

Mali

ALGERIA

International boundary

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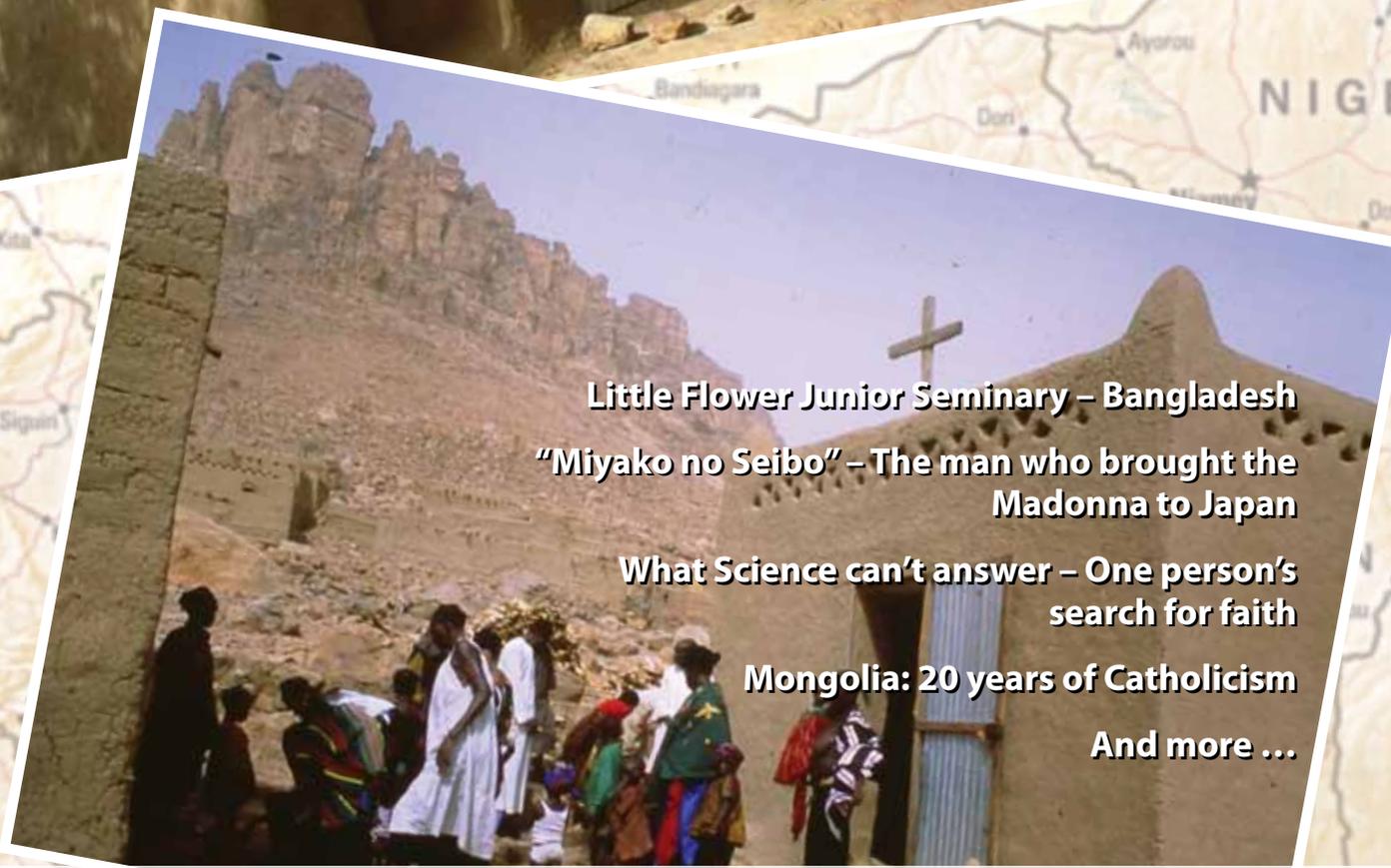
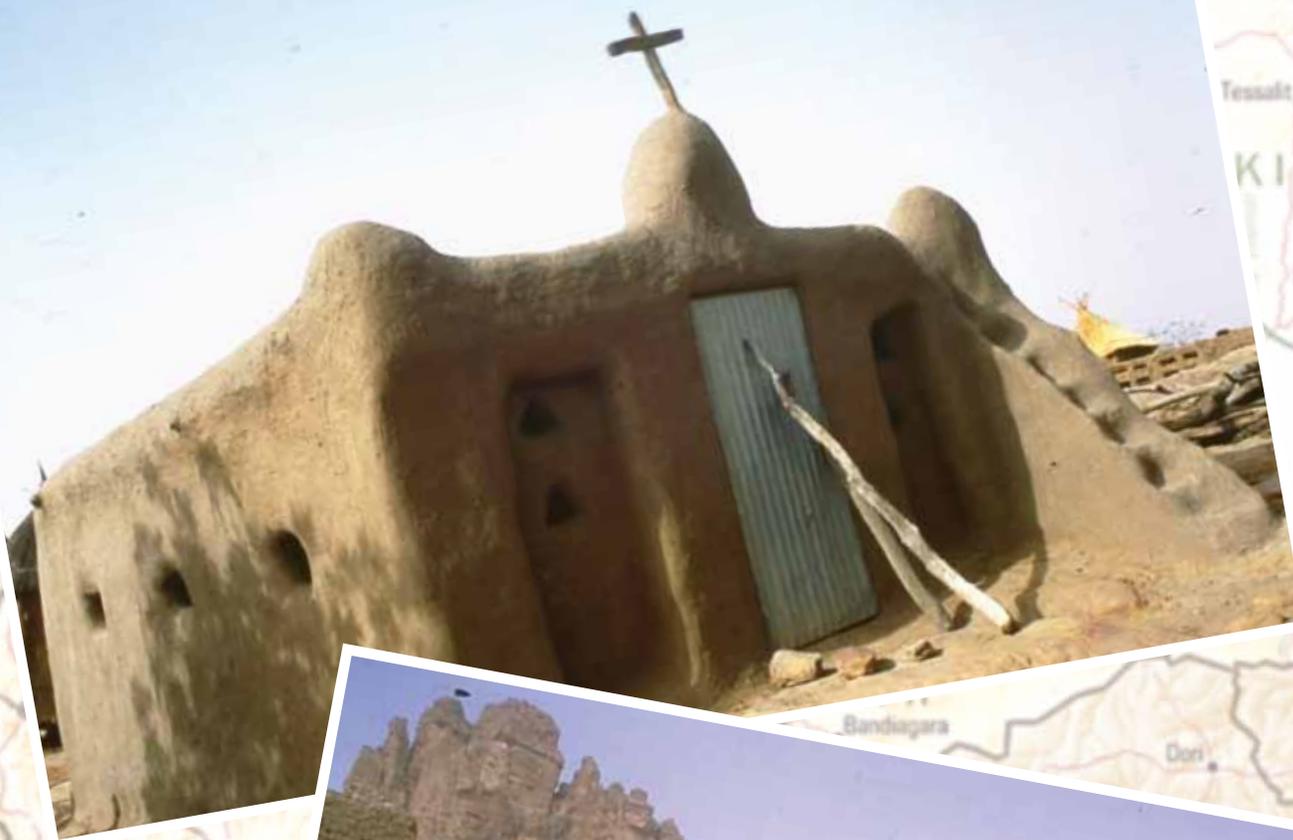
National capital

Region capital

MISSIONS TODAY

VOL 71, NO. 2

Spring 2013



Little Flower Junior Seminary – Bangladesh
 “Miyako no Seibo” – The man who brought the
 Madonna to Japan

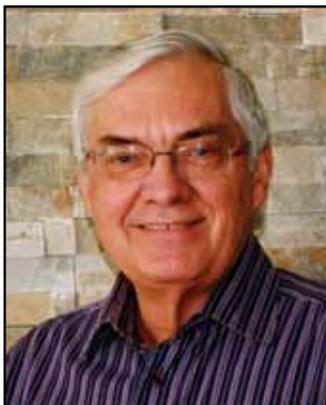
What Science can't answer – One person's
 search for faith

Mongolia: 20 years of Catholicism

And more ...

The Society for the Propagation of the Faith

National Director's Message



Easter is approaching very quickly. Traditionally Lent is a time designated for reflection, reaffirmation of our beliefs and renewal. In his pastoral plan, Cardinal Collins, Archbishop of Toronto, states that “the New Evangelization, simply put, is appreciating the joy that the faith in Christ brings us and sharing it with others”. And so

I ask: as a faith filled follower of Jesus have you done your part to bring the message of brotherly love and hope to all who will listen? Are you prepared to meet the risen Jesus?

Missions Today Magazine opens a window on the work of the missionary church. It gives testimony to the faithful who have dedicated their lives and who often work in very difficult and sometimes life threatening circumstances to spread the Christian message of love and forgiveness which leads to hope and justice. We are indeed fortunate in Canada. We have adequate housing, ample food, abundant sources of potable water, universal health care and education. While all may not be perfect, we do not experience persecution, dysfunctional and unjust governments, famine or mud floors. All this makes it easy to minimize, or even dismiss, the reality of many many people in mission countries.

The work of the Pontifical Missions Societies is to support Catholic missionaries in their efforts to bring spiritual and meaningful change to those who seek the healing grace of the Gospels. I encourage you to read the appreciation expressed by Fr. Rozario and

that of seminarian Raja Lamin, the reflection on the need for a ‘new evangelization’ by Msgr. Menampampil and the thoughts of Susan Greenfield on the presence of God. But do not slight the other worthy stories of mission.

After six years as National Director, Mrs. Marie Deans has retired. We thank her for her generous and enlightened leadership. I am pleased to have had the opportunity to bridge the gap between National Directors. We now welcome Father Alexander Osei, CSSp as the newly appointed National Director. Father Alex was ordained in Ghana as a Spiritan and worked as a missionary in Kano, Nigeria for several years. He was later appointed to St Joseph’s Parish, Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan in the Archdiocese of Regina. For the past four years he has been the Director of Brottier House, a settlement house for refugees in Toronto. He is pleased that during that time over 60 new comers and claimants from a total of 14 different counties have passed through its doors. All have been accepted as Permanent Residents. Fr. Alex brings authentic experience to this position.

Mr. Robert Gutcher
Interim National Director

Missionary Prayer Intentions

MARCH: That bishops, priests, and deacons may be tireless messengers of the Gospel.

APRIL: That mission Churches may be signs and instruments of hope and resurrection.

May: That seminarians, especially those of mission Churches, may form priests fully dedicated to proclaiming the Gospel.

