



3/2015

AFRICA CALLING

**NEWSLETTER OF THE
MISSIONARIES OF AFRICA
IN THE PHILIPPINES**



This year, World Mission Sunday will be on 18 October. It takes place within the Year of Consecrated Life as well as marking the 50th anniversary of the promulgation of Ad Gentes by Pope Paul VI on 7 December 1965. Ad Gentes was a call to bring our world together, but, it is unfortunate that many places in our world do not seem to have heard this call.

Over recent months, it is difficult not to be aware of the plight of so many displaced peoples in our world. These are peoples who have been forced to flee from their homelands in search of a place of safety and security for themselves and their families. It is a forced migration that has reached unprecedented levels with little sign of reducing. Several hundred thousand men, women and children are involved. They pay high amounts of money to human traffickers and travel perilous journeys often at great risk.

Despite many dying along the way and the perils they undergo on their journeys, they are willing to accept the risks involved in hope of a better future. The reality is, that, even if they reach their destination safely, many are not accepted where they find themselves nor can they return to their homelands for security reasons. Many find themselves in camps that are without proper access to basic amenities. These are people truly without a home. This is the new Exodus. Politics overshadows doing the right thing. This raises many questions. Where are they to go if no one will accept them? Is there a political will to truly solve the situations that cause such a migration to take place in the first place? As Christians, what should our response be to such situations? This situation is a stark reminder that the call to mission takes on an even greater importance in today's world and a missionary church is more needed than ever.

World Mission Sunday, which we will celebrate in October, is a reminder that mission is not only the call of those men and women who have consecrated their lives to serving the Church in different capacities. The whole Church is, by its very nature, missionary. To be missionary is a call of all who, with their wide variety of gifts and within a wide diversity of cultures, are called to respond to the mission of the Church and to do whatever is within our capacity to ensure that the message of the Gospel is not only heard, but actively lived, wherever we find ourselves, whether that be in the Philippines or elsewhere in our vast world.

Within this newsletter, we include the full text of the Holy Father, Pope Francis, to mark this 89th World Mission Sunday. Within his text, Pope Francis reminds us of the centrality of this Mission and calls “... every baptized person...to bear witness to the Lord Jesus by proclaiming the faith received as a gift...” This is a challenge the Holy Father is extending to all of us who are members of the Church.

As we reflect upon our missionary calling, let us continue to pray for an increase in vocations to the priesthood and religious life that many more young men and women throughout the world may respond to this particular way of life. Let us also pray for all who call themselves Christian, that we may never lose touch with the fundamental mission of the Church and each of us may take up our own role to ensure that the mission of the Church continues wherever we may find ourselves. Let also remember in our prayers our brothers and sisters who are displaced and who are seeking refuge, that the political powers of our world will take action to ensure that all peoples of our world are treated with respect and dignity and that concrete steps will be taken to deal with the issues that cause such displacements.

Paul Johnston, M.Afr.

**PLEASE REMEMBER
OUR DECEASED CONFERES IN YOUR PRAYERS**

Fr. Emile Devieus from France at the age of 103 (73 years as a missionary)
Fr. Louis Melis from the Netherlands at the age of 85 (59 years as a missionary)
Fr. Andre Ralet from Belgium at the age of 92 (65 years as a missionary)
Fr. Simon Côté from Canada at the age of 102 (75 years as a missionary)
Fr. Gabriel de Lorimier from Canada at the age of 90 (66 years as a missionary)
Fr. Paul Kerkhofs from Belgium at the age of 89 (66 years as a missionary)
Fr. Marcel Forgues from France at the age of 99 (69 as a missionary)
Br. Kees Koning from the Netherlands at the age of 81 (54 years as a missionary)
Fr. Jan Hartmann from Belgium at the age of 93 (70 years as a missionary)
Br. Joseph Nouverron from France at the age of 93 (64 years as a missionary)
Fr. Josef Kuppens from the Netherlands at the age of 82 (56 years as a missionary)

Swahili Proverb

Muomba Mungu hachokake: Who petitions God does not get tired:

MEANING: God is the true and only recourse of the poor.
Jesus will say, “...pray without getting discouraged..” do no be afraid of tiring God out.

