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MISSIONS TODAY

VOL 69, NO. 1

Spring 2011

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Focus On: The Church in South Sudan

One Brick at a Time: Building a Church in Ilole Parish

Developing mission responsibility in one elementary school

The Grandness of Compassion: Missionary Women

The Church in the World: A Statistical Profile

The Society for the Propagation of the Faith

National Director's Message



Elementary School in Toronto for their commitment to the poor of the world.

Happy Lent! This issue of Missions Today offers you much “food for thought” that might be considered as part of your Lenten reflection. “Planting the Seeds for Charity” and the mission outreach activities captured in the Youth and Mission section is one such article. Congratulations to the students and teachers of St. Denis Catholic

Catholic country in the midst of a largely Muslim area of the world, is quite significant.

Mission stories of appreciation are also shared with you in this issue. “Missionary Women”, as well as our regular features of St. Peter the Apostle and the Holy Childhood provide such stories.

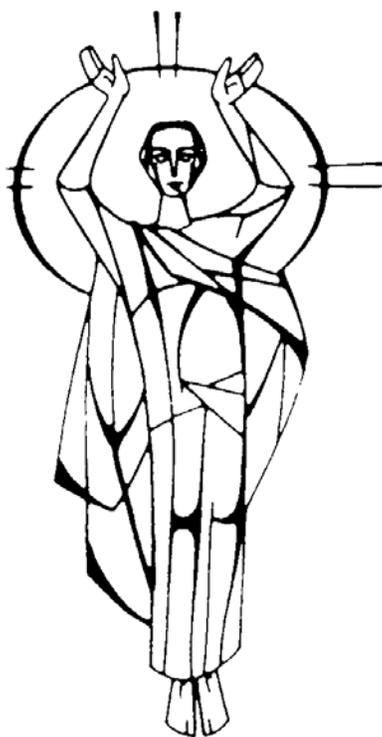
During your Lenten journey we hope that this issue will provide you with a reflective pause and serve as a reminder that the Lenten season includes and emphasizes prayer and charity. Please remember our missionaries and those they serve in your prayers. May we be inspired by their faith and hope and remain in solidarity with them through our continued spiritual and charitable support.

May Easter bring to you renewed peace and joy in the risen Lord.

Mrs. Marie Deans
National Director



Ash Wednesday – Brother Joseph Hiep



Risen Christ – Hermano Leon

Across the Globe features information on interfaith dialogue as well as Catholic stewardship that supports our living the faith while instilling hope for the people of the world.

This issue's focus is on the Sudan. Recently, the countries of northern Africa have been very much a part of our daily news. The articles on the Sudan focus on the important role of the Church facilitating a peaceful transition of succession of the south from the north within that country. As our editor suggests, the possibility of the emergence of a predominantly

Missionary Prayer Intentions

April: For all missionaries – That through the proclamation of the Gospel and the witness of their lives, missionaries may bring Christ to those who do not yet know them.

May: For the Church in China – That the Lord may help the Church in China persevere and grow in unity.

June: For missionary vocations – That the Holy Spirit may bring forth from our communities many missionaries eager to spread the Kingdom of God.

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Photo - Jon Sullivan, FreeStock photos

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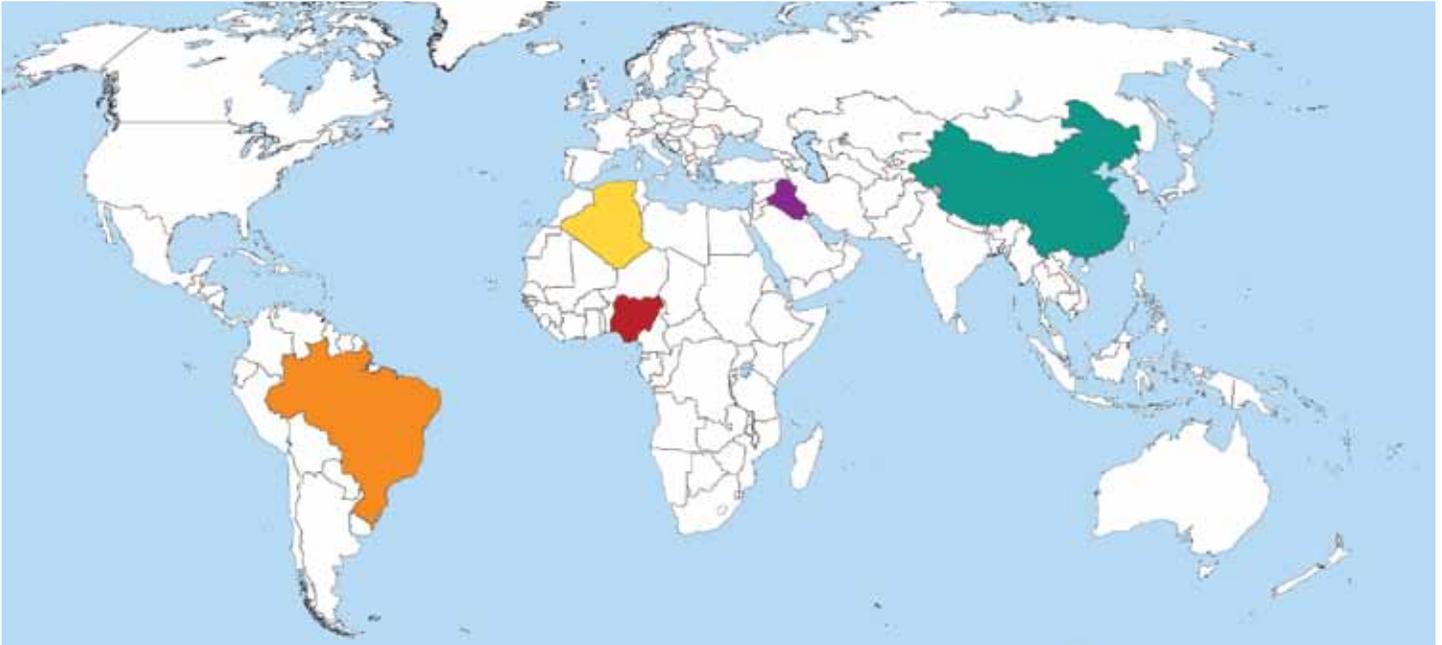
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Across the Globe



■ ALGERIA - The North African Bishops recognize “a vindication of freedom and dignity” in recent events in Tunisia and Egypt

Algeria - The Bishops of North Africa “recognize in events that are shaking Tunisia and Egypt... a claim to freedom and dignity, in particular by the younger generations, resulting in the desire that all people be recognized as responsible citizens,” said in a statement following the meeting of the Conférence des Evêques de la Région Nord de l’Afrique (CERNA), which was held in Algiers from 29 January to 2 February.

Taking up the Message by Benedict XVI for World Day of Peace, the Bishops of CERNA affirm, “Religious freedom is a guarantee of full and mutual respect between people. Religious freedom signifies first and foremost, in the freedom of conscience being recognized for all, the freedom to seek the truth.”

The Church in North African Countries is dedicated to the pastoral care service of Christians who live in these states, many of whom are foreigners. In addition to the pastoral care ministry to Christians, the Church in North Africa is “at the service of the mainly Muslim inhabitants of the countries where they live, for their development and their aspirations for greater dignity.” The Bishops emphasize “the bonds of friendship woven together with the citizens of these countries” and claim that “Islamic-Christian dialogue is possible, that work with civil society associations in the towns of Maghreb permit us to learn to come together, not only to tolerate but to respect and understand each other in seeking the will of God.” *An edited version, taken from Agenzia Fides 02/03/2011.*

■ NIGERIA – New Formation Centre for young Christians and Muslims teaches non-violent approach to problem solving

Jos– A formation centre for young Christians and Muslims opened on 27 January in Hai-Hong, 70 km from Jos, capital of the Nigerian State of Plateau, where in recent times various clashes have broken out between Christian and Muslim communities. In the latest clashes, about 15 people lost their lives. The centre’s focus, stated Archbishop Ignatius Ayau Kaigama of Jos

is “to help young people take the positive path of development rather than that of violence to resolve socio-economic, political, ethnic and religious problems.”

Archbishop Kaigama continued: “It is a humble effort by the Catholic Church, which could be replicated by other districts, by local groups, and by State and Federal associations. . . . much can be done for young people if there is the political will.”

For now, the centre has started a single formation course for 35 young male carpenters. Eventually, the school plans to add a course for girls. In addition to vocational training, students learn ways to deepen their faith and to follow paths of dialogue. In fact, there are two teachers of religion, one for Islam and one for Christianity. The teacher for Islam teaches Muslim students while the teacher of Christianity instructs Christian students. In addition, Muslim students are given basic education on Christianity and, conversely, the Muslim teacher gives lessons on Islam to Christian students. Students then have common lessons to learn the art of

dialogue, reconciliation and tolerance, instead of resorting to violence at the slightest disagreement.