Remembering the Missions in your Will

Help the missionaries of the future through

- a specific bequest **amount**
- **securities** bequest
- all or part of the **residue** of your estate
- **real property** (e.g. a building) bequest

In your Will use our legal name:

**Society for the Propagation of the
Faith for Canada, English Sector**

Registered Charity BN 12888 2883 RR0001

In This Issue...

Vol. 71, No. 2 Spring 2013

The National Director's message	2
Letters from Abroad – Greetings from Dhaka, Bangladesh.....	4
Saint Pedro Calungsod and the Laity's Role in Pacific Evangelization	7
“And when they found him...” Reflections on the New Evangelization.....	8
“Miyako no Seibo” The Man who brought the Madonna to Japan	10
What Science Can't Answer – One Person's Search for Faith.....	12
Mongolia: 20 Years of Catholic Presence	15
Across the Globe	16
The Society of St. Peter	18
This Issue's Crossword	19
Holy Childhood Association	20
Mission Conversations with the Editor	22
In Remembrance: Our Deceased Donors	23



Photo: free-pictures-photos.com



PONTIFICAL MISSION SOCIETIES

Missions Today is published four times a year by the Society for the Propagation of the Faith, 2219 Kennedy Road Toronto, Ontario M1T 3G5

International Standard Serial Number
ISSN 0843-1515

Design: Marcucci Studios
Printed: Timeline Printing Inc.
Toronto, ON

Cover Photo: photos - opus vocationum
copyright:AACHEN,1998 background-
map: Courtesy of the University of
Texas Libraries, The University of Texas
at Austin.

Back Cover Photo: PMS Canada.JPG

Propagation of the Faith & St. Peter the
Apostle: Income Tax Number:
BN 12888 2883 RR0001

Holy Childhood Association: Income
Tax Number:
BN 11909 5818 RR0001
Canadian Publications Mail Sales
Product Agreement No. 0040008362

Subscription Rates:
1 yr. - \$8.00, 2 yr. - \$15.00(GST in-
cluded, no tax receipt issued for sub-
scription fees.)

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Letters from Abroad

Greetings from Dhaka, Bangladesh



Map - [www.cia.gov/library/publications, wikimedia.org](http://www.cia.gov/library/publications/wikimedia.org)

Dear Mrs. Marie Deans,

Greetings and peace to you all from Little Flower Seminary, Bandura, Dhaka. On behalf of the Staff members and seminarians, I would like to express my sincere thanks and gratitude to you and through you to all the members of the Pontifical Society of St. Peter the Apostle of Canada for all (the) kind assistance and cooperation that you have been rendering for the formation of seminarians. Without your assistance it would be quite impossible for us to give formation for the future candidates to priesthood. We always keep you all in our prayers. Once again, expressing our heartfelt thanks and gratitude and wishing you all our deepest prayerful regards, I remain,

Sincerely yours in Christ,
Fr. Milton Joseph Rozario
Rector

The two letters reproduced below, along with the pictures provided by Father Rozario, will demonstrate not only the great appreciation felt for you by the staff and students of the seminary but also the important work being done at Little Flower. The first is a report to the Head Office of the Society of St. Peter the Apostle in Rome, (Pontificium Opus a S. Petro Apostolo), written by the Rector of the Seminary, Rev. Fr. Milton Joseph Rozario. The second is a letter of thanks written by Raju Richard Lamin, a student at the seminary.

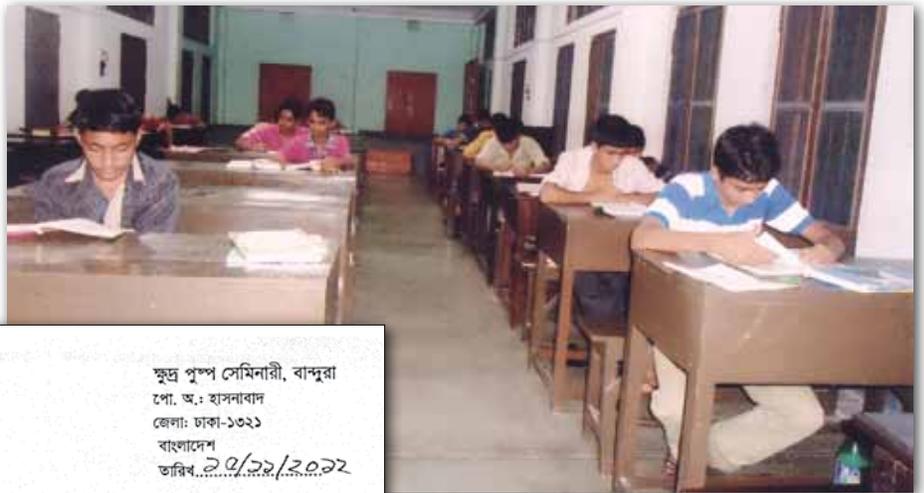
Your donations to the Society of St. Peter the Apostle have helped the Little Flower Minor Seminary in the Archdiocese of Dhaka educate and support over 100 seminarians. In this extremely poor region of the world, these young men would never have been able to pursue their dreams of becoming a priest without outside assistance. Your financial support provides the seminary with the funds to pay for teachers, food and lodging, medical expenses, travel costs, clothing and other basic needs, from the roof over their heads to the electricity for their classrooms. Father Milton Joseph Rozario, Rector of the Little Flower Minor Seminary, expressed in his report to Mrs. Deans the following:



Presenting the Offertory Gifts to the Archbishop at a seminary liturgical celebration



Daily Prayer – an integral part of the boys' education



Young Seminarians studying in class

LITTLE FLOWER SEMINARY
 Bandura, P.O. Hashnabad
 Dist. Dhaka-1321
 Bangladesh.
 Date...15/11/2012

ছন্দ্র পুষ্প সেমিনারী, বান্দুরা
 পো. অ.: হাসনাবাদ
 জেলা: ঢাকা-১৩২১
 বাংলাদেশ
 তারিখ...১৫/১১/২০১২

Msgr. Jan Dumon
 Secretary General
 Pontificium Opus a S. Petro Apostolo
 Palazzo di Propaganda Fide
 Via di Propaganda 1C
 00187 Roma.

Dear Very Rev. Monsignor,

In the year of Faith greetings in the Lord from Little Flower Seminary, Bandura, Dhaka, Bangladesh. We are very much grateful to you and *Opus A.S. Petro Apostolo* for the generous help and constant support for our seminary that we have been receiving throughout the years. I express our sincere thanks and gratitude to you. We remember our loving donors and friends in our daily Eucharist and prayers. Your generous and constant favor greatly helps us to form our young boys to prepare themselves according to the Gospel values and contribute to the formation of faith for the establishment of the local Church in Bangladesh and preach the Good News to all.

With great joy, in this year we are celebrating 125th anniversary of our Diocese. We are encouraged to renovate and keep special deep attention to Christian life for the young people entrusted to us. Holy Father, Pope Benedict XVI has opened our eyes to the faith formation. We are aware and committed to the formation of quality with your generous supports in the year of faith.

We, two priests are trying to nurture the young seminarians throughout the year, 2012. Until half of this year Fr. Shitol Theotonijs Costa was rector of the Seminary and I have been vice-rector with him for two and half years. Fr. Shitol Theotonijs Costa has gone to Philippines for his higher studies and His grace, Most Rev. Archbishop Patrick D' Rozario has entrusted me the responsibility as rector of the seminary since June 3, 2012. I realize the great need of minor seminary formation in our country, Bangladesh. I find joy and courage to work in the field of formation to give real taste of priestly life and sacrificial significance of Christ's love. At present Fr. Brien Chonchol Gomes is the new vice-rector of the seminary since June 15, 2012. He extends his helping hands in the formation work. We are trying our best to give human, spiritual and intellectual formation as well as guidance to the needs of the future Church.

Like other years, this year we arranged "Spiritual and Academic Formation" for the post S.S.C. students. The aim and objectives of the course was to learn better English and aware of their own vocation and prayer life. After this program 16 seminarians are promoted to the Intermediate Seminary, Ramna, Dhaka. We always encourage them to persevere in their desire and become good, holy priest.

During Ramadan vacation in this year, we arranged "COME and SEE" program for the prospective candidates for Little Flower Minor Seminary. In this program 98 boys joined from different parishes of Dhaka Archdiocese and Sylhet Diocese. Out of them we accepted 55 boys who are coming in the seminary in January 2013. Thus, in January, 2013 the total number of the seminarians will be 109. Indeed it shows that God is very kind to inspire our young boys to prepare themselves as the labourers in His Vineyard.

We arranged 4 days annual retreat as previous years and we are having one day retreat in every month so that they may strengthen and enrich in spiritually and totally surrender to the Almighty God.

You are always in our prayer. Please keep us in your prayer too. We extend our joy and happiness of Christmas and New Year, 2013.

With much appreciation and gratitude to your support and loving concern for us, I remain.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Fr. M. Rozario
 Rev. Fr. Milton Joseph Rozario
 Rector

Little Flower Minor Seminary, Bandura, Dhaka.



Offertory Procession at special Feast day Liturgy



Preparing the garden.

LITTLE FLOWER SEMINARY
Bandura, P.O. Hashnabad
Dist. Dhaka-1321
Bangladesh
Date: 15/11/2012

সুদ্র পুষ্প সেমিনারী, বান্দুরা
পো. অ.: হাসনাবাদ
জেলা: ঢাকা-১৩২১
বাংলাদেশ
তারিখ: ১৫/১১/২০১২

Dear Benefactor of Pontifical Society of St. Peter the apostle,

In the year of faith, greetings in the Lord from Little Flower Seminary, Bandura, Dhaka, Bangladesh. We hope and pray that you are in good health with sound mind and body.

Our final exam of the scholastic year is over in which we have done well, and we will start our new scholastic year from the January 2, 2013. We hope and pray that the New Year-2013 will bring abundant blessing and happiness to all of us.

We are always reminded by our Rector and Archbishop about the generosity of Opus A S. Petro Apostolo and about our loving benefactors and friends, who are sacrificing a lot to provide our material, spiritual and educational needs. Your kind help is a real blessing for our growth and formation. We always remember you in our daily Eucharist and prayer.

With 55 new comers in the coming year, the total number of the seminarians will be 109. This year 16 seminarians appeared for the S. S. C. examinations, all of them promoted to the Intermediate Seminary, Romna, Dhaka.

We got Fr. Milton Joseph Rozario our new Rector and Fr. Brien Chonchol Gomes new Vice-rector.

Our Rectors are very parental and friendly to us. They take good care of us and always very sincere in their efforts to form us with missionary spirit of the present church in the world, so that we can be a good, dedicated and holy priest, and serve the people with a missionary zeal.

In year of faith we are getting catechism classes by our rectors and teachers. We are enriching our faith formation as future priest. We remember and grateful to them those who given us faith on God and His Son Jesus, our Lord.

