

3/2013

EDITORIAL

Good out of evil!

The Missionaries of Africa 125th anniversary celebration of Cardinal Lavigerie’s campaign against slavery launched in October 2012 concluded last September 8 in Burkina-Faso (West Africa).

In 1876 a Missionary of Africa ransomed a young slave from the neighboring country Mali. Six years later the young man was named Adrian on the occasion of his baptism by Cardinal Lavigerie. Adrian underwent training and became a nurse and a catechist. At 23 years of age Adrian Atiman was missioned to East Africa (Tanzania) where he became a living witness of God’s mercy. He contributed to the foundation of the Tanzanian local church. He lived into old age and was honored with several awards from different countries and from Pope Pius XII.



Slavery remains very present in our modern world in many forms. The anti-slavery campaign must find new forms in our time to respond to the evil of human trafficking in the context of the exploitation of migrants, child labor and

prostitution.

We hope that this year of celebration and remembrance will spur our creativity to act against the evil of slavery in its new forms. We will be energized for the struggle in as much as we realize that the Earth is our sacred home where nature and humans may not be exploited and used as objects and mere resources to be wasted! Visiting a slum in Brazil Pope Francis said: "We must never allow the throw-away culture to enter our hearts, because we are brothers and sisters. No one is disposable!"

Inside this issue:	
From Zambia to the Philippines	2
My new beginning	3
A transforming Experience	4
Unity - "3 in 1"	6
Our Founder (12) MSOLA	7

From Zambia to the Philippines: Fr Coro

(The Superior general of the Missionaries of Africa recently appointed Fr. Dioscoro Pan-cito Malugao superior of the Philippines to succeed Fr. Bernard Monteron).

Fr. Emmanuel: *"How did you meet the Missionaries of Africa?"*

Fr. Coro: "It happened when I met Fr. George Smith, the chaplain of the Cebu Institute of Technology (now CIT-University) where I was a student of mechanical engineering. I was an active campus ministry member at that time. We had a Bible sharing in the chapel and I was impressed by his experience when he was in Tanzania (Africa) as a missionary. He invited me to "Africa Calling", a monthly event organized by the M. Afr. community. We had film showings and inputs. In an informal way each of the Missionaries of Africa in the community shared his own experience in Africa."

Fr. Emmanuel: *"Coro, you were ordained to the priesthood on April 14, 2007 in your Parish Baclayon / Bohol. What motivated you leave your family in Bohol to become a missionary priest in Zambia?"*

Fr. Coro: "I wanted to be an instrument of the Lord by extending his mission to the people on the African continent."

Fr. Emmanuel: *"For how many years have you been in Africa? Could you share the most touching experience you had?"*

Fr. Coro: "I have lived in Africa now for almost 13 years. Seven years during the time of my studies and six years as a missionary priest. When we celebrate the Eucharist there is an atmosphere of joy. It is expressed in songs and dances in front of the altar especially when offerings are presented.

Whenever I visited the hospital to take Holy Communion to the sick I could notice happiness on their faces, their willingness to receive Christ. They strongly believe that it is Christ who helps them to bear the pain of their illness. Even in



the face of death, it is Christ who gives courage to the terminally ill.

Fr. Emmanuel: *"What makes you feel that God is calling Filipinos to work as missionaries in Africa?"*

Fr. Coro: "For God there is no distinction between Filipino, Zambian, Irish,

French, American... Surely God calls Filipinos to share the Good News in Africa and beyond the Philippines. Filipino is a national identity. God does not look at the nationality but at the heart. A heart willing to answer to his call and ready to proclaim that the crucified and risen Jesus is our companion towards the fullness of life."

My New Beginning

Seven years of my life spent in teaching in elementary have given me a lot of opportunities to be able to discern well on what life God wants me to live. The encouragement and support of my family and friends together with my prayers and theirs enabled me to finally say YES to God's call to enter the seminary on June 2, 2013.

My coming to Cebu filled me with mixed emotions. I was excited and happy because at last I made it here and was able to meet new friends. I also felt sad because I was and will always be away from my family and friends back home. I started to miss the life I used to live as a teacher for seven long years. I really do miss the people I used to be with including my pupils.

"My new beginning" means a very different life from the one I was used to. I will now submit myself to God to be guided by the formators he gave me here. I have started to live a new chapter of my life. Like a pot, I need to be formed beautifully and strongly to be ready for the mission God has prepared for me.