*MESSAGE OF POPE FRANCIS
FOR THE 89th WORLD MISSION SUNDAY 2015*

"Today, the Church's mission is faced by the challenge of meeting the needs of all people to return to their roots and to protect the values of their respective cultures."

* * *

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

The 2015 World Mission Sunday 2015 takes place in the context of the Year of Consecrated Life, which provides a further stimulus for prayer and reflection. For if every baptized person is called to bear witness to the Lord Jesus by proclaiming the faith received as a gift, this is especially so for each consecrated man and woman. There is a clear connection between consecrated life and mission. The desire to follow Jesus closely, which led to the emergence of consecrated life in the Church, responds to his call to take up the cross and follow him, to imitate his dedication to the Father and his service and love, to lose our life so as to gain it. Since Christ's entire existence had a missionary character, so too, all those who follow him closely must possess this missionary quality.

The missionary dimension, which belongs to the very nature of the Church, is also intrinsic to all forms of consecrated life, and cannot be neglected without detracting from and disfiguring its charism. Being a missionary is not about proselytizing or mere strategy; mission is part of the "grammar" of faith, something essential for those who listen to the voice of the Spirit who whispers "Come" and "Go forth". Those who follow Christ cannot fail to be missionaries, for they know that Jesus "walks with them, speaks to them, breathes with them. They sense Jesus alive with them in the midst of the missionary enterprise" (Evangelii Gaudium, 266).

Mission is a passion for Jesus and at the same time a passion for his people. When we pray before Jesus crucified, we see the depth of his love which gives us dignity and sustains us. At the same time, we realize that the love flowing from Jesus' pierced heart expands to embrace the People of God and all humanity. We realize once more that he wants to make use of us to draw closer to his beloved people (cf. *ibid*, 268) and all those who seek him with a sincere heart. In Jesus' command to "go forth", we see the scenarios and ever-present new challenges of the Church's evangelizing mission. All her members are called to proclaim the Gospel by their witness of life. In a particular way, consecrated men and women are asked to listen to the voice of the Spirit who calls them to go to the peripheries, to those to whom the Gospel has not yet been proclaimed.

The fiftieth anniversary of the Second Vatican Council's Decree *Ad Gentes* is an invitation to all of us to reread this document and to reflect on its contents. The Decree called for a powerful missionary impulse

in Institutes of Consecrated Life. For contemplative communities, Saint Theresa of the Child Jesus, Patroness of the Missions, appears in a new light; she speaks with renewed eloquence and inspires reflection upon the deep connection between contemplative life and mission. For many active religious communities, the missionary impulse which emerged from the Council was met with an extraordinary openness to the mission *Ad Gentes*, often accompanied by an openness to brothers and sisters from the lands and cultures encountered in evangelization, to the point that today one can speak of a widespread “interculturalism” in the consecrated life. Hence there is an urgent need to reaffirm that the central ideal of mission is Jesus Christ, and that this ideal demands the total gift of oneself to the proclamation of the Gospel. On this point there can be no compromise: those who by God’s grace accept the mission, are called to live the mission. For them, the proclamation of Christ in the many peripheries of the world becomes their way of following him, one which more than repays them for the many difficulties and sacrifices they make. Any tendency to deviate from this vocation, even if motivated by noble reasons due to countless pastoral, ecclesial or humanitarian needs, is not consistent with the Lord’s call to be personally at the service of the Gospel. In Missionary Institutes, formators are called to indicate clearly and frankly this plan of life and action, and to discern authentic missionary vocations. I appeal in particular to young people, who are capable of courageous witness and generous deeds, even when these are countercultural: Do not allow others to rob you of the ideal of a true mission, of following Jesus through the total gift of yourself. In the depths of your conscience, ask yourself why you chose the religious missionary life and take stock of your readiness to accept it for what it is: a gift of love at the service of the proclamation of the Gospel. Remember that, even before being necessary for those who have not yet heard it, the proclamation of the Gospel is a necessity for those who love the Master.