Our Archbishop has a special interest for us and comes to visit us from time to time. It gives us special blessings and encouragement and it shows how much concern he has for us. We are very grateful to him for the gesture of his concern for us. We are very grateful to our Archbishop and Bishop. We are trying our best to from ourselves as a future priest.

This year in August 31, 2012, His Excellency, the Apostolic Nuncio to Bangladesh, Archbishop Joseph Marino had his very kind visit to our seminary. It was very precious and encouraging to us, we got new spirit from his special visit to the seminarians. His Excellency prayed for us and gave blessing to us at the shrine of Blessed Virgin Mary. We are very grateful to our Nuncio.

We always pray for you. We also offer special prayer service for our benefactors and friends. We request you to pray for us, so that we can proceed on with our desire and fulfill the will of God by becoming His labourers. Once again, we extend our gratitude to you and ask your prayers and blessing.

Gratefully yours in the Lord

Raju Richard Lamin
Raju Richard Lamin
On behalf of the seminarians,
Little Flower Minor Seminary, Bandura



Above: Playing handball – a favourite game for the boys



Left: "Thank you, Canada!" from the young seminarians of Little Flower Junior Seminary

Saint Pedro Calungsod

& the Laity's Role in Pacific Evangelization

New Teen Saint a Reminder of Laity's Role in Pacific Evangelization

By Gina E. Taitano - Catholic News Service
10/19/2012

Gina E. Taitano is editor of *U Matuna Si Yu'os*, the official newspaper of the Archdiocese of Agaña.

AGANA, Guam - While little is known about the life of Blessed Pedro Calungsod, his canonization brings to light the role of the laity in the evangelization of the Pacific in the 17th century.

Blessed Calungsod, among the seven people to be declared saints by Pope Benedict XVI Oct. 21, came to the Mariana Islands in 1668 and was one of a group of lay catechists who assisted the Jesuit missionaries in their Pacific mission.

A Filipino native from the Visayas Islands, Calungsod was in his early teens when he arrived in Guam with Jesuit Father Diego Luis de San Vitores.

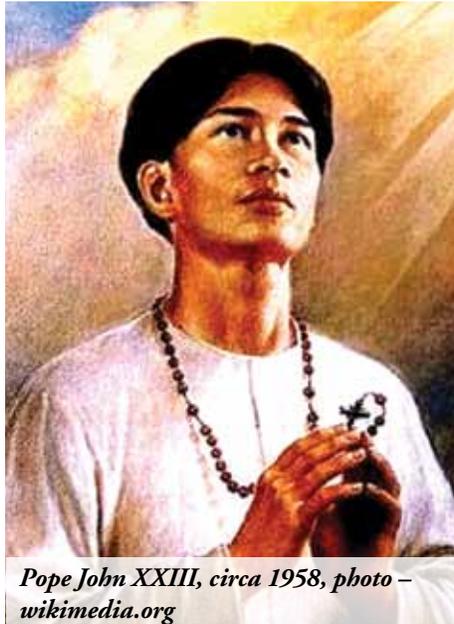
"We think that there were about 30 or 35 laypeople altogether," said Jesuit Father Francis X. Hezel, priest in residence at the Dulce Nombre de Maria Cathedral-Basilica and author of several publications on the Jesuit missions in the Pacific. "These people were handpicked. They had a personal association with the Jesuits that they were coming to serve."

In those days, it was common for young people who were not studying for the priesthood to travel with the missionaries as they contemplated entering consecrated life, he said.

"Most of these people are nameless," said Father Hezel. "Pedro is known because he had the good fortune to be with San Vitores at his death, but he represents another 20 or 25 nameless catechists, most of them Filipinos, who were killed during that turbulent time."

On April 2, 1672, Calungsod was martyred alongside Father San Vitores after the Jesuit baptized the infant daughter of Chamorro Chief Mata'pang. While Father San Vitores baptized the girl in her mother's presence, it was without the consent of the chief. After learning of the baptism, Mata'pang enlisted the assistance of Chamorro warrior Hirao, and together they attacked and killed Father San Vitores and Calungsod. Their deaths occurred on the Saturday before Passion Sunday.

Today, a monument depicting the baptism stands just off the coast of Tumon, Guam, near the site where the two were martyred.



Pope John XXIII, circa 1958, photo –
wikimedia.org

While Father San Vitores was beatified in 1985, the cause for the canonization of Blessed Calungsod was not initiated until 1994, after the Archdiocese of Cebu, Philippines, rediscovered documentation in the 1980s that associated the young teen with Father San Vitores' martyrdom. Calungsod was beatified March 5, 2000, by Pope John Paul II.

Blessed Calungsod's cause represents the move by Pope John Paul to "raise up new models of holiness for the people of our time," Father Hezel said. As a lay catechist who died for the faith, Blessed Calungsod fit that model.

The canonization is also a reminder of the role of the laity and of the Asia-Pacific people in the spreading of Catholicism in

the Pacific islands, he said.

"These catechists that came here with the missionaries were the people who made possible the planning of the faith here. (Calungsod) also represents the contribution of the Philippines and Mexico to this island group. After all, they suffered greatly, too, in planting the faith here.

"It wasn't just the European Jesuits who gave their lives for the faith," Father Hezel said. "If Pedro Calungsod stands for anything, in my view, it is the important role that others from the outside had in nurturing the faith and in channeling the Spanish culture into these islands."

Guam is the largest island in the Mariana Island archipelago where Catholics make up 85 percent of the population. The island was ceded to the U.S. from Spain in 1898. Chamorros, the island's indigenous inhabitants, constitute 37 percent of the population, while Filipinos make up 26 percent.

Half a million people attend Calungsod celebration

An estimated half a million people attended the "national thanksgiving" celebration for the canonization of Pedro Calungsod, the second Filipino saint, in Cebu on November 30.

A foot procession of 80 carrozas, floats of Catholic saints, from parishes around the province opened the celebration early in the day. At noon, a waterborne procession brought the image of Calungsod on board a galleon to a new site dedicated to the saint, which stands on a 27-hectare beachside property.

Information taken from *ucanews.com* 11/30/2012.

A Reflection on New Evangelization

By H.E. Mgr. Thomas Menampampil, SDB

Archbishop Emeritus of Guwahati, India

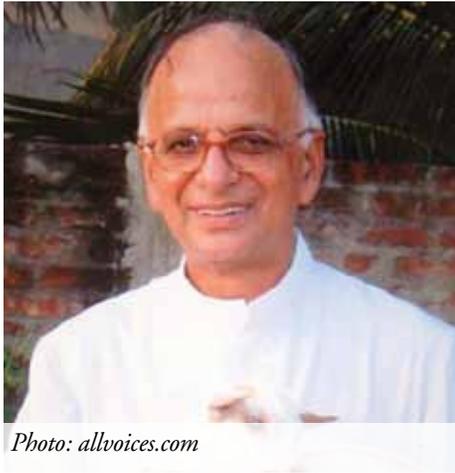


Photo: allvoices.com

... and when they found him they said, 'Everybody is looking for you.' (Mk 1:37)

Archbishop Menampampil's reflection on New Evangelization originally appeared in the June 2012 edition of *Omnis Terra*

magazine, of the International Secretariat of the Pontifical Missionary Union. It is our hope that you will find these observations to be both informative and stimulating in terms of your personal reflections on the evangelical nature of the Church today and on your role in its implementation. What follows below is an edited version, highlighting some of the key points raised by His Grace.

Please note that all words and phrases in bold emphasis are from the original text.

We are not successful even in the handing on of the Faith to our children, let alone offering it to new communities. The number of agnostics and atheists is on the increase. Cynics multiply. Time has come for us to pause a while and reflect ... and explore ways of beginning all over again from the beginning. The foundations of the Faith must be re-laid. It is very difficult for persons who grew up in a Christian culture to begin again from the basics. But it has become necessary today. The whole world has become a missionary territory.

If addressing the Gospel to people of different schools of thought within the same civilization is hard enough, offering the gift to persons of different cultures will be even more difficult. The distances are far greater. The Greeks looked for wisdom and the Jews for miracles (1 Cor 1:22).

The West may feel drawn to what is logical and analytical; the East to what is mystical and integrative. The South may be exuberant and enthusiastic and (the) North intuitive and interpretive. Different people may find different things meaningful.... Thus, diverse cultures and worldviews call for diverse strategies.

Is adapting to differences compromising on orthodoxy? That is not what I am suggesting. Recognition of the reality of a pluralistic society in which we are compelled to live today is

not conceding to relativism.

In showing respect for other ways of thinking and acting we are doing nothing else than trying to walk in the footsteps of Paul who said, "When working with the gentiles, I live like the gentiles. This does not mean I don't obey God's law ... among the weak in faith **I become like one of them**, in order to win them. So I become all things to all men, that I may save some of them by whatever means are possible". (1 Cor 9:21-22) It is appreciation of others that wins us their attention and offers us an opportunity to make a new breakthrough.

(However), it is a mistake to absolutize an experience in one period of history or a line of thought in one region of the world. Life, after all, opens to us a wide universe with the need of continuous learning and accommodation to each other. Another mistake is **irrelevance**. We keep answering questions that were asked generations ago and which no one is asking today. And we have no answers for the questions that are worrying the present generation. Another mistake still is to keep giving ultimate answers to those who are asking functional questions or giving functional answers to those in search of ultimate questions. In today's society, long-term and **ultimate interests** are marginalized by the immediate, the **functional, and the utilitarian**. The skill consists in establishing a relationship between the two.

Christian faith traditionally has kept itself close to the **central concerns of humanity** like justice and peace, honesty and uprightness, sincerity and authenticity, solidarity and generosity, respect for life and concern for the poor, love and forgiveness,



Masaccio's St. Paul
Photo - wikimedia.org



Lunch program in Peru photo courtesy Fr. Bill Kornacker.

mercy, concern for nature, and a profound sense of responsibility for human affairs.

If at any time we notice that the expressions of Christian faith have taken us away from these central concerns, we are on uncertain tracks. All the more, if they are in opposition. The entire prophetic tradition

and the core teaching of Jesus himself were against **empty religion**, which distorted the laws of justice and fairness and defeated good sense. Even with the best theologies, ideologies, structures, laws, traditions, devotions and services, if we divert too far from these central concerns, we are moving on unsure grounds, and we must rethink and return.

New evangelization is about giving answers to intelligent and penetrating questions, co searching and co-discovering the deeper dimensions of (the) ancient wisdoms and immortal truths, until Christ's face is revealed. When tragedies like the destruction of the twin towers or the tsunami take place, it will not be to sports heroes or film stars that society turns in search of meaning, but to prophets and spiritual guides who can bring the stunning words of Jesus to context; who can



"who can open our inner eye and enable us to behold the light" –photo-wikimedia.org

open our inner eye and enable us to behold the light.

