our departure. At the airport of Madrid, it took 10hrs before we managed to take a bus to Salamanca (250kms from

Madrid). Salamanca is full of old churches and schools. **I was fascinated** by the scenery.

When I saw the interior decoration of the churches, it reminded me of the church at my home parish Baclayaon (Bohol) which was built in 1596 under the supervision of the Spaniards.

The World Youth Day started in Salamanca. We were celebrating together with the participants from Canada, Australia, Germany, India and Venezuela. We had morning prayers, mass and evening prayers together. One of the major activities was the catechism.

We ended our time in Salamanca with a social night. All participating countries had to present something. It went very well.

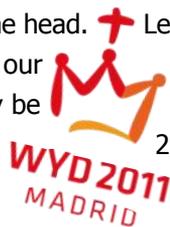
I wonder when will be the next time that I may live again such an experience.

The second week of our pilgrimage took us to Madrid. We were hosted in a school owned by the Salesian sisters (20kms from the city). We slept on the floor using our sleeping bags... There were around 400 people who were staying in that school from the different corners of the

world. A mass in one of the parks in the city, presided over by the local Archbishop, was our first activity in Madrid. Our pilgrimage climaxed with a night vigil with the Pope. The weather was deadly hot and humid with temperatures of 40° Celsius. I could not stand the heat, so I sought refuge under a tent.

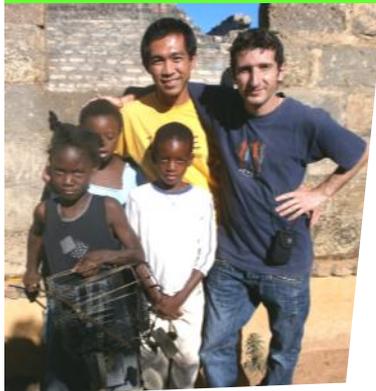
In the evening, I looked around, and was **mesmerized** to see a big crowd waiting for the arrival of the Pope. In spite of the exhaustion of many the Spirit was working. When the Pope started the vigil prayer it began to rain making the ground muddy. Yet the rain was felt as a blessing since everybody longed for water to cool down. In that way the rain showers increased the sense of joy among the young people who even started singing and dancing.

My experience was special and unique. The World Youth Day 2011 has taught me something. The Catholic Church is alive through the work of the Holy Spirit. Though we are quite numerous in the Church there is a strong possibility that **we can live in unity** as one body with Jesus Christ as the head. Let us continue to pray for all ministers of the Good News, for our Pope, the bishops, my fellow priests and all the laity that we may be united as one family like the participants of the World Youth Day 2011 when they gathered together for the vigil and Eucharistic celebration with Pope Benedict XVI.



Fr. Dioscoro Pancito Malugao, Mafr.

“Unless you become like little children ...”



One is nibbling a pencil, on the other side a group of five are precariously hanging on a swing. In a corner one is silently munching a biscuit while at the back of the room four are acrobatically keeping their balance on a single see-saw. Add bullying, running, screaming, thumb-sucking, boisterous laughter, crying and it will make a perfect scene for a normal **ordinary day at the nursery class.**

Of course, it was not at all an “endless chaos”. In fact, I had great fun working with the kids. When it is time to play, we play. When it is time to sing, we sing. When it is time for lessons, they sit and listen.

Handling a child of 5-6 years old is a real challenge and when you multiply that by 30 and the task becomes next to impossible. This is what I found myself doing for my 6 week immersion at Buyantanshi Community School, located in Twapia, Ndola.

Teaching is a profession I would never have dreamed of. From time to time, I feel the need to go down to the level of my pupils in order to perceive the

world as they perceive it. I realized that teaching is indeed a noble profession. My interaction with my pupils also allowed me to know the story behind those little innocent eyes: stories that inspire me to love them more. Many of my pupils are HIV positive. It is **heartbreaking**, but at the same time a great privilege for me to let them feel even for just a moment that life can be beautiful despite all the apparent ills that overshadow all their reasons for hope, for gratitude and for being happy in this world.