Today, the Church’s mission is faced by the challenge of meeting the needs of all people to return to their roots and to protect the values of their respective cultures. This means knowing and respecting other traditions and philosophical systems, and realizing that all peoples and cultures have the right to be helped from within their own traditions to enter into the mystery of God’s wisdom and to accept the Gospel of Jesus, who is light and transforming strength for all cultures.

Within this complex dynamic, we ask ourselves: “Who are the first to whom the Gospel message must be proclaimed?” The answer, found so often throughout the Gospel, is clear: it is the poor, the little ones and the sick, those who are often looked down upon or forgotten, those who cannot repay us (cf. Lk 14:13-14). Evangelization directed preferentially to the least among us is a sign of the Kingdom that Jesus came to bring: “There is an inseparable bond between our faith and the poor. May we never abandon them” (*Evangelii Gaudium*, 48). This must be clear above all to those who embrace the consecrated missionary life: by the vow of poverty, they choose to follow Christ in his preference for the poor, not ideologically, but in the same way that he identified himself with the poor: by living like them amid the uncertainties of everyday life and renouncing all claims to power, and in this way to become brothers and sisters of the poor, bringing them the witness of the joy of the Gospel and a sign of God’s love.

Living as Christian witnesses and as signs of the Father's love among the poor and underprivileged, consecrated persons are called to promote the presence of the lay faithful in the service of Church's mission. As the Second Vatican Council stated: "The laity should cooperate in the Church's work of evangelization; as witnesses and at the same time as living instruments, they share in her saving mission" (Ad Gentes, 41). Consecrated missionaries need to generously welcome those who are willing to work with them, even for a limited period of time, for an experience in the field. They are brothers and sisters who want to share the missionary vocation inherent in Baptism. The houses and structures of the missions are natural places to welcome them and to provide for their human, spiritual and apostolic support.

The Church's Institutes and Missionary Congregations are completely at the service of those who do not know the Gospel of Jesus. This means that they need to count on the charisms and missionary commitment of their consecrated members. But consecrated men and women also need a structure of service, an expression of the concern of the Bishop of Rome, in order to ensure *koinonia*, for cooperation and synergy are an integral part of the missionary witness. Jesus made the unity of his disciples a condition so that the world may believe (cf. Jn 17:21). This convergence is not the same as legalism or institutionalism, much less a stifling of the creativity of the Spirit, who inspires diversity. It is about giving a greater fruitfulness to the Gospel message and promoting that unity of purpose which is also the fruit of the Spirit.

The Missionary Societies of the Successor of Peter have a universal apostolic horizon. This is why they also need the many charisms of consecrated life, to address the vast horizons of evangelization and to be able to ensure adequate presence in whatever lands they are sent.

Dear brothers and sisters, a true missionary is passionate for the Gospel. Saint Paul said: "Woe to me if I do not preach the Gospel!" (1 Cor 9:16). The Gospel is the source of joy, liberation and salvation for all men and women. The Church is aware of this gift, and therefore she ceaselessly proclaims to everyone "what was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes" (1Jn 1:1). The mission of the servants of the Word – bishops, priests, religious and laity – is to allow everyone, without exception, to enter into a personal relationship with Christ. In the full range of the Church's missionary activity, all the faithful are called to live their baptismal commitment to the fullest, in accordance with the personal situation of each. A generous response to this universal vocation can be offered by consecrated men and women through an intense life of prayer and union with the Lord and his redeeming sacrifice.

To Mary, Mother of the Church and model of missionary outreach, I entrust all men and women who, in every state of life work to proclaim the Gospel, *ad gentes* or in their own lands. To all missionaries of the Gospel I willingly impart my Apostolic Blessing.