I thought of seminary life as easy, but I found out already that this was a wrong idea. Adjustment to almost everything is very necessary. I need to follow the program or structure prepared for me. Everything is a challenge for me which is the reason I double my prayers everyday. Yet, I am also happy and grateful to be meeting new friends and companions here who will be with me in this new journey of my life. I know and I believe that God is guiding me every step of the way.



Taking up AB-Philosophy at the Rogationist College Seminary is something I am happy with despite the challenges of being a student again. I need this to prepare myself for mission. The pastoral work every Saturday afternoon is something that I love to do. Being with the patients in the Eversley Leprosarium is an awesome experience. Listening to their stories and sharing mine makes them feel important and loved, and that is overwhelming for me. I am always happy doing this pastoral work and I always look forward to doing it.

I still miss my family back home as well as my friends, co-workers and pupils. I will always miss them and look forward to seeing them again sometime. Surely

I do not forget to pray for them always.

My life here in the seminary now gives me joy and happiness as this has been my prayer for a long time. I am thankful to God because He brought me here. I hope and pray that I will be able to finish the formation here to become a priest of the Missionaries of Africa in God's own time. Please pray for me and for all missionaries.

Larry Villaver



A Transforming Experience



(Alvin did his first stage of formation in Cebu. He stayed two months in Fazenda. In September he will proceed with his formation in view of becoming a "Missionary of Africa". He will do his novitiate in Zambia/ Africa.)

There is a saying: "What man does not know man fears". This was exactly my conviction prior to my arrival in *Fazenda da Esperança* in the province of Masbate. Usually people connect the word "addict" with... vicious and harmful criminals. Such social conditioning of which I was not spared has drastically changed after my two months' stay at *Fazenda*. My exposure changed my prejudices against addicts after I witnessed the exact opposite of the nasty stereotype that usually portrays them.

In fact, I was dumbstruck on how I was warmly welcomed. I expected to see people of intimidating appearance but I was greeted by their joyful smiles and their hilarious stories that made me feel at home and comfortable.



Fazenda da Esperança utilizes their own products for

their own consumption thus: we have to toil hand in hand for our own survival. Learning organic farming, baking, flavoring milk and manufacturing dairy products are some of the skills I've learned from the institution.



I admit that I am tremendously challenged by the people of Fazenda. The maturity of their spirituality is clearly manifested in the way they speak and act. They always try to concretize the gospel values which they've learned every day from the missionaries and sisters. Love

is the fundamental principle which all the Fazenda boys are trying to live out. Given the fact that people from different ethnic groups, cultural backgrounds, generations and upbringings are living together makes occasional skirmishes and arguments inevitable. Nevertheless, the gospel values of love and forgiveness certainly help them to mitigate their anger and resentments.

I witnessed how the Fazenda reformed not merely their spiritually but their entire personalities. My exposure in Fazenda was indeed an eye-opening experience. It taught me that everyone has the capacity to change for the better. From now on I will no longer look at addicts the way I did before.

Apart from the skills I acquired, one of the most important things I've learned from my exposure is to employ the eyes of God in looking at the person - God's eyes which are without pre-judgment and prejudices but are eyes of openness, empathy, equity and love.

I suppose these divine qualities are essential to an aspiring missionary like me who wants to understand profoundly people's culture and customs. Moreover, to break the barriers of social stereotypes; to educate people with objective knowledge; to relate to everyone regardless of their religion, cultural background and upbringing - these are vital to being a missionary and that is

my greatest aspiration right now.

Alvin Escabusa



For more information on Fazenda :

<http://fazenda.org.br/filipinas/>

Unity - "3 in 1" - An imperative need for a Missionary Church!



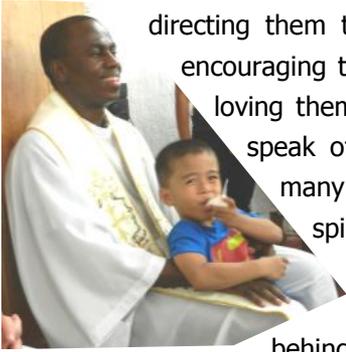
The comparatively short period of time of His Holiness Pope Francis in office has revitalized a considerable number of faithful both Catholic and non-Catholic. This is basically due to his simple, humble, warm and close-to-people style as described by many. One major emphasis of the new Pope is the need for a united, witnessing, and inclusive missionary Church with particular concern for the poor! *'I need not a calm Church but a missionary one!'* said the Pontiff.