In many societies children are considered a nuisance because they are spontaneous and curious; they are noisy, they break things, etc. Being a teacher I cannot but acknowledge the fact that each child has an innate **passion for learning** and so does not fear to explore and to experiment. There is always that sense of wonder and awe. A child sees life as colorful and vibrant; it is never boring.

Each single day is an opportunity to make a discovery. A discovery of how sweet is the sugarcane, how colorful is the rainbow, how plentiful are the fish in the sea, how brilliant are the stars in the heavens, how incredible are my parents, how great I am. To a child, the world is just so big that the quest to count and name everything that is on it is just endless. It was a priceless chance for me to relive my childhood and to re-experience how joyful and free it is to be a child.

Clayb Caputolan.

Clayb has now begun his period of 20 months apostolic training in Mua/Malawi.



Ndola is an industrial city in the copperbelt region of Zambia. Copper is the main export of the county. It is one of the busiest and highly populated cities in Zambia. There are many foreigners: Indians, Somalians, Chinese, Europeans seeking opportunities for business. Twapia (meaning *I am broken*) is a township on the outskirts of Ndola.

It was originally a settlement area for the workers who were left jobless after the collapse of the copper industry in the early 90's. At present, Twapia is a bustling residential area overlooking the city.

“Fazenda - An oasis of renewal”

So "get rid of your old self, which made you live as you used to, the old self that was being destroyed by its deceitful desires. Your hearts and minds must be made completely new." (Eph. 4:22-23) Paul's invitation to the community of Ephesus could be the mission and vision of Fazenda da Esperanza. A total transformation coming from the heart, helping individuals to restore themselves **from brokenness to wholeness**.

This is the great contribution of Fazenda to our church today. Fazenda da Esperanza is a rehabilitation center for drug addicts (shabu, alcohol...). I stayed for two months from April to June 2011. It is located at Milagros, Masbate, a huge farm of 278 ha.

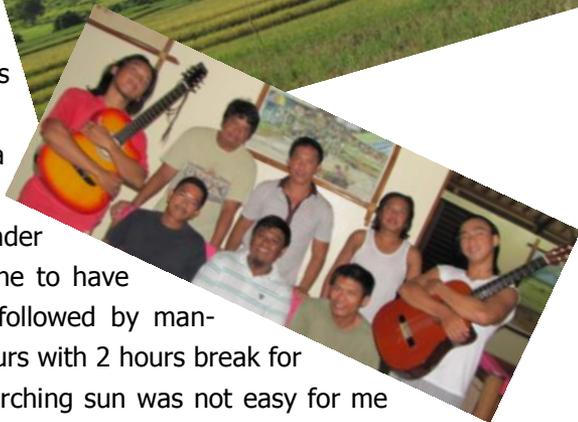
Fazenda da Esperanza is built on **3 pillars** of renewal: community life, spirituality and work. Community life means living together as "brothers" beyond differences of background. It means learning to set aside our biases and prejudices. The spirituality of the Focolare Movement inspired by Chiara Lubich is adapted in their daily meditation and applied through daily experiences. Work would be the exciting part where they can invest all their energy and break free from the influence of alcohol and drugs on their bodies and minds.

The center looks elegant but as a matter of fact life is simple according to the vision of the founder Fr. Hans Stapel. It was our routine to have daily meditation from 6am-7am followed by manual work in the rice fields for 8 hours with 2 hours break for lunch. A whole day under the scorching sun was not easy for me to adjust to. A time came that I couldn't bear the intense heat of the sun anymore, feeling I was in a forge with my skin being burned and blackened. I was accepted wholeheartedly to their so called "world." I told my stories and they told theirs. Now I am more compassionate and empathetic. Their lives affected me very much and they taught me to persevere and uplift my self-esteem and not to lose hope.

Living with them is a blessing and a true liberating experience. Moreover, Fazenda has become an instrument of love, helping individuals to renew/transform their lives. A paradox of life, wholeness comes after brokenness.