“Certainly, it is better to light a candle than curse the darkness,” concludes Archbishop Kaigama. “So much has been said about youth violence resulting from laziness, from poor education or from poverty, and how little has been done to fix the situation. We hope that this small effort will open the eyes of the Government, non-governmental voluntary bodies and all people of good will.” *An edited version, taken from Agenzia Fides 01/31/2011.*

■ BRAZIL - The mission and ecology: preparing for the missionary campaign of October 2011

Brasilia— Under the coordination of the Pontifical Mission Societies (PMS), the team responsible for preparing the material for the missionary campaign next October, met at the PMS headquarters, in Brasilia, to intensify its work. Inspired by the theme chosen for this year, “Mission in ecology,” Fr Savio Corinaldesi, Secretary of the Pontifical Missionary Union, presented the themes of the Missionary Novena that will serve as the foundation for the new DVD produced by Word Films.

The first day of the novena invites us to contemplate the beauty of Creation, “unfortunately, these wonders are being slowly destroyed, so the second reflection is the indignation regarding the desecration of these works,” writes Fr Savio in a note sent to Fides. Other themes of the novena: the mission is also to fight against the misuse of God’s works, committing us to maintaining and caring for them in order to preserve natural resources. The mission and forced migration due to climate change, to share water and food with everyone, to defend the Amazon and to collaborate in the evangelization of the world. The nine themes will be presented in the light of the Word of God, with testimonies of missionary experiences and prayers. *An edited version, taken from Agenzia Fides, 02/07/2011.*

■ CHINA - A village of vocations on the Silk Road

Zhou Zhi – A small village of 660 people on Silk Road in Shaan Xi province has given 14 vocations to the Church in recent years: seven priests, one deacon, three religious sisters, two major seminarians and one minor seminarian. The village, named Zan Jia Cun, is close to two-thirds Catholic, with 130 families practicing the Faith. It is located in the Diocese of Zhou Zhi, known as “the diocese of vocations”. When asked to explain the village’s success at attracting candidates to the religious life, the pastor of the village responded: “To tell the truth, we do not know whether it amounts to a secret or not. We intensely live out our faith. The families of the village pray together daily. Mass and prayer meet-

ings on Saturday and Sunday are fixed appointments for all. Even the faithful from villages around us come. ... these small daily testimonies have built the base for an eloquent evangelization and they are useful at the same time for the formation of vocations. Here there is never the need to prepare a list for the evenings of Eucharistic Adoration in Holy Week, or in other circumstances, because the church is always full, 24 hours a day.”

Other Catholic communities often visit this village, to exchange experiences on evangelization and vocations. However non-Catholics also come, as this small village on the Silk Road is also a model of economic development. “Some non-Catholics ask us why we are so happy, and we respond because we have faith,” concludes the pastor. “When the faithful have had economic opportunities, the first thing they thought of was to build, renovate and improve the house of God. Our church is the most beautiful in the whole area. The priests and nuns who live in rooms adjacent to the church wake up at 4 am with the recitation of the Rosary by the faithful”. *An edited version, taken from Agenzia Fides 01/31/2011.*

■ IRAQI - bishop calls for international aid

Rome, Italy - Auxiliary Bishop Shlemon Warduni of Baghdad, Iraq is calling for the international community to continue offering assistance to Christians in his country.

Bishop Warduni spoke Jan. 20 during Italy’s congressional committee on foreign affairs and warned, “Christians are in great danger.”

“They are tired, they don’t know what to do or where to go. Their rights are being restricted.”

He added that Christians in the area have no protection from violence. “Iraq needs a comprehensive solution,” the bishop said, urging that “minorities, including Christians, who have done much to build Iraq.” receive special help.

“Cooperation among all in order to achieve peace and security in Iraq and the Middle East” must be one of the first steps, Bishop Warduni continued. “If this were happening,” Christians would not be leaving the region.

“Christians are free to worship but not to fully profess their faith. “The time for words is over, it is now time for concrete action,” the bishop concluded. *An edited version, taken from CNA on-line, 01/24/2011*

Letters from Abroad

Father Romulo Mkongwa
Diocese of Iringa
Ilole Parish
P.O.Box 250
Iringa, Tanzania

16 – August, 2010

Dear Mrs. Marie Deans:

Praise be our Lord Jesus Christ.

RE: REPORT ON THE UTILIZATION OF THE SUBSIDY RECEIVED FROM
THE PROPAGATION OF THE FAITH – CANADA

I have the pleasure of informing you that we have almost finished the work of constructing the church at Kitumbuka, secondary station.

I would like to take this chance so as to thank you and the CONGREGATION at large for your vital financial assistance, which we really appreciate.

May God bless you all.
I wish you all the best.

I have enclosed pictures: 1. The former “church under the tree”
2. Frame in place to begin the roofing of the church
3. Roofing under way
4. The finished roof

Thank you very much
Yours sincerely in Christ.
Rev. Fr Romulo Mkongwa
ILOLE PARISH PRIEST



4. *The finished roof*



2. *Frame in place to begin the roofing of the church*



3. *Roofing under way*



1. *The former “church under the tree”*

South Sudan: Setting the Context

By Paul Coady

On January 2, 2011, Archbishop Paulino Lukudu Loro travelled several hours from Juba to the town of Lirya. A new church had been built on a hill last year and plastic chairs covered the tiled floor. A generator was producing enough power to run fans, a rarity, and a gospel choir sang with all its might. Priests read a litany of saints and after each one, the congregation exulted “pray for us”. As the archbishop walked in, he was joined by dancers in traditional dress, musicians and nuns. Most of the town’s thousand-strong population thronged in and around the church and still more could be seen arriving through swathes of tall grass. Tinny bells rang and drums rumbled. The archbishop said, “This is a great success for the church in Sudan.” He meant the building of a new church and the ordaining of a priest, the reason for his visit that day. But everyone understood the political significance. A local village official came to the altar and read out an appeal to vote in the referendum. The archbishop endorsed it and amplified it. He said he was praying for peace and then, mixing pidgin Arabic and English, the two main tongues in Sudan, he said, “killo vote”: everyone vote.¹

During the week of January 9 – 15, 2011, the people of southern Sudan voted overwhelmingly in a referendum to secede. Sudan, a country like many others in Africa, is a country whose borders were drawn by European diplomats during the colonial period of the mid-19th century. As is the case with many other countries in Africa, this process did not take into account the serious implications of grouping ethnic populations that traditionally were enemies, and, in other cases, of separating ethnic groups with natural ties to one another. Such is the case in Sudan today.

South Sudan is one of the poorest regions in Africa with little to no infrastructure. Its population is predominately-black Africans who practice Christianity or native religions. Northern Sudan is overwhelmingly Arab Muslim, more in common with the peoples of the Middle East than those of its compatriots in the south. Both the west and south regions are seriously underdeveloped, and receive little or no support from the north.³ The people of the south have turned to the Church for guidance and support and it has not let them down.

¹ Jean-Marie Nsambu, Leadership Magazine An edited excerpt from the article “Church and State”, which appeared in The Economist, 1/20/2011.

² Non-Government Organizations ³ Source: CNA on-line ⁴ Archbishop Loro, speaking on sudancatholicradio.net. 2/4/2011 ⁵ Coady, Allison, “Journeys to the World’s Newest Nation”

The Church in South Sudan: “the Church is closer to the grassroots than any other institution in the country”⁴

It is very hard for us to understand the importance of the Catholic Church in South Sudan. Most of us have no relationship with our bishops. In fact, if we see them at all, it is in the context of a relative’s confirmation or perhaps, if we attend a church with a bishop in residence, then at the occasional Mass. Nor do we expect to have a closer relationship with the hierarchy of the Church. We live in a country of order and peace. Our complaints are relatively minor when compared to those of the people of South Sudan. With little or no infrastructure, the people have come to rely and trust the guidance and judgment of their priests, religious and Bishops. The Church is a living, dynamic organism to these people. They see it come to life through the daily example of priests and religious truly dedicated to their welfare, both temporal and spiritual. The Church, in recent times, has been a place of refuge and protection from the chaos. In South Sudan, the beatitudes have come to life.

This new nation has the potential to become a truly Christian nation. The roles being played by the bishops, priests, religious and catechists permeate every aspect of South Sudan. “In Southern Sudan, mission work goes beyond the physical walls of the Church. Mission work encompasses all aspects of life.”⁵ In no other mission country is this statement more evident. Because the Church works daily to fill the gaping void created by the lack of order and structure it continues to resonate with meaning to its people. Without the Church, South Sudan could not come into being. It is the Church, not government that is assisting the people in providing education, spiritual guidance and temporal support under its mission mandate. Thus, it is no coincidence that its buildings are filled with worshippers.