From the Vatican, 24 May 2015, Solemnity of Pentecost

FRANCISCUS

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONCERNING THE MISSIONARIES OF AFRICA
IN THE PHILIPPINES WRITE TO:**

**MISSIONARIES OF AFRICA
4 KALAW STREET
STO NIÑO VILLAGE
BANILAD
CEBU CITY**

**P.O. BOX 1088
6000 CEBU CITY
PHILIPPINES**

**TEL: (032) 344-06-06
FAX: (032) 346-27-71**

Or e-mail us at

Missionariesofafricaph@gmail.com

**To find out more about who we are and our mission,
log on to our international website:**

mafrome.org

MISSION INTENTIONS OF POPE FRANCIS

September

Universal: That opportunities for education and employment may increase for all young people.

Evangelization: That catechists may give witness by living in a way consistent with the faith they proclaim.

October

Universal: That human trafficking, the modern form of slavery, may be eradicated.

Evangelization: That with a missionary spirit the Christian communities of Asia may announce the Gospel to those who are still awaiting it.

November

Universal: That we may be open to personal encounter and dialogue with all, even those whose convictions differ from our own.

Evangelization: That pastors of the Church, with profound love for their flocks, may accompany them and enliven their hope.

FAREWELL TO FR. PHELIM MALUMO

Fr. Phelim Malumo, who had been in the Philippines since November 2014, left the Philippines on 26th July 2015. He was based in the FAZENDA community in Masbate, where he was sent in order to prepare himself to help in a similar project foreseen for the Diocese of Bethlehem in South Africa, where the Bishop, Rev. Jan de Groef, is a member of the Society of Missionaries of Africa. The departure of Fr. Phelim from the Philippines came earlier than planned as his appointment changed. He left the Philippines and traveled back to his home country of Zambia where he spent a short period of time before heading for his new appointment in Kenya at a new project of the Missionaries of Africa. We wish him well in his new appointment and his new apostolate. We thank him for his presence in the Philippines. Phelim...you are always welcome in the Philippines!

TWENTY YEARS OF MISSIONARY PRIESTHOOD A WORK IN PROGRESS

We all have moments in our lives, which we call life-changing moments. For me, one such moment happened on 27th August 1995 in my home parish of St. Anne's in Brampton, Ontario, Canada. It was on that day when, in front of my family and friends, I was ordained a priest for my congregation, the Society of Missionaries of Africa.

Twenty years have now passed since that day and, in all honesty, I must admit that, while it hasn't always been an easy journey and there have been a few bumps along the way, I can only look back with heart-felt gratitude and thanksgiving.

I believe a vocation is like a jigsaw puzzle. Many pieces must be put into their proper place for the picture to begin to take shape. Sometimes pieces are put in the wrong place and need to be re-arranged. My own vocation has been precisely like this and, as I reflect about my 20 years as a missionary priest, I am deeply aware of two specific aspects that have been very much a part of my own journey.

For many people, a vocation is between God and the person called. While a vocation is a personal response of an individual to the call of God in his/her life, a vocation actually involves many people. As I reflect upon the past 20 years of my missionary priesthood, I am aware of the numerous people who played a role on my journey. There are, of course, those closest to me, like my family and close friends, of whom I will never be truly able to express enough gratitude. However, there were also people who have been at work in the background and whom I didn't really pay much attention to. There are people whom I

have never met; yet, who have influenced me in different ways and whose life stories have had an impact upon me in one way or another. All of these people have been a part of my own missionary vocation and I truly give thanks for each and every one of them. Without them, I don't know where I would be today!

My own vocation journey has also shown me that a vocation does not happen at one particular moment. For most people, they do not have a conversion process like that of St. Paul on the road to Damascus. The nurturing of a vocation is a slow process requiring time to mature. Yes, there are obvious moments through which a person can see God's call more clearly, but there are also more subtle moments that seem to pass quickly. Such moments initially seem to be insignificant and we often don't pay much attention to them, but they can have a great impact and they can be ways in which God is leading us to where He wants us to be in life.