As we begin to take New Evangelization seriously, let me place before you (a) few cautions. The first danger is that the entire New Evangelization programme ends up in mere **rhetoric**: impressive themes and vocabulary, with no follow-up, no consequence!

A second danger is that we make of the Church an eminently successful **dealer in religious goods and services**: fascinating advertisements, thrilling programmes, stunning event ... no depth, no God encounter! This is in keeping with the consumerist culture of the day. We need to give more of spiritual content to our glamorous events.

A third danger is that the renewal of the Church confines itself to functional and pragmatic dimensions (office-decisions, budgets, policies, rituals, media), forgetting the spiritual dimension of the church and strengthening of its **authenticity, integrity, consistency, genuine goodness, and credibility** that will give her convincing power.



A fourth danger is that in our eagerness for novelty we concentrate on the rare and glamorous (lectures, seminars, study sessions, symposia), and neglect those pastoral activities that have proven their worth, like family visits and personal encounter, being **fully available** for dialogue and pastoral services right round the year. It is the pastor who takes trouble for his flock that will reveal the face of Christ to those who seek Him.

Let us gather up courage and announce the Good News with confidence. History has its rhythms. When problems reach a climax, solutions are proximate. Should we be surprised that the strategies for the redemption of the humankind are to be developed and realized through your efforts and mine? An invitation remains.



The Monument of landing place of Francisco de Xavier in Shimonoseki - photo Twilight2640 - CCBYSA 3.0 wikimedia.org

Remembering the priest who brought a Madonna to Japan

This is an edited version of a story originally published at ucanews.com on 12/27/2012.



Bishop Yoshinao Otsuka – photo, - ucanews Diocesan directory

to the long departed Frenchman is their shared faith and a statue of the Virgin Mary.

Catholic Diocese of St. Claude – map – Diocèses _ (France), wikimedia.org

Several years before Japan reopened its borders that had been closed to foreigners for generations, Fr Robin had heard stories of the Japanese martyrs and was so moved that he formed a prayer group to pray that missionaries might again enter the country.

Last August, Bishop Yoshinao Otsuka of Kyoto paid a visit to the town of Digna in the French diocese of Saint-Claude. His destination was the long-forgotten grave of one Father Leon Robin of Saint-Claude (1802—1882).

The reason for the visit and what joins the modern day Japanese prelate

In one of these stories, it was said that when St. Francis Xavier traveled to Japan in 1549, he carried with him an image of the Blessed Virgin and prayed earnestly that a church might be erected at Kyoto, the capital at the time.

Hundreds of years later, after Japan had reopened its doors to foreigners, Fr Robin used that image of Mary as a model and had a set of six statues of her cradling the Christ Child on her lap cast in Rome, where they received a blessing from Pope Pius IX.

In 1866, one of these six statues was sent to Fr Prudence Seraphin-Barthelemy Girard, a priest with the Paris Foreign Mission stationed in Yokohama, with the hope that St Francis Xavier's wish for a church in Kyoto might yet become a reality.



Giappone - Diocesi di Kyoto

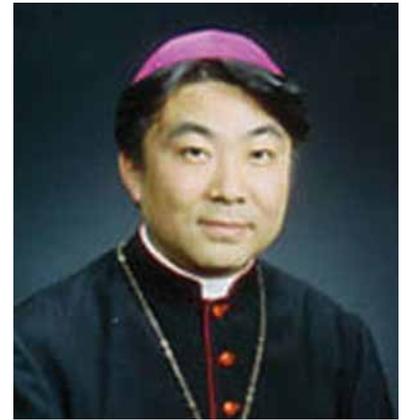


Miyako no Seibo – Image source: kyoto.catholic.jp

This statue is today known in Japanese as the Miyako no Seibo, or “Madonna of the Capital.”

A church Fr Girard had built in Yokohama in 1862 was the first erected in Japan after the opening of the country, and it was this church that became the temporary home of the Miyako no Seibo. All was not well for Christianity in Japan, however, as the year 1867 saw the beginning of a

During the memorial Mass, Bishop Masahiro Umemura of Yokohama made special note of Fr Robin and the other French missionaries who worked so fervently for the re-evangelization of Japan. He lamented the fact that their accomplishments are all but forgotten these days, but spoke of his deep gratitude, saying, “This is the true face of evangelization.”



Bishop Masahiro Umemura – photo – ucanews Diocesan directory

new period of persecution.

In 1873, another priest took the Miyako no Seibo to the outskirts of Kyoto, where he buried it on a small hill overlooking the city. That same year, the persecution was lifted in a de facto, tacit, recognition of Christianity; it was dug up in 1879 and now stands in Kawaramachi Cathedral in Kyoto.

Recently, a replica of the statue was sent from Kyoto back to France, bringing the Miyako no Seibo full circle, back to the land of Fr Robin, the man responsible for its creation.

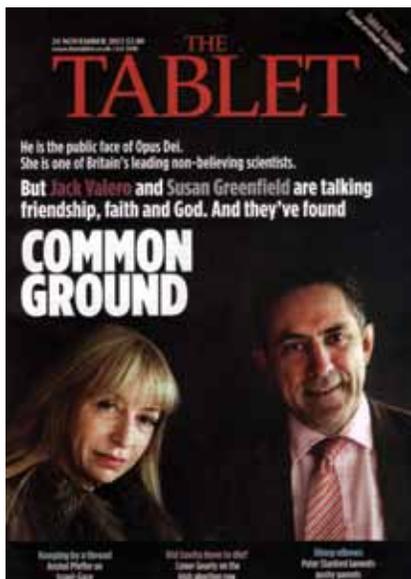
“The grave site was right next to the town church,” said Bishop Otsuka after his visit this year. “But these days, even the locals there have forgotten him. They didn’t even know where the grave was, so they had to search for it.”

The year 2012 was the 150th anniversary of the construction of Fr Girard’s first church in Yokohama. Commemorative events organized by the local diocese and held there in November attracted at least 4,000 people.



Kawaramachen Cathedral - photo-Collin Grady CCBYSA 2.0

What Science Can't Answer



How do I project to others the message of Christ? In what ways am I representative of the Gospel message in my daily interactions with others? We live in a society where the Christian message is increasingly marginalized and even worse, held in ridicule by many. The old certainties are gone. Spreading the Faith is not the same task it was 50 years ago. Now, more than ever, it is imperative that each of us

take our beliefs with us into the supermarkets, the offices, the bus terminals, the streets and show others what it means to be Catholic and Christian. "What Science Can't Answer" presents an "outsider's", in this case Susan Greenfield, perspective on faith and Christianity. She is representative of many others also searching for meaning and clarity, but not necessarily that provided by her chosen field. As you read, take note of what does have an impact on her with regards to the observations she makes on the Catholic faith.

Susan Greenfield is one of Britain's best-known scientists, often mentioned in the same breath as atheists like Richard Dawkins. But slowly she has been learning more about religious belief through pilgrimages and conversations with her friend, Jack Valero, the public face of Opus Dei. Here she talks to him about her 'zigzag journey'.

This article is reprinted with permission from The Tablet, November 24, 2012.

Baroness (Susan) Greenfield should, by all accounts, be another public atheist. Her parents had no time for religion, she espouses no religious creed and she is one of Britain's most influential scientists. A leading neuroscientist at Oxford University, running state-of-the-art research into Parkinson's and Alzheimer's diseases, she was the first female director of the Royal Institution of Great Britain. She travels the world lecturing on modern technology's impact on child develop-

ment, holds more than 30 honorary degrees, has written six best-selling scientific books and numerous articles, and her first novel will appear in the spring. As a major scientific celebrity, she has sometimes been linked by journalists with the likes of Dawkins and co. But, ever the rebel, she insists she is neither an atheist, nor even an agnostic.

I first met her in 2005, after one of my closest friends, John, and his wife became her Oxford neighbours. Two years later, John was diagnosed with the most aggressive form of brain tumour, but despite being given only months to live, he is still with us. Just before receiving his traumatic bouts of radio- and chemotherapy, he returned to the Catholic Church. Greenfield watched with close interest and, in November 2008, she asked to accompany John, his wife, another friend and myself when we took John to Lourdes. Soon after that, at the suggestion of another friend, she went to Ampleforth Abbey for a retreat. Over the years, I have been privileged to share something of the inner journey of a woman with a piercingly honest and well trained mind, who feels drawn to faith but is not yet comfortable there.

Greenfield, 62, is the daughter of a Jewish father and an Anglican mother, whose marriage scandalised both families: her grandmothers never spoke because of their different faiths. Her father was an atheist and her mother went to church rarely. At her secondary school, children were divided along prayer lines: "You had Protestant prayers, Catholic prayers, Jewish prayers, and then there was a mixed bag where everyone else



Baroness Greenfield with Jack Valero – photo: Mykel Nicolaou

went: the Jehovah's Witnesses and the Buddhists, and so on," she recalls. "I had to go to the ragbag one, where we read poems. That was my religious upbringing – or lack of it."

On a scale of 0 to 10, where 10 is very religious and 0 is very anti-, her parents, she says, would have been "about a four", whereas "I'd be a seven."

She rejects what she calls "scientism", namely "this unshakeable belief, which is as strong as any religious belief, that science is the only approach to understanding the world around you." She says agnostic is "too rigid a definition" to apply to herself: "I have already a hazy feel for the spiritual, or the non-material, and that's why I wouldn't call myself an agnostic. Also, as I understand it, an agnostic is waiting for proof, and I am not waiting for proof ... I don't think the issue is about proving there is something there or not. I couldn't prove I love my mother, but I know I do."

Greenfield was irritated to see Richard Dawkins recently cross-examine the Chief Rabbi, Dr Jonathan Sacks, on television about whether the Red Sea actually parted. "That's neither here nor there," she says. "The issue is more the experience that people have that is above and beyond the material. And that, for me, is what seems to be at the heart of people who believe in God: they don't believe in God because someone's proved it to them or because they believe literally in the sea parting. [What matters is] you are having an experience that you know is the case, it's unshakeable. That's what faith is."

And she knows she hasn't got it – yet. She is waiting "for something further, for some kind of steer or feel, because I have a sense of the spiritual, and glimmers of it from time to time, but I cannot say that I am believer in the sense of subscribing to any particular religion".

She sees the effect faith has had in our friend John. "I cannot imagine someone who did not have a faith having that cheerfulness and resilience and lack of self-pity. It might be that people without faith could also endure for a long period of time but it is this almost sense of privilege that I think they sometimes express." Similarly, she says of another Catholic friend that he "speaks as though he just knows that God is there, and you don't have to ask for proof and you don't have to prove it to others, you just know it".