Christopher Rabelas

For more information: <http://www.fazenda-ph.org/>



“As the Father has sent me, so I send you” (Jn 20:21)

Recently I joined the vocation awareness campaign in the Archdiocese of Palo/Eastern Leyte where we visited different schools. I want to share with you some of the reactions I got during my interactions with people.

A newly ordained priest told me **“Africa is challenging!”** True enough! Yet often we do not notice that Africa is a vast continent, 100 times the size of the Philippines, composed of 55 nations, each one with its own cultural diversity and history! Even if there are African countries like Somalia and the newly created South Sudan that are going through difficulties it does not mean that the entire African continent shares the same fate.

most media who zoom in on the spectacular and the tragic! And good news does not sell advertisements! Whenever something good happens in any African country we usually do not hear about it. The resulting impression of Africa created by one-sided media reporting is mostly negative.

A 4th year high school student told me there is **AIDS in Africa**. Yes it is true. I myself know grand-parents taking care of their grandchildren because their parents died of AIDS! Then I listen to the Gospel: *“I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.”* (Mt 25:36) If indeed there is suffering caused by HIV/AIDS in Africa must we not be concerned? If a part of

the body is in pain, is it not the whole body which suffers (1 CO 12:26)?

What is the point of joining religious life if the only thing we look for is a comfortable life? In his message for the **World Mission day** on **October 23rd** 2011 Pope Benedict XVI reminds us: “To ignore the problems of humanity would be to forget the lesson which comes to us from the Gospel concerning love of our neighbour who is suffering and in need.”

When I told the youth that I lived in Mali/West Africa, a country which only 1% Christians, they were amazed. “After two thousand years”, said the Pope, “there are still peoples who do not know Christ and have not yet heard his Message of salvation... The **Gospel is not a possession** we received and should keep for ourselves! It is a gift to be shared, good news to be passed on to others ...”



Faith will grow stronger whenever I am able to share it with others! Every Eucharistic celebration ends with Jesus' mission to the Apostles "**Go therefore and make disciples of all nations ...**" (Mt 28:19). We are sent to the world to bear witness to our faith. Missionary vocations for the Church in the Philippines are worth praying for!

Emmanuel L.

Our Founder Cardinal Lavigerie (4)

Do you believe in the significance of **dreams**? Can they become turning points in history? If not, let me tell you about such a life-changing dream in the life of Bishop Lavigerie. It happened on the night of November 11, 1866.

In 1866 the Archbishop of Tours (France) wanted to rebuild the Cathedral on the tomb of St Martin (316 – 397). For the opening of a temporary shrine he had invited his fellow bishops, among them Lavigerie. As a church historian Lavigerie had studied the life of St. Martin of Tours and was fascinated by St. Martin's impact as a missionary monk.

On the night after the feast Lavigerie dreamed that he was in a strange, unknown country with **dark-skinned people**, speaking an unknown language, approaching him. Six days later, now back in his diocese, he found a most unexpected letter from a certain Mac Mahon, then the French Governor of Algeria (North Africa). In his letter the governor asked if Lavigerie would be ready to accept being named for the **Episcopal seat of Algiers!** (Political influence at the time allowed the French government to propose to the Pope the bishop they wanted to be appointed). The following day Lavigerie wrote back to Mac Mahon to communicate his acceptance.

Lavigerie's answer came as a great surprise to many. Some bishops even expressed criticism. Being the youngest bishop in France at the time, he was foreseen as the one to succeed the Archbishop of Lyon in the most prominent diocese in the country and thereafter to become Cardinal. Algeria being a French colony at the time was considered difficult to handle as



Ch. Lavigerie Bishop of Nancy

a diocese. Instead of listening to some voices enticing him to an ecclesiastical career Lavigerie knew that Algeria was his calling and that it was "the **open door** to an immense continent where evangelization had hardly begun". His dream surely played a significant part in his answering the call to Africa ...

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*Diaconate of
 Jame Dela Cerna Sept. 10, 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».

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