The past twenty years have been years filled with many experiences. I have had the privilege of meeting people from many different cultures. I have lived in quite a number of countries both within Africa and outside Africa. Through all of it, I have been supported by so many people, especially my family, my friends of my home parish and the members of the Missionaries of Africa. It is their support and encouragement that keeps me going and for which I give thanks and praise today!

Twenty years as a missionary priest are now behind me; however, my priesthood is still a work in progress. The jigsaw puzzle of my priesthood is not complete. There are still many pieces to add and, with God's help and your prayers, the process will continue!

Paul Johnston, M.Afr.



THANKSGIVING MASS BROTHER CLAYB CAPUTOLAN

Clayb was one of those who attended the Search-In in December 2007 from where he joined the Cebu formation community. He followed the formation programme of the Missionaries of Africa and, after 7 years of formation, professed his perpetual oath as a Brother at our formation centre in Nairobi, Kenya on 20th May 2015. In June 2015, he came back to the Philippines for his home-leave.



A Mass of thanksgiving for Clayb was celebrated on 21st June 2015 in his home parish of Carmen. The whole community of our formation house travelled to Carmen for the celebration and joined the parish community for the Thanksgiving Mass, which was presided by Fr. Dioscoro Malugao who was assisted by Frs. Paul, Loloy and Phelim along with the Parish Priest. Many people, including family and relatives of Clayb, came to witness this celebration. Following the homily, which was given by Fr. Dioscoro, Clayb was invited to share his experiences with those present. He shared some of his experiences in formation as well as his lived experience in Africa. He spoke of having to overcome fears and anxieties as well as the need to learn to live in multi-cultural communities. He spoke of the beauty of different cultures he encountered on his journey as well as the realities of Africa today, which are not always easy to deal with. He expressed his thanks to his family and all who helped him get to where he was today.

Following the Mass, a gathering was held at the family home of Clayb, which was not far from the church. It was a celebration attended by many of the family members and relatives of Clayb, some of whom Clayb had not seen in many years. Many pictures were taken and there was plenty of time to mingle with others at the celebration. There was plenty of food available. The celebration ended with a Karaoke.



We all went home with full stomachs, but also full of hopes and dreams. Clayb is happy with his new life as a missionary Brother and what he shared with us were words of encouragement, especially to those of us who are just at the beginning stages of our formation process. Clayb told us to have courage and to work toward making our dream of one day becoming a missionary Priest or Brother a reality. There are still many years ahead of us, but the example of Clayb gives us courage

to move forward with the hope that, one day, we will become like Clayb, full of experience and ready to face the realities of missionary life in Africa. We know his parents are proud of what he has become and so are we. Clayb, you are most welcome to the family of the Society of Missionaries of Africa.

Clayb has now returned to our formation centre in Nairobi to finish his studies toward a Masters in African Studies, which, all going well, he should complete next year. He will then receive an appointment to continue working in Africa among the peoples he has come to love and with whom he has committed his life to serve.

Mart Vincent Adtoon

First Year Candidate

**IS GOD CALLING YOU
TO BE A
MISSIONARY PRIEST OR BROTHER?**

**Founded in 1868 in North Africa
by Cardinal Charles Lavigerie,
we are Priests and Brothers
living in International, Inter-cultural communities
serving the peoples of Africa.**

**Our mission is to preach the Gospel,
to promote Peace, Justice and the Integrity of Creation
and to engage in Inter-religious dialogue.**

**We currently carry out our mission
in 22 countries within Africa.**

**If this interests you
and you are a young man
who feels called to join us
or would like further information
concerning our mission...**

Contact:

Fr. Loloy Poe: 09291575139

Fr. Coro Malugao: 09167162842

Or by e-mail:

Missionariesofafricaph@gmail.com