Greenfield occasionally prays. "I say the Lord's Prayer if I'm frightened or worried, but it's rattled off almost, by heart. I don't quite know if I'm doing it right, or what the purpose is, but it's something that I feel comfort in doing." For example, during a recent health scare which required her to have some



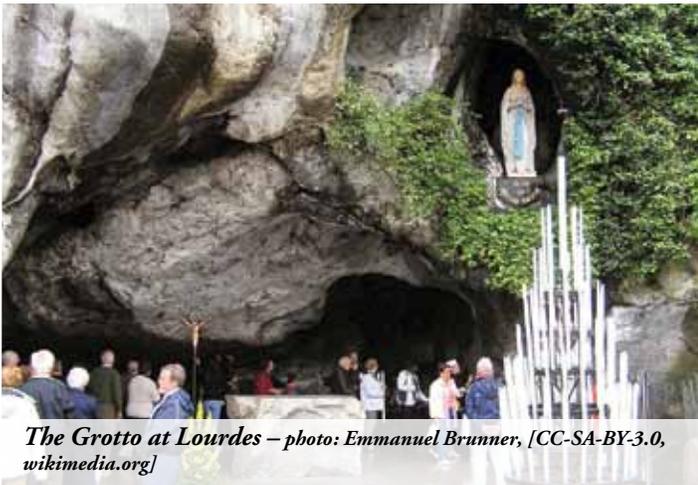
The promenade outside the grotto – photo: Fabio Alessandro Locati, [CC-SA-BY-3.0, wikimedia.org]

tests, she made a pact: "If it's all all right, I promise after I've come out of the hospital, that I'll find the nearest church and I'll go and say thank you. And I did do that."

It was not a great religious experience: there was heavy drilling outside the central Oxford church where she went to keep her side of the bargain. But "it seemed right to do it", and praying "feels natural to do". Yet daily Scripture reading, as some have urged her to do, does not sit well with her. Nor does worship. "I went to Mass with some friends some time ago, and it was something one did for an hour. It didn't feel ..." (her voice trails off, before coming suddenly back, with excitement) "... whereas when I went to Lourdes it did feel different." Lourdes was Greenfield's idea. "We were having a drink on a Saturday night in John's house. And I said, I don't know why, 'We should go.'"

"I was bracing myself for all the kitsch stuff. You know, Bernadette in the snow, the Pope on a key ring and so on. But honestly. I didn't mind that, and in a sense it came as a bit of a relief, that there were all these normal, kind of low-grade souvenirs which introduced a light-hearted and fun element to what would otherwise have been a serious and grave place."

The experience was intense. "The fact that sick people were the norm, and we – the able-bodied people, the healthy ones – we were in the minority. The other thing that struck me was that everyone was a volunteer and people came from all over the world. The amount of love and altruism and removal from all the normal things ... it was the world turned upside down: the sickness being normal, no one working for money, people being kind to each other rather than witty or hostile, or defensive ... so that impressed me hugely."



The Grotto at Lourdes – photo: Emmanuel Brunner, [CC-SA-BY-3.0, wikimedia.org]

The most moving moment for Greenfield came at the Grotto, where, she recalls, her group went to the front because John was in a wheelchair. “The priest had given me a rosary with a crucifix – which I still carry around with me – and I didn’t know how to say the Hail Mary, so you gave it to me on your mobile, and I was reading it off the mobile, hoping that people would not think that I was being so tactless as to be text messaging at this most sacred place.” She remembers a “lady with long plaits saying over and over again in French the Hail Mary”, and that being “rather mesmerising, very special”.

Greenfield rejects the idea that science and religion are in contradiction as “intellectually bankrupt” and cites scientists such as Francis Collins, the American who mapped the genome and who “speaks freely and openly, and very happily about his faith, about being a Christian”. When she chatted to him recently at Davos, she saw “someone who knows God is there”, who “does not have to go through lots of sophistry”.

It is obvious to Greenfield that there is a spiritual dimension and that “much of what you do in science is not harsh computational type logic, it’s not algorithmic”. She quotes the physicist Niels Bohr, who once said to a student: “You’re not thinking, you’re just being logical.” In the “human toolkit”, she says, “there is more common sense than algorithm”. Most science is not approached with a ruthless logic but “a

hunch and an instinct”. Science, she says, “can answer some questions but not others, such as the meaning of life, or what is love. Of course, someone can say that love is when you have a rise in the hormone oxytocin, but that’s just rather silly ... The subjective feeling you have does not trump or invalidate what’s going on physically in the body. On the other hand, just because what you can point to correlates to what is going on in the body, does not detract from the subjective state.” The fact that both dimensions exist “has very big implications for accountability”.

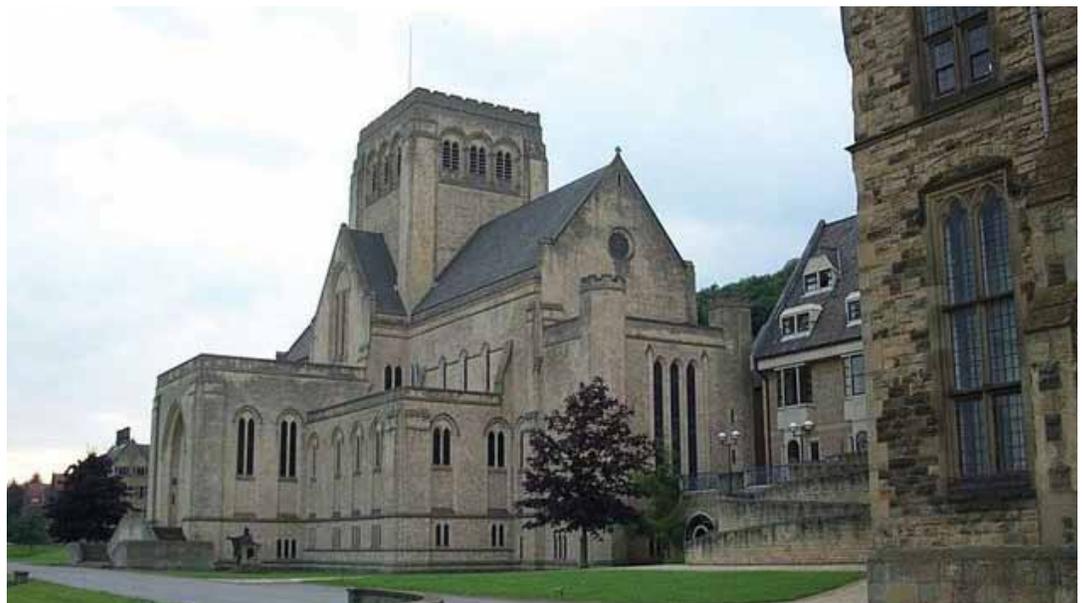
Of her three-day retreat at Ampleforth, Greenfield says: “I felt a need to go. I’d only been to church in my whole life probably between 10 and 20 times. So I didn’t know about the services,

I didn’t know how to cross myself, or anything. And I said to the monk who had been put in charge of me, ‘I truly don’t know why I’m here,’ and he didn’t seem to mind that. He gave up a huge amount of time walking with me and talking. And so it was a very peaceful time.”

Perhaps, I suggest, all this means that God is looking for her. “I know,” she laughs. “But he’s playing hide-and-seek at the moment.”

There was “no great revelation” at the time, she says. “It was only after I got back that I just felt so super-charged and super-detoxed ... amazing, really bursting with energy, and positive. And it was not just that I had three days in the country.” She was struck by how quickly the time passed, despite barely looking at her mobile phone and being without computers or a television. Perhaps, I suggest, all this means that God is looking for her. “I know,” she laughs. “But he’s playing hide-and-seek at the moment.”

Jack Valero is communications director for Opus Dei in Britain and co-founder of Catholic Voices



Ampleforth Abbey – photo: Elliott Simpson, [CC-SA-BY-2.0, wikimedia.org]

MONGOLIA:

20 years of Catholic Presence

Ulan Batar - It is a young Church, entrusting its future to young people and families. The Catholic community in Mongolia now numbers over 800 faithful.

In his comments on the anniversary, His Exc. Mgr. Wenceslao Padilla, Apostolic Prefect stated, "The celebration of the 20 years since the birth of the first mission in Mongolia reminds us that we are called ... to strengthen our contribution to the social, developmental, educational and spiritual works catering to the needs of the people. As disciples of Jesus Christ, the Incarnate Word, we cannot live without taking into consideration the concrete situation of society, doing works of charity and acts of mercy".

Among the special activities planned for the 20th anniversary, there is the celebration of "Mongolian Youth Day" followed by a solemn Mass at the Cathedral of Ulaan Baatar, in the presence of civil and religious authorities. Moreover, during the twentieth anniversary, the parishes in Mongolia will increase from 4 to 5, with the elevation of the Church "Mary Mother of Mercy" to the status of parish. The celebrations will culminate on October 7, 2012, the day on which all the faithful Mongolian Catholics are invited to plant a tree in memory of the first 20 years of the Church.

Until the fall of the communist regime in 1991 - recalls the Prefect - there were no Catholics in Mongolia. Then, in 1992, with the institution of a new Constitution which recognized religious freedom, the first mission was established and diplomatic relations between Mongolia and the Holy See were begun. In that year three pioneer missionaries arrived in the country. They rebuilt houses of worship and helped the population, renewing the process of evangelization. By 2006 there were about 600 Catholics, including 350 native Mongolians. Today, there are 81 religious in the country representing 22 different nationalities and 13 religious communities. Baptized, practising Catholics now

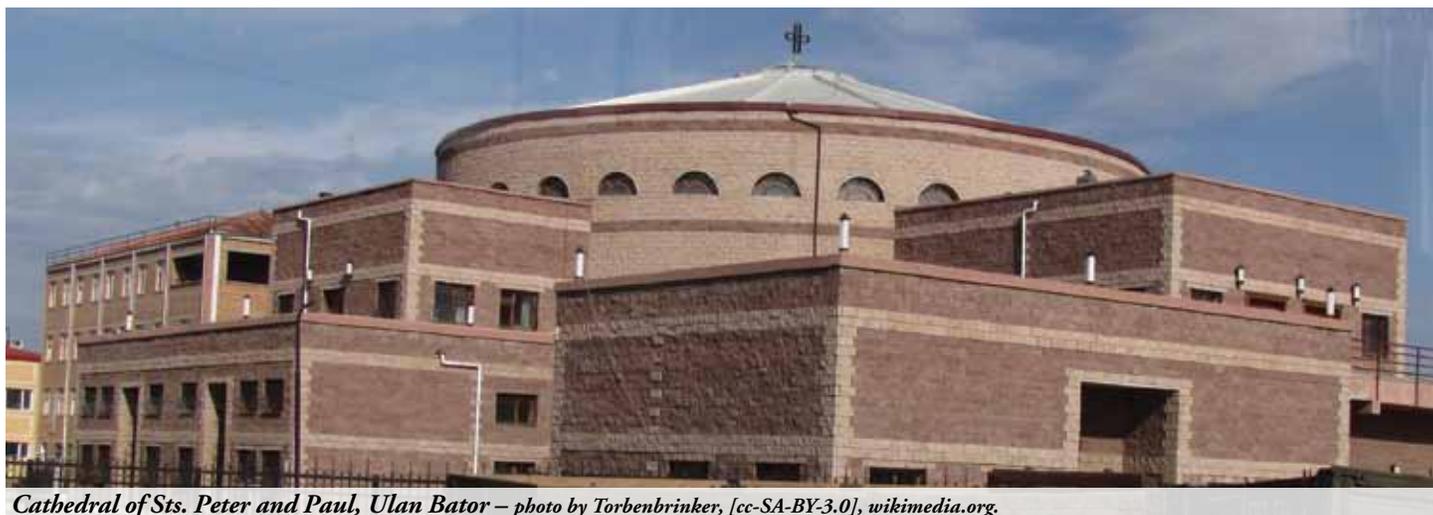


map, wikimedia.org.

number 835 while many others are preparing for their baptism. Two young Mongolians are now studying in South Korea, at the Catholic University in Daejeon, pursuing the path for priesthood.