On the Street in Malakal, South Sudan

photo - Allison Coady

And so, Missions Today presents to you two stories of South Sudan, both told with eyewitness detail. Each tells a different story of the impact of our Church in this part of the world. The first describes the important leadership role the Church has taken in ensuring that the people of South Sudan are made aware of their rights to self-determination. The second, also about education, tells the story of a small group of determined nuns working to raise the standard of education in a small town near the border with the north. Examined as one piece, they tell the story of a Church vibrant and alive to the needs of its people.

Journeys to the world's newest nation: South Sudan

The Church's role in nation building - By Allison Coady

"Here, look at this. I'm a Canadian too!" Simon, the MP from Malakal I have met at the South Sudan Hotel proudly flashes me his Canadian passport. "I lived 17 years in a place called Hamilton, Ontario and have taught at McMaster University. Ever hear of it?"

Have I ever. A Torontonion by birth, it amazes me to find a fellow Canadian in this tiny, dusty town of Malakal in the Upper Nile State of southern Sudan. Up until recently, Malakal, situated quite close to the disputed border between the north and south Sudan, has been a hotspot for conflict and is only now learning to live in relative peace. This is my second time in Malakal; here to facilitate one in a series of workshops on conflict resolution, peace building, and good governance – critical topics for what may soon become the world's newest nation.

How did I get here? I work for the Denis Hurley Peace Institute (DHPI), an associate body of the Southern African Catholic Bishops' Conference. With the end of apartheid in South Africa in 1994, and inundated with demands for assistance from within the country, the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace could not begin to address the many requests coming from neighbouring countries in the region and throughout the African continent. In 2005, the Conference established the DHPI to respond to those requests. We offer our solidarity to people seeking peace, we share the lessons learned from the South African experience and we build capacity among the key stakeholders in conflict-torn

states. We work throughout Africa: in Ethiopia, Sierra Leone, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Burundi, Zimbabwe, Swaziland, and Sudan. Our involvement in Sudan goes back many years and most recently, we have been working to support local church leaders help keep the peace in a much fractured society.

Last year, DHPI received a request from Malakal through Pax Christi Sudan for support in building the capacity of a group of forty pastors. Because Sudan has been at war for as long as its people can remember and conditions of underdevelopment, corruption, poor infrastructure, extreme poverty and illiteracy are widespread, the Church is required to take a leadership role. With little to no developed civil society, it is the Church that fills this void and pastors, ministers and priests who hold the trust of their parishioners act along with tribal heads as community leaders and key stakeholders in ending conflict in Sudan.

In other countries I have visited including Zimbabwe, civil society is far more developed and active. There are numerous human rights organizations, women's groups, and environmental lobbyists; to name a few, that are the key actors in informing and involving the general population. In southern Sudan, this is not the case. The onus lies with the local Church, which finds itself in a special position to reach out across geographical and ethnic divides. In southern Sudan, mission work goes beyond the physical walls of the Church. Mission work encompasses all aspects of life.



The Pastors Meet in Malakal.

photo - Allison Coady

On this particular visit, it is late November. The rainy season has long gone and the dirt roads have turned to dust. It is 38 degrees in the shade but it is not just the humidity that is making the people of this small but influential town anxious. The anticipation and preparations for the referendum scheduled for January 9 is occupying everyone's mind. The vote will determine whether the South will secede from the Sudan and finally be free from the oppressive hands of the Muslim/Arab Khartoum that has been accused of treating Christian southerners like second-class citizens.



Open air Market in Malakal

photo - Allison Coady

The first day of the training is going very well. The pastors are eager to delve into more of the material on good governance and democracy. But work in Sudan does not always run so smoothly. Minutes before we break for lunch, Simon the MP, accompanied by armed SPLA soldiers, stormed into our meeting. The large hall seems to shrink immediately in size with the soldiers' presence. Simon has shed his friendly tone from our previous encounter and has replaced it with a sense of entitlement and aggression as he explains that there was to be an SPLM political rally in the same hall that afternoon. He requests that we make alternate plans for our afternoon session and we certainly are not about to disagree. After lunch, we convene our training under a small tent close to the air-conditioned hall. Between the sounds of the diesel generators and the water tanks, our participants can hardly concentrate. Then without warning the gates of the hotel compound burst open with the sound of wailing sirens and in flooded SPLA soldiers, each equipped with AK-47 rifles, and a cavalcade of military and police vehicles. The soldiers surrounded the entire compound and for a moment, I found it difficult to catch my breath. Were we under attack? Finally, the sirens stopped as the doors to one of the Land cruisers opened to reveal a short, unimposing executive who we later learned is the Speaker of the southern Sudan Parliament, the number three man in the country after President Salva Kiir and his deputy. The fear dissipates and we continue our program into the heat of the afternoon.

Life in Sudan is a life of extremes. The work we conduct in the south has been challenging but the most rewarding, as we can clearly see the rapid changes and developments in this brand new country that is emerging from practically nothing. There were great fears leading up to the referendum that there would be damaging interference from the north and possible bloodshed caused by the notorious ethnic divisions that plague the south. The DHPI were in-

vited to Juba to monitor the voting week in early January of this year and witnessed an unexpectedly peaceful referendum; one that has left the people there full of hope and committed to building a strong and prosperous South Sudan. The official results of the referendum will be announced in mid-February but no matter the outcome, we will continue our work, supporting them for as long as they need us.

The Denis Hurley Peace Institute is named after South African Catholic Archbishop Denis Eugene Hurley, a well known human rights activist and Archbishop of Durban for many years. He was the critical voice of the church during Apartheid. The Institute, like its namesake, believes that the church (its people and organizations) must become a community serving humanity. The Institute hopes to do this by serving people in conflict situations ensuring that building peace addresses the root causes of conflict and the processes by which the peace is achieved, respects the human rights of people. *Source: Denis Hurley Peace Institute*

Allison Coady has been working as the Programme Manager for the Denis Hurley Peace Institute in Pretoria, South Africa since 2009. For over four years, she has worked on human rights and democracy development in countries across the African continent, including Ethiopia, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Burundi, Sudan, Zimbabwe and Swaziland. Allison is also a Master's candidate in International Relations at the University of Pretoria



Archbishop Paulino casts his ballot in Juba

photo Sara A Fajardo

With paper and pencils, missioners rebuild education in Southern Sudan

By Paul Jeffrey, Catholic News Service - An edited version of the original article that first appeared in CNS on January 3, 2011.



MALAKAL, Southern Sudan -- Sister Ninet D'Costa served in a variety of educational posts in her native India. And then, thankful for recovering from a serious illness, she told God she wanted to be a missionary. Sister D'Costa, a member of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians, ended up heading for Malakal, a muddy town along the contested border between the North and South of Sudan. Ahead of her proposed departure, she and others planning the new mission received discouraging information.

"They told us there was no security in Malakal, no food, no health facilities. But in Malakal, they did have one thing, the poor, and because of them we were committed to go," she told Catholic News Service.

Sister D'Costa arrived in Malakal in 2008 as a pioneer member of Solidarity with Southern Sudan, an international network of religious orders and congregations supporting the church in what may become Africa's newest country following a referendum on independence.

Solidarity currently has 22 full-time members and 2 short-term volunteers living in Southern Sudan. They come from 16 congregations and 18 countries. Solidarity's work is supported by 170 congregations or orders.