It is within this framework and in the context of fighting against modern forms of slavery that the need to work together seems to me inevitable.

As Missionaries of Africa we are commemorating 125 years since the anti-slavery campaign was launched by our founder Cardinal Lavignerie with focus in Africa. Today, modern forms of slavery persist, as cruel as in the past and spread all over the globe. It is these new forms of slavery which compel me to emphasize the need to unite charisms in order to fight a common battle. By "3 in 1" I mean the Fazenda da Esperança, the Focolare Movement and Missionaries of Africa. Fazenda focuses on rehabilitating youths with all sorts of dependency, particularly drug consumption. The Focolare emphasizes the unity of all... that they may be one... In 17:21. I have been attending several meetings with the two groups and realize that we can do more and be better witnesses by working together, by combining our charisms without losing our identities since we are the servants of the same master: Jesus.

For the past few months we Missionaries of Africa, decided to invite to our house in Cebu the support group of Fazenda, commonly known as Group of Living Hope (GLH). The group has as its objective to combat the drug pandemic all around us through living the gospel concretely. The group progressively witnessed its growth and together we have been able to alleviate the suffering of a few of our brothers and sisters hooked on drug consumption, either by





directing them to Fazenda rehabilitation centre in Masbate or by encouraging the families to support their daughters and sons by loving them more. It is good to note that the rehabilitation I speak of here is not the ordinary one, usually known by many. It is an alternative rehabilitation based on spirituality, work and community life. It is not about medical or psychological treatment. The emphasis is on LOVE since we believe and experience that behind any misconduct there often is a lack of love.

It is through the monthly meetings, open to all that we share how we have lived the gospel concretely and tried to be witnesses of love. I strongly believe that to be a witnessing Church we need to be united. We need to work together. We need to get rid of the prejudices and fix our eyes on the same Lord, who came to save those most in need (Lk4:16-20). In this way we can be co-creators and co-founders with our beloved founders and with Jesus. It is by being united that we can walk together with the Pope, to bring hope to others, each in his or her way and capacity. It is in this way that injustices will give way to justice, conflicts will give way to reconciliation and love will prevail.

Fr. John ITARU M. Afr.

Our Founder Cardinal Lavigerie (12)

Foundation of the "Missionary Sisters of Our Lady of Africa (MSOLA)

It all began with a storm! The 8 young French women who had courageously responded to Bishop Lavigerie's appeal for missionaries were tossed by the waves on their first crossing to Africa. Bishop Lavigerie transmitted his blessing over the seas and the next day the sea was found

"It is not the activity of our minds that God values in our prayer, but the sincerity of our hearts."
Mother Marie Salome

calm, allowing the sisters to safely reach their destination Algiers on September 9, 1869. This was merely forecasting the many other storms that would shake the "Missionary Sisters of Our Lady of Africa" (MSOLA).



Bishop Lavigerie was aware how important talented women were for the missionary apostolate to touch the heart of African families. His missionaries' influence would remain limited were they not helped by women apostles among women.

Women are "the source of everything, because women can sow in their children's hearts seeds that nothing can destroy and that will grow in spite of all opposition. So, through the women the family will gradually be transformed, and through the family, society itself."

In 1870 the number of candidates responding to Lavigerie's call to mission had reached 20. They were trained by the "Sisters of St Charles of Nancy". By 1874 there was no significant increase in candidates and the educational

background of those who had become aspirants was rather poor. Lavigerie thought of merging the MSOLA with the "Daughters of the Assumption" (an institute founded by Lavigerie when he was still bishop of Nancy/France).

Finally in 1884 he set his mind on closing down the MSOLA. But he had not anticipated the resistance of the new superior general Mother Marie Salome who was convinced that God wanted the young congregation to exist. She pleaded vehemently with Lavigerie to change his decision but he would not.

The "Missionary Sisters of Our Lady of Africa" (MSOLA) became known as "White Sisters" on account of their religious dress. Today there are 700 Missionary Sisters MSOLA in 102 communities present in 15 African countries. The MSOLA have given birth to over 22 African sisters' congregations.

<http://www.msolafrica.org/>

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

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With another sister she went to pray Our Lady of Africa to intercede for the continuation of the congregation making a promise that a statue of Our Lady will be placed in front of the mother house and the "miracle" happened. Lavigerie changed his mind and new gifted candidates entered. At last the institute was on a sound footing.

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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