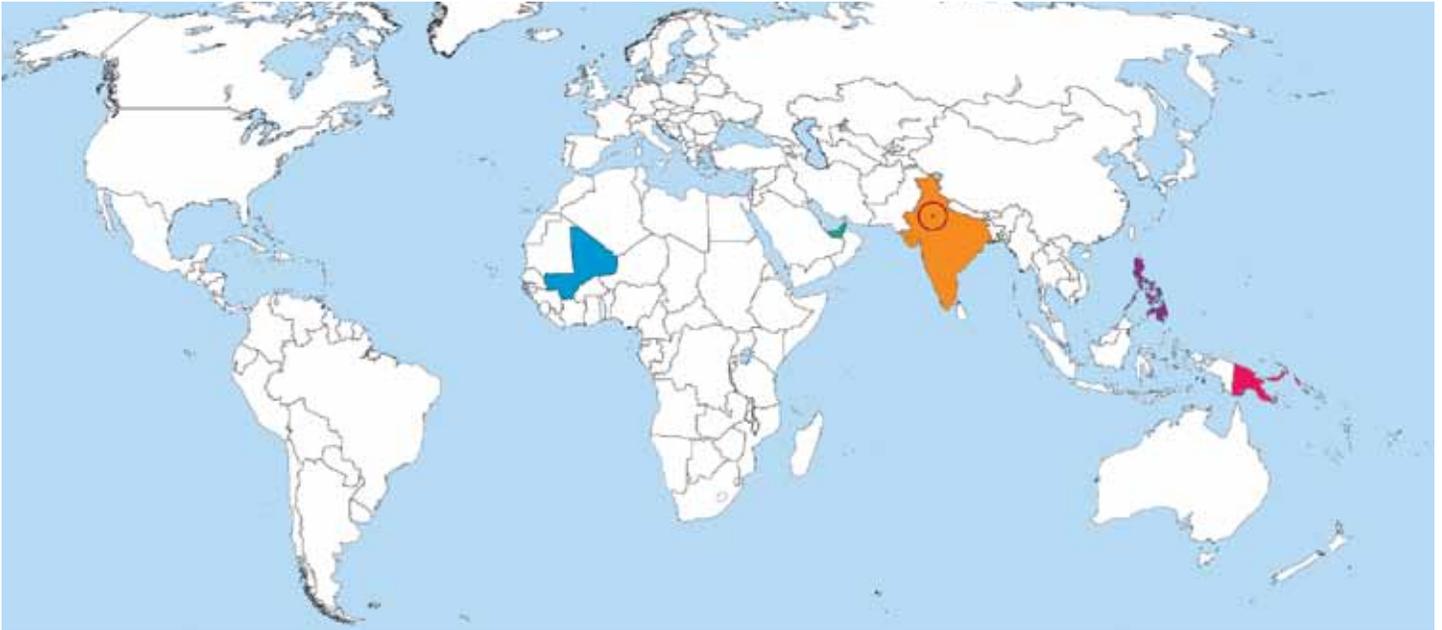
With the increase of church personnel (missionaries and local collaborators), pastoral, social, developmental, educational, charitable and humanitarian works have flourished. The country's first cathedral, dedicated to Saints Peter and Paul, opened in 2003 in the capitol city, Ulan Batar.

The Catholic mission now has 2 Centers for street children, a home for the elderly, 2 Montessori kindergartens, 2 primary schools, and a center for handicapped children, as well as a technical school. It has also created 3 libraries with study rooms and computer facilities, a hostel for university students, equipped with modern facilities, and various centers for youth activities. Two farms, a doctor's office and a clinic are in full operation, with programs that help rural communities. *An edited version, taken from reports by Agenzia Fides 07/07/2012.*



Cathedral of Sts. Peter and Paul, Ulan Bator – photo by Torbenbrinker, [cc-SA-BY-3.0], wikimedia.org.

Across the Globe



■ MALI - Catholic culture is threatened

Bamako - The entire Catholic culture will be in danger if the conflict in Mali drags on because; although churches are still intact, people are becoming afraid to go and worship.

This is according to Catholic Bishop Augustin Traore of Segou, whose diocese lies in the path of Islamic insurgents. "People are hiding in their homes, unable to venture out. Until the havoc caused by the French bombing ends and the hostilities cease, no one will be in a position to know what has happened," he said after noting that the country's churches could face destruction if conflict continues.

Bishop Traore said relations between Christians and Mali's Muslim majority remained "good at local level" and had not been damaged by the Islamist insurgency, adding that people of all faiths were "vigorously committed" to maintaining the country's secular way of life.

According to Traore, people are deeply anxious and longing for this turbulence to end, and needs are great everywhere and they include securing places of worship"

Ethnic Tuareg rebels seeking to establish a separate state overran most of northern Mali during 2012, operating alongside the al-Qaida linked Islamist group Ansar Eddine.

In a July statement, the country's Catholic bishops' conference and the Association of Protestant Churches deplored the robbing of Christian families and occupation of churches in Tombouctou, Gao and other northern towns.

The Catholic Church has six dioceses and makes up less than 2 percent of Mali's predominantly Muslim population of 15.8 million. This is an edited version, taken from CISA 01/18/2013 ease forgive us. We are one community, one people, and one nation. Your safety is ours. You are under our responsibility." Most of the

stolen items - otherwise destined for the black market - were returned, leading to great joy and relief on behalf of everyone involved. Fr. Georges served Arabic coffee to the guests and many other people in the neighborhood joined the convivial moment. The locals celebrated by offering cakes in the street. This was truly a happy ending to what was a bleak story in the beginning. *An edited version, taken from Agenzia Fides 11/22/2012.*

■ OCEANIA/PAPUA NEW GUINEA - Blessed Peter To Rot

Rabaul – Last July 7, 2012 marked the 100th anniversary of the birth of the Blessed Peter To Rot, a layman and martyr. To mark the occasion, the Bishop of Rabaul, Mgr. Francesco Panfilo, SDB issued a pastoral letter entitled "The Blessed To Rot, a sample of family life." In the text of the letter, the Bishop pointed out: "The sanctity of this simple and humble layman and reminds all the faithful Catholics of Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands, the importance of the institution of the family and Christian marriage."

The Bishop hopes that "the celebrations in honor of the Blessed bring(s) more holiness into our families and especially, for young people to discover the importance of the sacrament of marriage." Pope Benedict XVI sent Cardinal Joseph Zen of Hong Kong to Papua New Guinea as his special envoy for the celebration of the centenary, remembering that the Blessed "gave his life to Christ as a husband and father."

Peter To Rot was a catechist from Papua New Guinea who was killed in 1945 for his opposition to polygamy. During the Second World War, his village, Rakunai, was occupied by the Japanese who subsequently imprisoned all missionaries. Peter To Rot assumed responsibility for the spiritual life of his fellow citizens. When the authorities legalized polygamy, Blessed Peter refused it. He was killed with an injection in July 1945 by a Japanese doctor. He is the first blessed of Papua, recognized so on January 17, 1995 by John Paul II. *An edited version, taken from Agenzia Fides 07/07/2012.*

■ The Philippines - Friar serves 'the least of these'

On Sunday mornings, Franciscan Priest Pete Montallana says Mass before a crowd of bedraggled residents in an open space amid ramshackle homes. Montallana is no outsider; he himself lives in a 1,500-peso-per-month room (\$36) in the middle of this Quezon City slum. His bathroom is shared with dozens of others. Montallana belongs to the Orders of Friar Minor whose charism is to live with the poor.

"... not every priest is made for this kind of life. It's a grace, a gift from God," says Montallana in his room on the second level of a makeshift, three-story hut. His mission is simple: to nourish the faith of these people and to help them realize their rights as urban poor settlers.

In December last year, the priest gathered the people for Simbang Gabi, the nine-day dawn Mass that culminates on Christmas Day. He also held collections for families and, in between, gave seminars on human rights. Out of these gatherings emerged a basic ecclesial community of leaders who meet every Saturday at Montallana's cramped room to reflect on the people's struggles in relation to the Gospel. "They're not that 'solid' yet, but they'll grow in time," says Montallana.

"There is so much humanity here. And this is the mystery in lives of the urban poor," says the Franciscan priest. Montallana says he experienced a kind of "epiphany" in November last year after a fire razed a slum community not far from his convent.

"I was listless. How could I sleep comfortably in the convent? The fire became a challenge for me to focus on the poor," he says. He asked for a one-year leave from his superiors to rejoin the informal settlers and live among the people. Montallana doesn't spend all his time in the slums. He goes to the mountains and work with indigenous peoples who are fighting for their land. "Among the poor, I see God himself," he says. *An edited version, taken from a report by Juan Fontejon for ucanews.com 11/19/2012.*

■ INDIA - Mangalore mission in Africa presented "in real time" thanks to the web

Mangalore - The Diocese of Mangalore in the Indian state of Karnataka has sent two new priests to share the gift of faith in Tanzania. This mission will be constantly monitored through the website: www.mangaloreafricamission.org allowing the two missionaries to remain in contact and to share their experiences in real time with their diocese of origin. The website will provide information on the development of the African mission. The web thus becomes an instrument for fostering communion between believers of different continents.