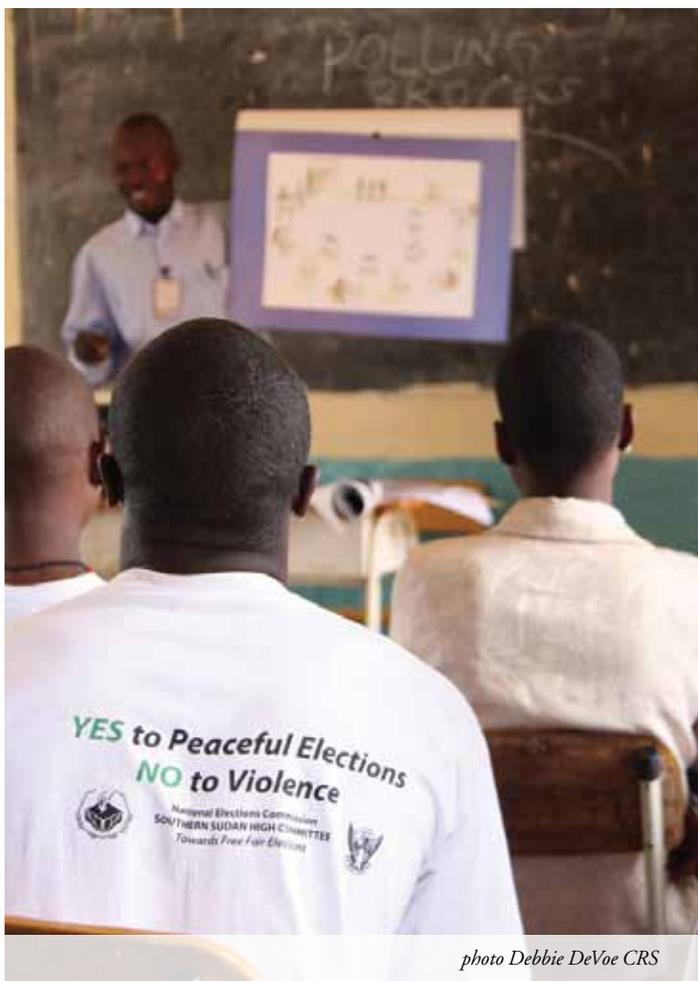
The group has its roots in a 2004 visit to Rome by a Sudanese bishop who met with the justice and peace coordinators of several congregations. With his country's long civil war about to end, the bishop invited the church workers to come to Southern Sudan to help rebuild the church and war-torn society. Sudan's episcopal conference soon followed up with an official invitation to the superiors general of religious congregations. A delegation of six representatives traveled to Southern Sudan in 2006, visiting every diocese to listen to what the church needed.

"We returned with a list of needs from car batteries and shock absorbers to schools and clinics," said Sister Cathy Arata, a School Sister of Notre Dame from New Jersey. As religious leaders in Rome reflected on the delegation's report, they decided to focus on providing training in education, health and pastoral services.

When Sister D'Costa arrived in Malakal, three religious brothers came with her, but conditions were so harsh that none of them lasted long. Sister D'Costa stayed with a group of Comboni sisters, which she said made adjustment easier.

Others have since joined the Indian nun. Sister Elizabeth Ryan, a member of the Faithful Companions of Jesus, had never encountered a pit latrine before she came to Malakal late in 2008. She admits any romantic ideas about mission were quickly eroded by the differences from her native Ireland.

"When I got out of the plane, the barrage of heat hit me. Then they took me to the house, and I was shell-shocked. There was no glass in the windows and the place was full of dust. The door was hard to open. Dirt and cobwebs were all over the place. I sat on





Malakal, South Sudan

photo - Allison Coady

the side of a bed and was totally paralyzed. Margaret (Sheehan, a fellow Irish sister) said, ‘We’ll sweep up and then have a cup of tea.’ They swept around me as I sat on the side of the bed, staring into space. Then we had the cup of tea, and that improved matters slightly,” Sister Ryan said.

By the time Sister Ryan had spent two months in Malakal, fighting broke out in the town. The nuns’ living quarters were right in the middle of the firefight.

“When the fighting started, people here were surprised that we stayed. But we did. And we still intend to stay,” she said. “It can still be difficult here, but our presence has become a sign of hope for the Sudanese,” she said.

The Solidarity team in Malakal is helping to jump-start the area’s educational system. The team is building a modern teacher-training facility with four classrooms, a lecture hall, computer and science labs, a library, preparation rooms and offices. In the meantime, however, they have little with which to work.

“We came here with lots of plans, but we quickly forgot about those. We had prepared PowerPoint presentations, but here there’s no power. There are no books, let alone science or computer labs. We’ve had to provide our teachers with pencils and paper and dictionaries,” Sister D’Costa said.

Malakal’s schools had taught in English, but the government in Khartoum decreed that all education must take place in Arabic. Since then, the semi-autonomous southern government has ordered all education to take place in English, but switching back will take a while. Few people in Upper Nile State speak English.

Few English books are available, although church officials hid some away when the northern government was burning English texts.

“There is no bookshop here, and so when I asked where I could find some English books, they opened the church storeroom and I found these lovely books, all dumped in sacks. The church had protected the books,” Sister D’Costa said.

Teacher pay is low and sporadic, which Sister D’Costa acknowledges does not help motivate teachers to teach. “And if they learn English from us, they can often get a better job for an NGO, and they’ll abandon teaching. Then we have to find someone else,” she said.

“At first that bothered me a lot, but then we decided we’d just keep teaching English until everyone knows it, and there will be enough trained people for both the schools and the NGOs. And in the meantime we’re lobbying the government to pay higher salaries to help retain good teachers,” she said.

Solidarity has made a 15-year commitment to accompany the people of Southern Sudan, and Sister D’Costa said she considers it a privilege to be an integral part of the church’s mission during the excitement and pain of a new country’s birth. “The church was a credible sign of hope for the people throughout the times of war. During the time of peace, where is the church? We came here to be a sign of hope, to help the church in its mission. I love this work. I’m teaching teachers who are teaching the whole country. Behind each teacher are hundreds of students. Think about the difference that one good teacher can make,” Sister D’Costa said.

Youth in Mission

Try Being in a Room with a Single Mosquito...

I was well into my interview with seven very keen students of St. Denis Catholic Elementary School steps away from the shore of Lake Ontario in East Toronto when a question popped into my head. I asked the students what they would say to those who suggest that the problems of the world are so great that it is futile and frustrating to improve it. Amanda Gibbs, a bright, articulate grade eight student responded quickly with, “ever try being in a room with a single mosquito? You can’t help but notice it. That’s the way I look at helping others.” Amanda, an avid collector of witticisms and sayings, has been a member of Kids 4 Kids at St. Denis School for the past four years. The other students nodded their heads in agreement with her position. Each one has come to the conclusion that actions speak louder than words, and that they can make a difference in the world around them.

Kids 4 Kids began five years ago as part of the school’s observation of Lent. Instead of giving up something, teacher Ms. Beth Pinsonnault, parent Ms Carolyn Bailey and student Hannah Casey, challenged the students to give back. In doing this, they were preparing the way for the students to apply their religious instruction to the world around them. In their religion program, the children are made “aware of the challenge to share love with the less fortunate.”¹ This is partly accomplished through reading and discussing stories of people whose hearts are open to others.² Out of this experience, the children try to suggest ways to act justly in day to day living.³ This led to the students organizing a series of fundraisers to assist an orphanage in Kenya to which Ms Bailey was connected. Through this activity, the students connected the way of the Beatitudes with contemporary living. From these first steps, the club has grown to involve students from grades four to eight who participate in fund-raising and outreach projects that touch the lives of not only mission countries but also the homeless in Toronto.

Alexys Ballem, also in grade eight, joined the club two years ago because she wanted to make a difference. After all, “kids become adults”, she pointed out. “If you can develop a habit of helping others when you’re young, it can stay with you into adulthood.”

The terrible events in Haiti last year spurred the current club president and grade seven student Daniella Rizza, into action. Inspired by the work of social activists who started as young people, Daniella joined the club last year. She also sees herself as being able to make a difference.

Samantha Hepperle, a two-year member, recalls watching the TV news at night with her father and becoming upset at the troubles around the world. She sees Kids 4 Kids as the perfect opportunity to do something positive for others.

Sophie Travaglini, a two-year member and grade 7 student, claims to “have learned tons from Kids 4 Kids... It has been a great experience to deliver homeless people home made bagged lunches, and what we called the “Sock Walk”, when we delivered socks, hats, mitts/gloves and scarves to people less fortunate living on the streets. We did lots of work last year in Sri Lanka, sponsoring children in an orphanage there. This year our focus is on Kenya.”

In the years since its founding, Kids for Kids at St. Denis has involved itself in both local and international projects. In the past, the club has “adopted” a country to support. Sri Lanka and Kenya are two of them. Through bake sales and raffles, the club raises funds to support projects that will be self-sustaining down the road. These students are both intelligent and informed. They want those receiving aid to be able to be self-supporting as soon as possible. They look to prepare people for life “after the money runs out”. Also mentioned during our discussion is “alternative income”. These bright young students know that pumping aid into a developing nation needs strategic and long-term planning outcomes.

Students in grades 4 and 5 handle the publicity and information part of the club, keeping the rest of the school up-to-date with the latest happenings. The older students, accompanied by parents and teachers, go on community outreach to the downtown area where most of Toronto’s homeless are concentrated. There, they distribute food, treats, and warm clothing to those in need. December’s outing brought over 300 sandwiches (made by the students) and hats/gloves to the homeless.



Kids4Kids Leadership Team

Photo – Paul Coady

In early February, the club brought mitts, scarves, hats and socks on their “Sock Walk”. These encounters with the homeless have brought a new level of understanding and compassion to their worldview. As Sophie says, “I know what it’s like to have cold, wet feet after having fun in the snow, so I can only imagine how bad it is for people to have to stay all day long in wet socks because they have only one pair.”