On November 14, Fr. Alwyn D'Souza, former National Director of the Youth Pastoral, and Fr. Ronald Pinto, who was curate in the parish of Madanthyar, received the solemn missionary mandate for the new missionary venture; they left and arrived the following day in the Diocese of Same, in Tanzania. His Exc. Mgr. Aloysius Paul D'Souza, Bishop of Mangalore, explained why this region was chosen. "Given that there is a shortage of priests in that area, the Bishop of Same had asked us for help. Our priests leave as authentic apostles of Christ and go to places and persons unknown even without knowing the local language. It is Christ that inspires and

will guide them in this new path, that of faith and proclamation."

The Diocese of Same has had a mission of the Ursuline Franciscan Sisters of Mangalore in place since 2004. The Ursuline mission now has thirty nuns, seven convents, three houses and a formation center in three dioceses in Tanzania. In addition, the Carmelite fathers of Karnataka have been working with rural missions and in the field of education in Tanzania and South Africa for 30 years and currently have 27 priests in Tanzania. *An edited version, taken from Agenzia Fides 11/19/2012.*

■ India - Defiant worshipers hold Sunday service in Maharashtra

New Delhi - Christians in the western Indian state of Maharashtra held a Sunday service surrounded by police protection yesterday (Jan. 13) following death threats and an economic boycott allegedly imposed by hard-line Hindus. Up to yesterday, no services had been held at the church following a series of death threats that prompted Christians in the village to attend a church 20 kms away.

About 25 people attended the service in a house church in Manor village in Palghar district two weeks after a mob of at least 400 Hindus reportedly attacked a Sunday congregation and desecrated copies of the Bible.

Recently, Christian villagers had also been subjected to a campaign of repression reportedly initiated by Hindutva, a loose affiliation of right-wing Hindu groups. Local Christians had been prevented from buying firewood and drawing water from wells in the town. Fortunately, these practices have now been called off.

Fundamentalists say they have received orders to prevent Christian practices in the village ahead of Maharashtra state elections next year. *An edited version, taken from an original report by Ritu Sharma, ucanews.com 01/14/2013.*

■ UNITED ARAB EMIRATES - Young Catholics gather to mark the Year of Faith in the Arabian Peninsula

Abu Dhabi - More than 1,500 young Catholics in the Middle East met in Abu Dhabi, UAE, last November for three days of reflection and prayer. The theme of the conference, taken from the Gospel of Mark, was "Everything is possible for him who believes" (Mark 9:23). The conference was organized by the Apostolic Vicariate of Arabia and North and South Arabia and, was held at St Joseph's Cathedral in Abu Dhabi. Young Catholics living in the two Apostolic Vicariates of Arabia are mainly immigrants from different countries in the world (mostly from the Philippines, India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Syria, Lebanon and African nations) who are in the Arabian Peninsula to work.

On presenting the event, Mgr. Paul Hinder, stated that "The future of a community lies in the young. Through our Youth Conference of the Arabian Peninsula, we intend to strengthen the faith of our young people who, in most cases, cannot participate in meetings such as the World Youth Day." Mgr. Camillo Ballin added that "The youth of our territories are often isolated in their experience of faith, in the circumstances of the region in which they reside. We want to try to answer the many questions they have about their faith.." *An edited version, taken from Agenzia Fides 11/07/2012.*

Society of Saint Peter the Apostle



She flew into my arms as I was leaving the hospital, this tall, beautiful stranger who clutched me so desperately. She fingered the crucifix on her necklace and with her other hand she reached out and touched mine. Bursting into tears she sobbed, “My mother just died”..... and we stood united in grief and belief, oblivious to the people milling about in that busy hospital lobby.

This “God Moment” burst upon me as it did the disciples of Emmaus. Our mutual recognition of Christ transcended all barriers of propriety or political correctness in an immediate understanding that we shared Jesus in a very special way. For those few precious seconds we recognised the Lord in the breaking of her heart in sorrow and loss. Like Jesus’ followers on the way to Emmaus our “eyes were opened and (we) recognised Him”. Luke 24

Pope Benedict has called us to a Year of Faith and encouraged us to a new evangelisation – a sharing of our faith in Jesus. Of course this means we will have documents to read, meetings to attend, pamphlets to issue and posters to put up. These help us to know about God but the moving of our hearts and minds to love of Jesus comes when we share our experience of Him. Perhaps it is just as simple and sublime as that.

The disciples on the road to Emmaus walked and talked with Jesus without knowing who He was but it was in the breaking of the bread that “their eyes were opened and they recognized him.” Luke 24 We believe that it is in this sharing of the Body and Blood of Jesus in the celebration of the Eucharist that we encounter the Christ in a powerful way and having priests among us to celebrate the Mass is a treasure which we wish for the entire world. Our support of seminarians in war-torn and impoverished countries ensures that Christians there also have the opportunity to share the love of Jesus in the study of the Scriptures and the Breaking of the Bread. Your generosity in praying for them and supporting them financially ensures that this gift is available to all who long for it throughout the world.

And so all of us around the globe, strengthened by the Word of God in the Scriptures, supported by our Catholic community and invigorated each time we participate in the Mass, are able

to open hearts to Jesus in all whom we meet. Pope Benedict has encouraged us to share Jesus in this Year of Faith as “more than a historical figure”. He is alive among us: He matters in our lives: He

is so important to us that we cannot stop sharing our joy in Him. Not many of us are called to preach and teach, but we are all called to live in such a way that people around us may comment – “look how these Christians love one another!” Tertullian 200 AD.

Thank you for all and enjoy Jesus in this Year of Faith!

Sr. Christa Mary

“eyes were opened and (we) recognised Him”

- Luke 24 -

“look how these Christians love one another!”

- Tertullian 200 AD -

Bringing Jesus to the People

The education and support of seminarians and novices ensures that they are equipped with the knowledge, skills, and dedication to live their vocation to the full. The Society of St. Peter the Apostle does just that for those in need throughout the developing Catholic world. It maintains and supports seminaries, helps with the costs of living, aids the provision of enthusiastic educators. It provides libraries, books, and spiritual material. It is sometimes the one important lifeline that ensures that a seminarian becomes a priest. Thank you for helping us: every gift is appreciated.

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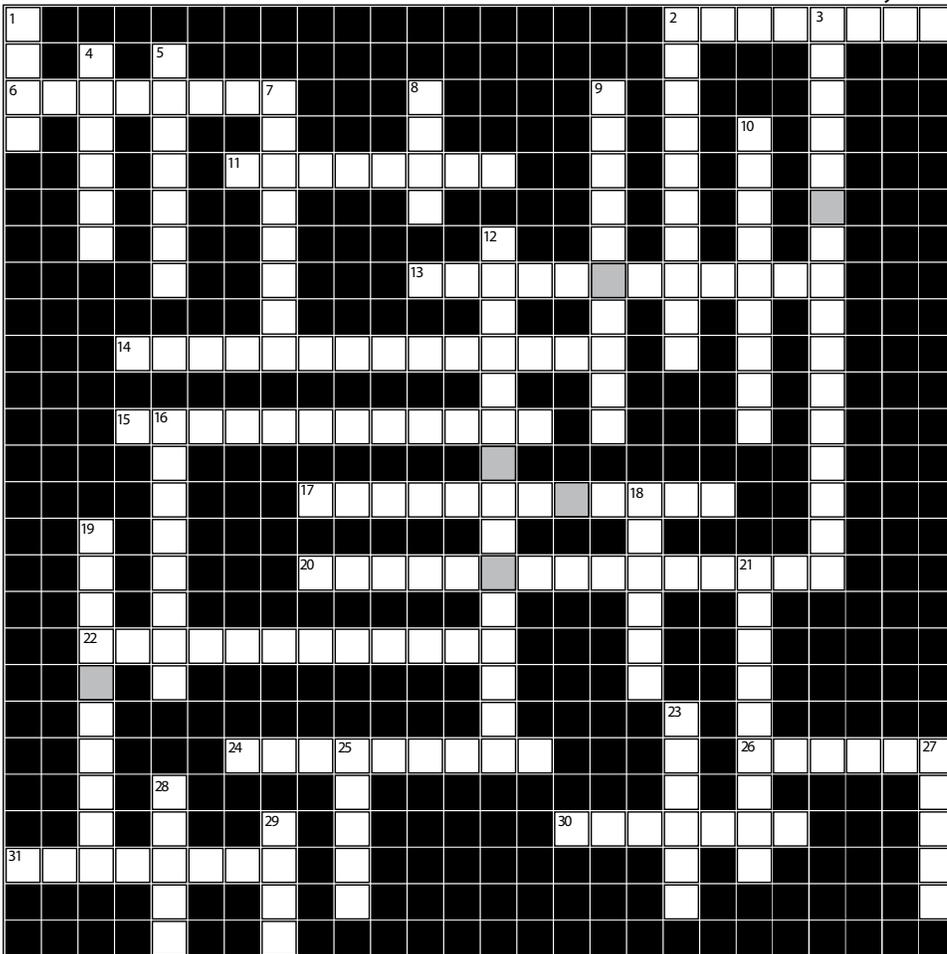
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Ontario M1T 3G5

Missions Today Crossword

Spring 2013

Paul Coady



- 20. catechist and newly canonized saint of the Philippines
- 22. area of science concerned with the brain
- 24. the editor's favourite weed?
- 26. "So I become all _____ to all men"
- 30. the patron saint of a minor seminary in Bangladesh
- 31. Asian country celebrating 20 years of Catholic presence

Down

- 1. St. Francis Xavier carried an icon of this holy person
- 2. Abbey in England known for being a retreat centre
- 3. one of Britain's best known scientists
- 4. this order came to the Marianas as missionaries
- 5. shrine in France known for its miracles of healing
- 7. indigenous people of the Marianas Islands
- 8. largest island in the Marianas archipelago
- 9. noted physicist
- 10. "_____ is looking for you"
- 12. Madonna of the Capital
- 16. retired, but maintaining an honorary title
- 18. President of the Philippines
- 19. priest behind the creation of six statues of Mary
- 21. a belief that science is the only approach to understanding the world
- 23. ethnic nomadic tribe common to desert regions of north Africa
- 25. the capital city of Bangladesh
- 27. middle-eastern country suffering from a vicious civil war
- 28. capital of Japan at the time of St. Francis Xavier
- 29. west African nation struggling to control terrorists

Here's our first puzzle for 2013. I hope it fits well with your morning coffee or tea.