Lunches for the homeless packed and ready to go Photo – St. Denis Catholic Elementary School

Danielle Fitzgerald has been a member for three years. The club has been a true revelation for her. “I’ve learned that anyone can make a difference: big or small, with your money or with your time. ... I feel like Kids4Kids is just the beginning of my journey for change. ... Change will not happen in one day, it will take time; I take pleasure in saying I am part of the generation of change. Change starts with you and me.”

St. Denis Catholic School students wear a uniform, and like all students, love it when they get to wear their choice of clothes on “dress down days”. Kids for Kids saw this as an opportunity and now they organize such days and ‘charge’ their fellow students a pair of socks as payment for the right to dress down. The response was astounding. Recently, the school filled three large bins with socks, enough for three pairs for each homeless person they met.

Following the meeting with the students, the next afternoon, I sat down with two of the teachers who spearhead this mission club. Beth Pinsonnault has worked at the school for six years, and besides her teaching responsibilities, is the originator of the “giving back” approach that mentioned earlier. One of the original founders of the club, she also serves as the school’s Religion Rep. Beth’s “quiet passion” for Kids4Kids comes through clearly in our interview. From the beginning, her goal was for the students to develop a ‘kindness habit’, with no expectation of anything in return. Kindness and compassion are their own rewards, and it is clear that the students have bought in to this message. Jennie Valentim, fellow teacher with five years of service at St. Denis, is equally committed to this project. Living close by each other has led to a successful car-pool experience. As Jennie says, “sharing the ride means we can bounce ideas back and forth. I drive and Beth writes.” Out of these rides have come many of the organizational ideas for the club, but both teachers emphasize that the actual project ideas

often come from the students themselves. Beth also points out that to maintain momentum; the club meets every Monday at lunchtime to discuss plans, problems and solutions. The meetings also provide an opportunity for the teachers to bring articles and talking points to the group. Malcolm Gordon, another teacher at the school, is the ‘researcher’ for the group, and often comes up with stimulating articles for the students to study and discuss.

One wintry idea that came out of these meetings was to support fellow students in other schools who lacked clothing and skates. A skate/clothing drive was organized and as a result, a downtown school benefited from the delivery of several pairs of skates and winter clothing.

The group has also supported the local food bank during food drives, rallying the entire school around this need.

The club meets from September to April and its numbers are growing. There are now upwards of 30 children regularly participating in its activities and meetings. This takes time and commitment on the part of parents, teachers and students, but it is a commitment happily made. The Expectations of the Ontario Catholic School Graduate package, which is present in every Catholic school in the province describes the Christian vision of the human journey by stating, “it is best understood within the context of relationship. It is accomplished in community, in solidarity with brothers and sisters in the Church and beyond.”²⁴ The outreach program in place at St. Denis is a model that other schools might wish to emulate with its combination of local and international outreach. This is a school with a clear understanding of community and solidarity with others.

Sources: 1, 2, 3: TCDSB Religion Guidelines, ‘Born of the Spirit’ Junior Division
4: Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations



Steyler missionary sisters in Argentina

photo - Melters/missio

The Grandness Of Compassion

by **FR. JOSÉ REBELO, MCCJ**

“I am awed that so many of the selfless people serving the world’s neediest are lowly nuns and priests – notable not for the grandeur of their vestments but for the grandness of their compassion” (Nicholas D. Kristof, Journalist of the New York Times).

Missionary women – religious and lay – have been privileged witnesses and often victims of ravaging wars and armed conflicts. All around the world, they put their lives at risk to stay by the people they serve and be a sign of hope amidst madness and savagery.

For instance, in Sri Lanka last year, as the government troops were aiming to end a 25-year-old war by dealing a death blow to the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) rebels, Sister Mary Colostica, a 74-year-old Catholic nun, and her five colleague nuns – some already injured – shepherded more than 2,000 civilians from village to village as they tried to escape fighting and shelling, and searched for food. Their braveness and strength in sharing people’s sufferings led to seeking refuge and finding safety for them.

The world has been rather adverse to women. More than their male counterparts, missionary women are able to understand their plight and contribute to their empowerment. Despite the great progress made in the last years to protect women, they still suffer violence in the form of feticide, infanticide and abandonment; discrimination in health and nutrition, thus impairing physical and mental growth. Girls continue to account for the majority of children out of school and girls 15 years of age and over account for two-thirds of the world’s illiterate population; three quarters of those infected by HIV/AIDS are girls and women between the ages of 15 and 24. Women and girls are the majority of transnational victims being trafficked into commercial sexual exploitation, not to mention economic abuse.

Missionary women have been at the forefront of the battle for life and dignity, especially of their fellow women. Their work for and with the poor is awe-inspiring. Writing in The New York Times, on April 17, Nicholas D. Kristof affirmed that, after a number of encounters with nuns in the mission field, he has come to believe

“that the very coolest people in the world today may be nuns.” Two weeks later, on May 1, reporting from Juba, Southern Sudan, where he had gone to cover the elections, he returned to the theme: “Once again, I am awed that so many of the selfless people serving the world’s neediest are lowly nuns and priests – notable not for the grandeur of their vestments but for the grandness of their compassion.”

(This is) a well-deserved tribute to thousands of indomitable and selfless missionary women who, all over the world, are making common cause with the poor and needy. Many live inserted in the squalor of refugee camps and shantytowns; others exercise their ministry of love and compassion in hospitals among the AIDS and leprosy patients, in hospices with orphans and elderly; others operate superb schools that provide needy children an escalator out of poverty; others work for development along with groups and cooperatives. With their presence and care, they channel the love and tenderness of Jesus to orphans, homeless, unloved and poor people, oblivious of themselves and without pretending to be doing anything beyond their duty. They do a wonderful work and give a powerful testimony – certainly, the best the Church can offer.

Father José Rebello is the editor of World Mission Magazine. This editorial is reprinted with kind permission.



Missionary teacher At St. Vincent School, Zambia

photo - Sister Pauline Chirchirillo



Spiritual service and human aid

photo - Klijn/present



Mama Bakhita Home in Zambia - Child patients with nurse

photo - Sister Pauline Chirchirillo

The Roman Catholic Church in the World: A Statistical Profile

By Paul Coady

In May 2010, the Vatican released the Statistical Yearbook of the Church (*Annuario Statisticum Ecclesiae*). The yearbook provides a snapshot of the workforce for the apostolate throughout the world. The most recent information covers the year 2008, and presents declines and increases in this workforce. A close examination of this information, coupled with a considered examination of the CARA Report for 2010, (which covers the period from 2003 to 2008) provides us with an interesting view of the Church in the World today.

Missions Today offers for your consideration the following observations.

The Catholic population worldwide is increasing. Over the five-year period 2003-2008, the number of Catholics grew by 7.4%. However, this increase is not reflected in the numbers of priests and religious in the world. Their numbers increased minimally, by 0.7%. Not surprisingly, the regions showing the greatest Catholic growth were Africa (20.4%) and Asia (10.1%). This is not surprising given the major evangelical efforts made in these regions. PMS has long played a key role in the support of evangelization in Africa. The continued growth of Catholicism in China also contributes to the overall totals for Asia. So, while the total numbers of Catholics in Asia remains small (3%), it is encouraging to note the continued growth of Catholicism in this region.. Central America and Oceania show encouraging growth; in South and Central America, Catholicism has for centuries been the dominant religion, this despite recent inroads made by Evangelical Protestant growth; in Oceania's case this reflects the efforts

of various missionary orders and the support they receive from PMS in evangelization.

The Apostolate Workforce is an area of some concern.