Missions Today Crossword Solution on page 23

Across

- 2. one who doesn't deny the existence of God, but who also doesn't believe it is possible to know God
- 6. the art of oratory
- 11. a favourite game of the boys at the seminary
- 13. an integral part of the boys' education at the seminary
- 14. the rector of the minor seminary
- 15. martyred catechist of Papua New Guinea
- 17. a nine day period of preparation leading up to Christmas Day in the Philippines



Photo: Jacek Bogdan, [CC-BY-3.0], wikimedia.org

Waiting on God

Waiting on God is restorative. It is one of the tools God uses to remake us into what we were designed to be in the beginning. Yet I don't like to wait, and I still struggle to wait well. How about you? The next time God calls you to wait, don't let your mind go to the dentist's office. Picture in your mind the nimble and skilled fingers of a potter who is putting pressure on the clay right where it's needed, so that it will take on the beauty that is its potential. And with this picture in mind, give thanks for the very moment that once would have driven you crazy. - *Paul David Tripp (from, A Shelter in the Time of Storm, Inter-varsity Press, 2009)*

Holy Childhood Association

Canadian Children Helping Children in 2012

Greetings to all members of the Holy Childhood Association in Canada!

Because of your efforts on behalf of the children of the world in 2012, you were able to help HCA Canada provide assistance to over 58,000 children through 47 different projects in 8 countries. The world map below shows you these countries and some of the projects that you helped support. The children of the world wish you peace and include you in their prayers each and every day.



In Ghana, you helped build classrooms and provide school supplies.

In Liberia, you helped give poor children and orphans school supplies and health care.

In South Africa, you helped build schools and medical clinics, food, clothing and medicines.

The teachers and students of St. Martin's School in Thunder Bay, Ontario hope all of their fellow HCA friends have had a happy start to 2013. Together they raised \$500.00 for the projects of the Holy Childhood Association. Children around the world thank you for your time, efforts and prayers.

The handsome "young" man in the middle? That's none other than Father Luigi Filippini, the singing/jogging parish priest who serves St. Martin's School.



Would you like to see
YOUR HCA group featured on this page?
Send along your photos and story to:
Holy Childhood Association
2219 Kennedy Road
Toronto, ON M1T 3G5
Or
Email us at hca@missionsocieties.ca

In Haiti, you helped provide medical care and schooling for deaf children

In India, you helped build an orphanage as well as providing school supplies, food, clothing and medicines for poor

and disabled children.

In Bangladesh, you helped provide food, clothing, school uniforms and supplies, medicines and education for needy children

In Sri Lanka, you provided religion classes, a new nursery school, medicines, food, clothing and school supplies.

Holy Childhood at Holy Cross Elementary School

Written by: Grade Seven students Domenika Scaglione and Kayla V.

All over North America, schools are participating in the Holy Childhood program. Holy Childhood is an organization where children help other children from all over the world to make sure that they are meeting their basic needs. The members of Holy Cross Elementary School in Burnaby B.C. are proud supporters of this organization. We help donate money to countries such as Haiti, Nigeria, Africa, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, India, and Liberia. Each year, our school holds an enrollment liturgy for all students to sign up and be a member of Holy Childhood. This past year, we invited special guests,



During the Paraliturgy, the grade five students performed a dance while singing a song which reminds us that all children in the world are special.



Holy Cross students signing up to be part of the Holy Childhood Association: "Children helping Children".

Sister Mary Ellen and Mrs. Doreen Dominguez, who are the Holy Childhood coordinators in Vancouver B.C. to attend the Liturgy. The para liturgy was hosted by the Grade 5 students. New students were introduced to this special club just for children. Students brought up objects that remind us of all the things we take for granted. For example, someone brought up a baby doll tucked in a blanket to symbolize that we have wonderful parents who care for us. Also, someone brought up a pillow and a blanket to represent that we have a warm bed to sleep in at night. At the end, the Grade 5 students presented a song that told us about all of the different

qualities that we possess. Before all of the students left, collection boxes were handed out to each person to keep all of their donations. Throughout the school year, the Student Council of Holy Cross host many activities to raise money for Holy Childhood. For instance, in October, there was a Penny Carnival, where students were to dress up and play old-fashioned carnival games. In December, a Christmas Craft Fair was sponsored by the Catholic Women's league. The grade sevens also took part in this by selling two types of hand-made crafts. All of the proceeds went to Holy Childhood and from those two events; we managed to raise over \$1,200. In May, the Student Council members of Holy Cross participate in a Mass celebrated by the Archbishop with children from all different schools in Vancouver. After the Mass, the student council members from Holy Cross presented a cheque to the Holy Childhood Association on behalf of the whole school. This year, the theme for all Catholic Schools is "Open Wide the Door of Faith". Holy Cross has opened wide the doors, but not just to faith, but to sharing with the needy. It doesn't take much to make a difference. Even the smallest of things count. \$1.00 can save twenty children from tuberculosis in Bangladesh. Together we can make the world a better place! Let us all keep in our hearts the words of Mother Teresa, "Not all of us can do great things. But we can do small things with great love."



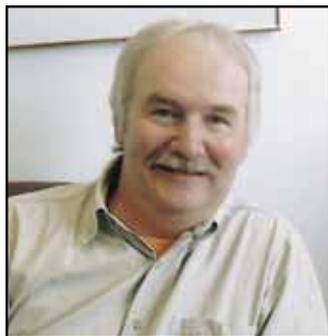
Grade seven students proudly selling the crafts they made, with their classmates, to support HCA.



The grade five students hosted the HCA Enrollment Paraliturg in October.

Mission Conversations with the Editor

Setting out on the road...



For as long as I can remember, I have had a close relationship with **Taraxacum officinale**. Some of my earliest memories are of warm spring afternoons and playing with my Dinky toys in the muddy grass of the backyard. Scattered throughout the yard were the bright yellow flowers of the taraxacum officinale. I would pick some, and

bring them in to the kitchen where I would take a small drinking glass and fill it with water. Flower arrangement completed, I would present them to my mother who always accepted the offering with grace. With a feeling of importance and accomplishment I would go back outside to continue my pre-school reveries.

My father would view the taraxacum officinale as nothing more than a nuisance weed. Weekends would be spent laboriously digging them out of the lawn on hands and knees. When they became too prolific, Dad would resort to the old standby, DDT, spraying the lawn while I waited patiently for him to finish so I could return to my play.

When I became a father, with a lawn and children of my own, the cycle of life repeated itself. As I had done, so too did my children. And like my father before, I attacked the bitter weed relentlessly. Not with DDT of course; times and knowledge had changed. No, I would get down on hands and knees with a double-pronged tool purchased from the local hardware store and tackle each weed, root by root. However, I also remember our daughter sitting in the middle of a field that was covered like a blanket in yellow flowers. It is a pleasant memory since it is forever connected with trips to visit with my brother. And so each encounter would bring me back to those earlier times, when having a managed lawn wasn't the point that mattered. Pleasing my mother was.

Throughout the ages, taraxacum officinale has played a role in our history. On the night of the first Passover, it was one of the 'bitter herbs' used on the meat eaten by the Jews of Egypt.

Today, the bright green early shoots of the taraxacum officinale is sought for salads and it is recognized as a source of vitamins and minerals. Others find the plant useful as an anti-inflammatory agent

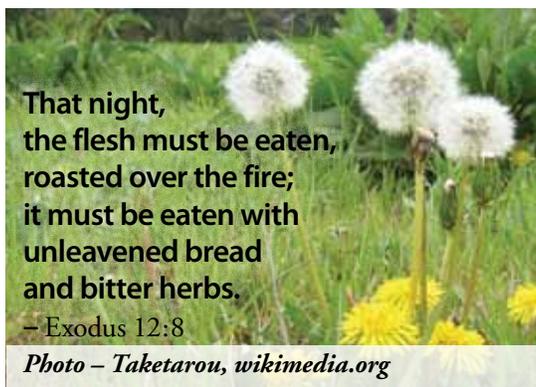
So, what is it to be: noxious weed or multi-useful plant? Individual perspective and personal experience come into play when attempting to answer this question, as they do with most decisions we make in life. Even the simplest things can take on a complexity that at first glance, first thought, seems unimaginable. Our relationships with one another are even more complex. We get into trouble when we limit our perceptions of one another to only one

viewpoint or one observation. The old axiom, 'first impressions are lasting' in some cases may be true, but it is a dangerous rule to follow rigidly. This especially applies to our encounters with those we do not know. It requires a certain level of self-confidence and trust in order for such encounters to go beyond the superficial realm of, "hello, what do you think of this weather we're having?" Opening up to others does require a kind of bravery. It is much like the parent trying to

convince the child to try the broccoli. The parent knows it is good for the child, but before the child will put it into his mouth, he needs to either trust the parent or have a level of bravery equal to the challenge of tasting the green stuff on the fork. Once overcome, the broccoli becomes easier to eat each time after. (At least, I think so!)

So as spring approaches in your part of the country, and your front lawns and backyards welcome back taraxacum officinale, spend a few moments contemplating your perceptions of both it and the people in your life. Noxious weeds or useful plants?.

Paul Coady
Editor



**That night,
the flesh must be eaten,
roasted over the fire;
it must be eaten with
unleavened bread
and bitter herbs.**

– Exodus 12:8

Photo – Taketarou, wikimedia.org

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

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Don't forget to visit our web-site.

www.missionsocieties.ca offers: access to feature stories from our magazine, Missions Today, child activities and news from Holy Childhood, and direct links to World Mission TV (RomanCatholicTelevision) where you can find stories of mission work from across the globe in documentary formats complete with teacher/student guides and activities. Our site also makes it easy to donate in a safe and secure way. Visit us today!

In Remembrance

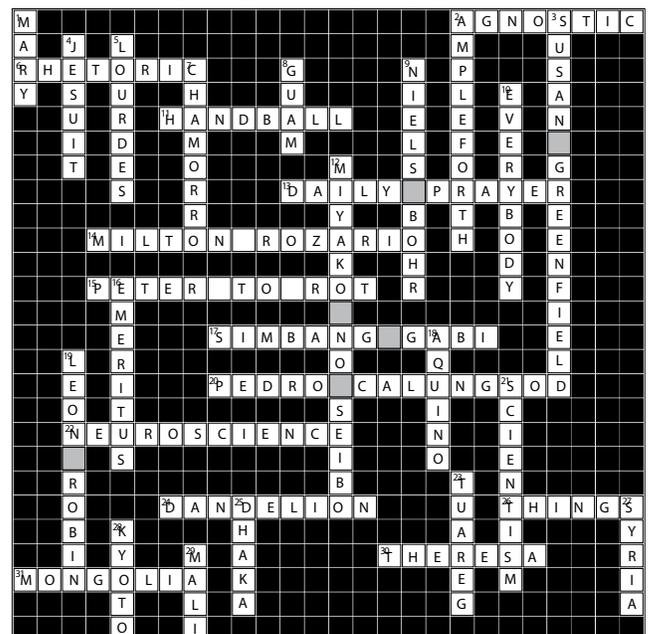
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