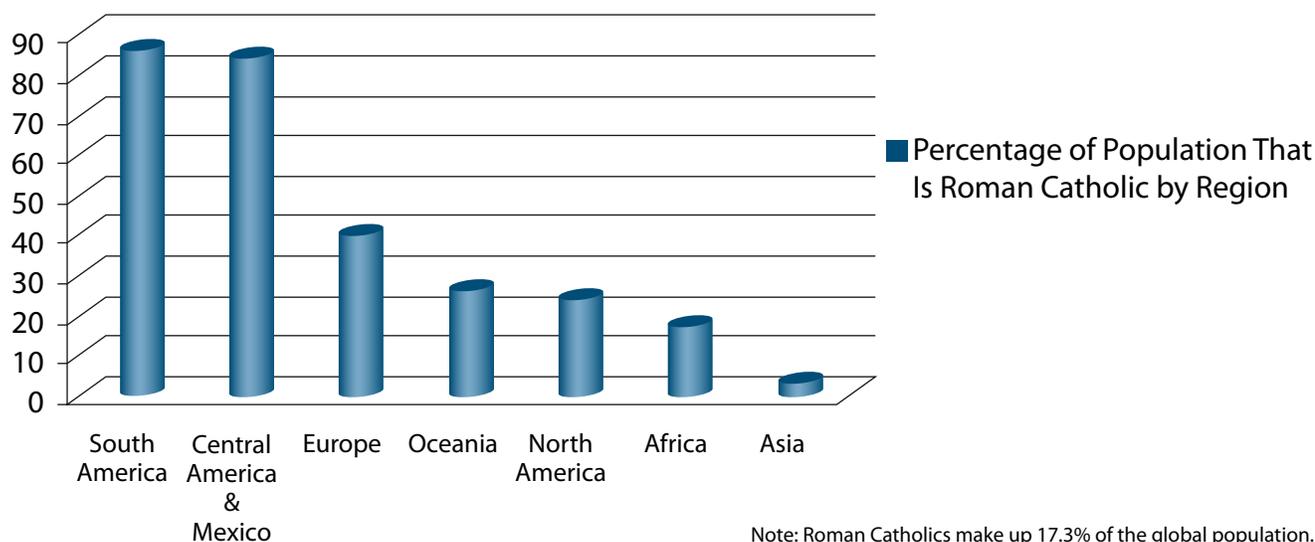
Traditionally, North America, Europe, and to some degree, South America were the regions that provided the priests and religious needed for evangelization in the rest of the world. Those days, at least for now, are over. North America and Europe both show disturbing declines in the numbers of priests and religious (-6.8% and -4.5% respectively). These regions cannot keep up with the demand in areas of the world where Catholicism is on the increase. Over the last several years, Africa and Asia have needed to find

CARA is a national, non-profit, Georgetown University affiliated research center that conducts social scientific studies about the Catholic Church. Founded in 1964, CARA has three major dimensions to its mission:

- to increase the Church's self understanding
- to serve the applied research needs of Church decision-makers
- to advance scholarly research on religion, particularly Catholicism

Source: cara.georgetown.edu

Percentage of Population That Is Roman Catholic by Region



Workforce for the Apostolate Worldwide

Category	End-2007	End-2008	Change
Bishops	4,906	5,002	+1.1%
Priests (Diocesan and Religious)	408,024	409,166	+0.3%
Seminarians	58,960	58,959	No change
Deacons	35,942	37,203	+3.5%
Religious Brothers	54,956	54,641	-0.6%
Religious Sisters	746,814	739,068	-1.0%
Catechists	2,993,354	3,082,562	+3.0%
Total Catholics Worldwide:	1,146,656,000	1,165,714,000	+1.7%

Source: Statistical Yearbook of the Church 2010

their priests and religious from within. Notice the increases for each: Africa 17.1% and Asia 15.2%. The not-so-hidden irony in these numbers is the increasing need for Asian and African priests to serve in North America and Europe. This reverse “religious drain” is necessary to keep First World Churches and parishes open! This trend will bear close observation in the years ahead.

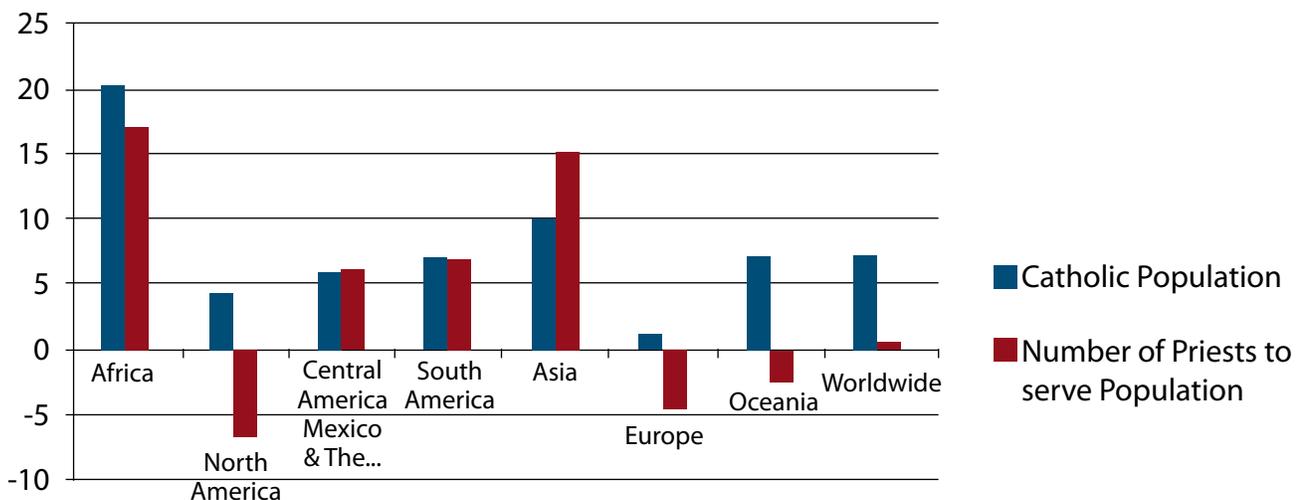
The moderate worldwide increase in Permanent Deacons and Catechists points to the growing need for the laity lead the evangelization efforts in areas lacking priests and religious. Whether it is the isolated village on a jungle path in Cambodia, a dusty gathering of huts on an African plain, or an urban, aging parish in a North American city, all need the support and effort provided by the laity. Again, another trend worth following.

So, what does the future hold? The short answer is more of the same. While we at PMS Canada justly celebrate the tremendous support provided by Catholic Canadians to our mission societies, we see there is still so much more to be done. Providing aid, both spiritual and financial to priests and religious around the world, as demonstrated by the very successful and long-running Chalice Program, is both important to the receiver and rewarding for the donor. However, developing ways to attract our own

young people to lives of service in the priesthood and religious is of paramount importance. We must show them that service of this nature is not only noble and sacred, but also that serving God is relevant to a generation looking for meaning and identity in a world that provides neither.

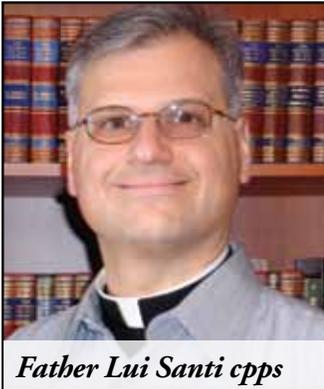
The Roman Catholic Church Worldwide

(Percentage Changes from 2003 to 2008)



Source: Statistical Yearbook of the Church 2010

Society of Saint Peter the Apostle



Father Lui Santi cpps

It is with grateful and loving hearts that we, dear friends, give thanks to God for having been given another successful year to spread the Good News of Jesus' love and mercy. You have been a great source of support in enabling the Society of St. Peter the Apostle to continue its work in the Church. Your gracious gifts of prayers and financial support help

to educate and train seminarians in poorer countries. Over the course of the year, the Society of Saint Peter the Apostle receives many letters from those who have benefited from your generosity. The letters presented below truly convey the gratitude of the recipients of your efforts on their behalf.

Greetings from Francisdale Seminary,

... Thanks very much for the money you had sent and it is already in operation. As already mentioned, the borehole will supply water to the new dormitory, which is under construction and in addition repairs to the old building. The commencement of the project of a 60 meters deep borehole already began and will supply 10,000 liters of water and a tank to be mounted on a stand.

On behalf of the Diocese of Ndola and well as the Seminary, I would like to register our heartfelt gratitude to all who contributed the Society of St. Peter the Apostle, it is because of their generosity that today we can smile... We can only promise our humble prayer so that the people of God all over the world may continue to contribute to this noble call.

Fr. Lawrence Malama
Rector of Francisdale Seminary
Ndola, ZAMBIA

Dear Friends in Canada,

"...I would like to express my feelings of gratitude for sending us the grants for the repair of the roof and furniture for the Seminary of St. Damin. This is a real great help for us, because maintaining a Seminary exceeds our financial strength. Thanks to God, we will receive help from outside, especially the Society of St. Peter the Apostle, from Canada... At the moment it is the rainy season in Timor. Therefore, it would be difficult to start the project so we need to wait until it is over.

Sincerely,
Bishop Dominkus Saku
Atmabua, Timor, Indonesia

Dear Society of St. Peter the Apostle, Canada,

Thank you very much for the beautiful chalice that you sent to me as a gift; in fact it is (used) for celebrating Holy Mass everyday for the donor. Thank you very much!

May I also take this opportunity to wish you a happy Christmas and blessed New Year.

With greetings and best wishes
Fr Simon R. Thoo, OMI
Maseru, Lesotho

Dear Benefactor,

I am a seminarian from the Diocese of Meru. I would like to most sincerely thank you for the support either materially or spiritually. It has meant a lot to my pursuit for the priesthood during the formation and training. Spiritual support (is of) paramount importance but alongside (it) is the material support. I promise to keep you in my prayers and may you continue with the same spirit of goodness be shown to others... Lastly, I wish you a Merry and Holy Christmas and a happy prosperous new year.

Yours faithfully,
Leonard Murungi
St. Joseph Meru Major Seminary
Nairobi, Kenya

All of us must share and help in the calling forth of priests and religious in mission countries through prayer and financial support. It is equally important for each of us to affirm those men and women who have responded to God's call; we pray that through the intervention of the Holy Spirit, they continue in their discernment and respond faithfully to God's invitation to serve in the priesthood of Jesus Christ.

**it is because of their generosity
that today we can smile...**

I thank you for your spiritual and moral support you have shown over the years. As you share in the commitment to strengthen the Catholic communities in poorer countries, you help make the faith journey possible, alive and authentic. You can take great pride in knowing that you have helped people sanctify and celebrate the most significant moments of their lives, and encouraged them to experience the transforming power of faith and share it with others. Your commitment to supporting the education of hundreds of seminarians and the work of countless priests in poor and remote corners of the world is truly faith in action.

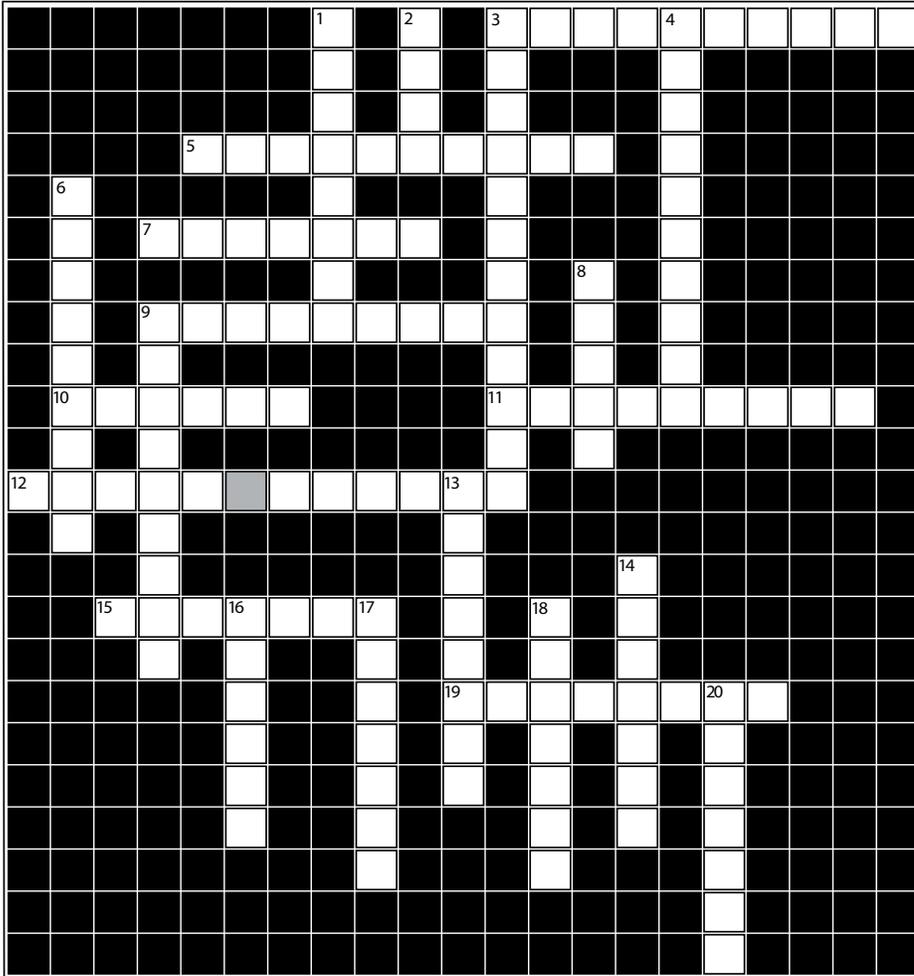
Peace and Blessings.
Rev. Lui Santi, cpps

Missions Today Crossword

Spring 2011

Don't try this one until you have read every last word of the magazine! Good Luck.

Paul Coady



I hope you have some fun with this one. Once again, all the clues point to words, personalities and phrases taken directly from this issue.
- Missions Today Crossword Solution on page 23

Across

3. there is a worldwide increase in Permanent Deacons and _____
5. Catholic worldwide population is _____
7. "mission in _____", theme for WMS 2011 in Brazil
9. site of new church in Tanzania
10. continent with the greatest growth in Catholics
11. The Society of Saint Peter provides grants for a seminary in this country
12. Archbishop of Durban who led the fight against apartheid
15. town in South Sudan
19. "try being in a room with a single _____"

Down

1. capitol of Sudan
2. proposed capitol of the new South Sudan nation
3. predominant religion in South Sudan
4. a 'grand' personality trait
6. location of St. Mary Magdalene Church
8. Archbishop of Northern Iraq
9. refuge area for Christians fleeing persecution in Baghdad
13. "life in Sudan is a life of _____"
14. the village of vocations on the Silk Road
16. site for a new Catholic hospital and university
17. serious degenerative disease of the skin
18. a grateful priest celebrates Mass in this country
20. "think about the difference that one good _____ can make"

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90	10.00%	10.00%

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Holy Childhood Association

From Wisma Kasih to Wisma Giovani

In 2010, HCA Canada provided \$8,000.00 (US) in financial support to the Diocese of Bogor, Indonesia to assist in the formation of two homes for abandoned women and orphans. Ms Maria Rosa, the director of this project, was so impressed with the generosity of Canadian children, that she asked if she and her orphans could join HCA Canada! Truly "children helping children".



"Please stay with us along our journey to learn how to love and to be loved."

Dear Friends:

December, 2010

Your support in our work, especially when problems come our way, has made it possible for us to open our hearts and our home to those who have nothing in their life except... grief and sadness.

More than 16 years ago, our foundation Wisma Kasih (Home of Love) came to Bogor, to find those who are screaming in the darkness of poverty and loneliness. The little house we borrowed became a witness of our efforts to learn how to love and to be loved by those who are poor, sick, dying and neglected.

We never forget the helping hands from a lot of people from different religions and countries, which made it possible for us to build another house in the village of Tonjong. The warm welcome of our neighbours gave us the strength to provide hope for those women who had been abandoned.

On November 6, 2010, we opened a new house of service. We call it, Wisma Giovani (The Home of John). More than 250 came to celebrate its opening. We now have 20 girls from several islands in our country working with us in this home, helping to provide charity work to those in our care. Our happiness at the inauguration of the Wisma Giovani was immensely disturbed by the natural disasters in our country. The flood in Papua, the tsunami in Mentawai and the eruption of Mount Merapi in Central Java have again made us feel so humble.

At this moment, my thoughts are of the first baby we took in, Caecilia Odilia Windya Putri. She is now studying to be a ballerina.

Our special thanks go to all the children from Holy Childhood Association. I tell our children that they have friends who love and care about their lives, even though they live far away from them. You are very lucky to have parents who love you and care for you. Ninety-nine percent of the children who live in our home never knew their parents. We hope that the love and care of people like you can make our children also capable to give their love to others. Without the help of all of you, we would not be able to take care of these orphans, nor help the women who have been abandoned by their family, nor the pregnant women who have been neglected by their partners.

Please stay with us along our journey to learn how to love and to be loved.

Thank you, with kind regards,

Maria Rosa



STUDENTS' CORNER



Niagara Catholic District School Board Does It Again!



A very special thank you goes out to the staff and students of the NCDSB. For the 27th consecutive year, they walked for children around the world, raising over \$21,000.00 in the fall of 2010. Since 2000, students across this board have raised over \$320,000 for HCA projects around the world. Each issue of Missions Today features stories of how your efforts allow the Holy Childhood Association to make life better for children everywhere, in both their spiritual and temporal lives. Students and teachers of the NCDSB: well done!

The HCA Walk-A-Thon keeps on giving...

Making a Difference

Papua New Guinea – 3 projects serving 6,440 children

- provision of educational materials for 81 Sunday Schools in remote areas
- provision of religious educational materials for a diocese
- provision of 2 water tanks for an elementary school without clean water

Uganda – 4 projects serving 2,633 children

- provision of desks, school supplies for a nursery school
- provision of 2 additional classrooms for a school in a remote area
- purchase of 100 mosquito nets to prevent malaria
- provision of playground equipment for 5 kindergartens

Ghana – 2 projects serving 5,570 children

- completion of a school renovation
- construction of 3 classrooms

Malawi – 3 projects serving 6,000 children

- construction of a primary school
- provision of a religion program for a parish
- food to support a children's program in a parish

Indonesia – 5 projects serving 2,130 children

- renovation of and addition to a school/orphanage
- support for 2 nutrition programs to combat hunger and malnutrition
- provision of educational materials for religious education in a primary school
- training, support and health care for immigrants and families in marginalized communities

Colombia – 4 projects serving 338 children

- provision of a nutrition for children who live in extreme poverty
- provision of nutrition, education and health care for orphans
- support for 2 education programs that provide hygiene programs, nutrition programs, clothing and school supplies



Tanzania – 4 projects serving 13,302 children

- support for faith education and leadership programs for children
- provision of hygiene workshops
- support for an AIDS orphanage
- support for orphans - clothing, medical care, education

South Africa – 5 projects serving 679 children

- support for 2 programs - 1 AIDS workshop - 1 on self sufficiency
- provision of materials for retreats and children's religion programs
- nutrition programs in 3 schools that serve street children and children from poor areas

India – 11 projects serving 1,751 children

- support for 5 boarding schools in rural, isolated areas that provide education for poor children
- construction of 2 boarding schools in rural areas where there are no schools
- provision of education, nutrition for poor children
- provision of drinking water to a primary school

Zimbabwe – 1 project serving 200 children

- construction of a centre for street children where 80% are orphans

Sri Lanka – 7 projects serving 2,324 children

- provision of education and training programs for at risk children
- support for Sunday School religion programs
- maintenance and support for a girl's orphanage that provides health care and education
- support for orphans and refugees providing shelter, food, health care and education
- maintenance of a boys boarding school that also cares for orphans and families in need
- maintenance of 5 orphanages caring for abused, abandoned and at risk children
- maintenance of a preschool that provides education, health care and day care for working mothers and mothers at risk

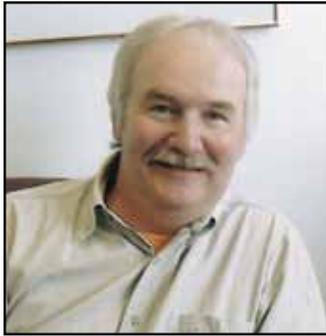
In 2010 your financial support has helped Holy Childhood Association fund 49 projects that impact over 41,000 children worldwide.

FROM the Vatican:
Meet the newly appointed world Secretary General for the Pontifical Society of Holy Childhood



Dr. Baptistine Jeanne Ralamboarison, Dame of the Order of Pope St. Sylvester, is the new Secretary General for Holy Childhood. A native of Madagascar, Dr. Ralamboarison has a background in law and languages; she has worked for Holy Childhood since 1983. She is the first woman to hold this position.

Mission Conversations with the Editor

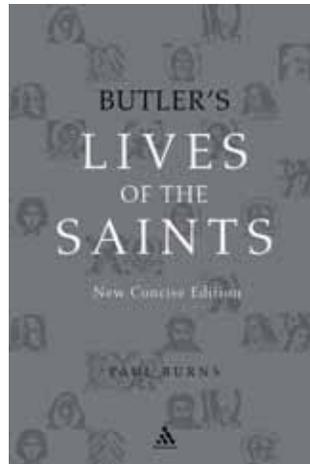


Growing up, I was always fascinated with the stories of the early martyrs. Noting my interest, my Dad purchased a used copy of Butler's Lives of the Saints. Perhaps he was tired of my incessant questions on "what happened to..." and "why did they die, Dad"

or, even more gruesomely, "how did they die?". Nonetheless, I can remember reading with rapt attention their stories aided by a flashlight under the covers following 'curfew'.

As time went on, my interests moved to other things, but somewhere in the back of my mind, this original fascination has always remained. Perhaps that explains my keen interest over the past several months in the stories coming out of the Middle East and Asia. Christians and Christianity is under attack in a variety of ways and situations. Now, before you begin to think that this is a call to Crusade, let me explain.

The recent events in India, Pakistan, Iraq, Indonesia, and other locations on the other side of the globe have brought home to me the difficult and dangerous situations faced by our fellow Christians who attempt to live their faith openly. Misguided zealots who see the Christian faith as a threat have attacked churches in Iraq and Indonesia. Priests, religious and laity have been killed or injured in these heinous acts forcing the faithful to go underground. Such stories bring me back to Butler's descriptions of the Roman Christians forced into hiding in the catacombs outside the city. And yet, the faith of the people in these regions remains strong. Many flee their homelands rather than give up the faith. And as for conversion, Muslims in certain areas of Pakistan face death if they do.



"the youth needed to fill such positions find talk of religion to be irrelevant. Try telling that to the Christians of Iraq."

One cannot but admire their fortitude and faith, which leads me to wonder whether I could withstand the same pressures. Unfortunately, I think I know the answer. I have not needed to experience anything close to what they face in their lives. There is a strange irony in all of this. Pope Benedict, concerned about the decline of religion in the more advantaged parts of the world (Europe and North America), has called for a 're-evangelization' of the West. It is a call to shake up sleepy Christians and comfortable pews around the First World. Continuing with the irony theme, part of this call requires the importing of hundreds of priests to fill the vacant positions in parishes across the advantaged world, left vacant because the youth needed to fill such positions find talk of religion to be 'irrelevant'. Try telling that to the Christians of Iraq.

In my analysis of the Church Statistics (see pages 16/17), I point out those areas where the Church is thriving in the world. Our missionaries have done and continue to do a remarkable job at igniting faith in Africa and Asia. They are working with people who admire the effort put in on their behalf to bring decent living conditions to their lives. However, the big difference between the work of our missionaries abroad and the laudable efforts of the non-religiously affiliated NGOs working beside them, is that the missionary lives out Christ's message of love and hope every day and in every encounter. They 'walk the walk' in their work. Perhaps it is time that we do the same in our lives. We may not be called to be martyrs; we may not need our own catacomb, but if we want to experience a faith inspired, it is time we took to heart the example of those who put their faith on the line.

Paul Coady
Editor

Missions Today is always interested in hearing from you.

If you have any comments on the articles we have used; the new structure of the magazine; or anything you would like to see us explore in future issues, please get in touch with us!

Contact the Editor via email at: editor@missionsocieties.ca

Or write us at: Editor - Missions Today Magazine

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In Remembrance

Our Deceased Donors

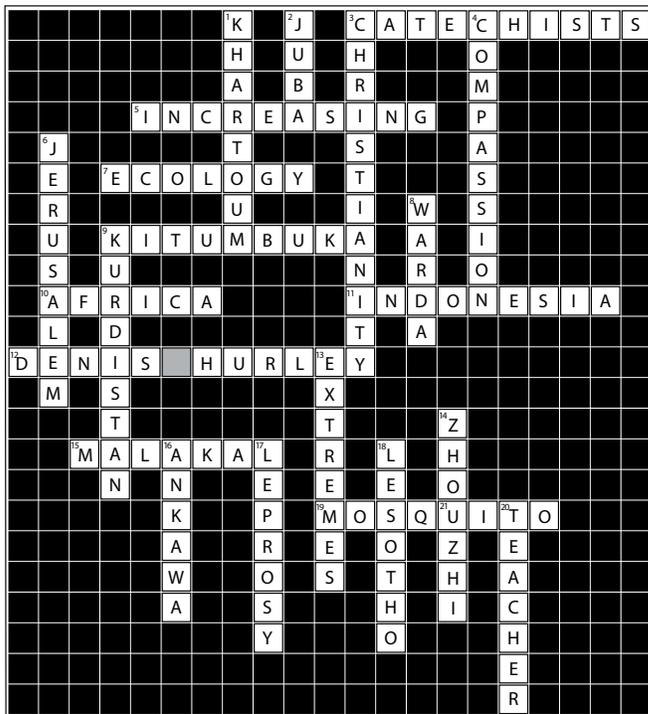
Please remember in your prayers the recently deceased members of the Pontifical Mission Societies

Mary Acorn.....Sedgewick, AB
 Jennie Baniuk.....Scarborough, ON
 Nadzjeja Borowiecki Edmonton, AB
 Mary Borutski.....Killaloe, ON
 Estella Burkett.....Belleville, ON
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 Francis McDonald.....Hampton, NB
 Barbara McKinnon.....Sudbury, ON
 Margaret Morgan Toronto, ON
 Tom Morley Sydney, NS
 Arthur O'Reilly.....Scarborough, ON

Daniel Pakula..... Telegraph Creek, BC
 Germaine Philippe..... Victoria, BC
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Missions Today Crossword Solution

Spring 2011 (from page 19)



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**There is nothing that does not share in
goodness and beauty.
Each thing is good and beautiful
by its proper form.**

– St. Thomas Aquinas

