



MISSIONS TODAY

VOL 77, NO. 2

Spring 2019



Project Report: Growing the Faith in the Solomon Islands



Also in this Issue:

Kenya: A Sister's Journey

Extraordinary Mission Month 2019

Vietnam Lay Missionaries

and more.

The Society for the Propagation of the Faith

National Director's Message



Happy New Year to each of you! A new year always brings with it feelings of renewed hope. The break that the Christmas season brings gives us time to reflect on our past and look to the future with fresh energy. The year 2019 promises to be an eventful one for the universal Church. Both “Extraordinary Missionary Month October 2019” and the 100th Anniversary of Pope Benedict XV Apostolic Letter “Maximum Illud” are prominent this year. In addition, World Youth Day was held in Panama, and in October, the Amazonia Synod in Amazon will take place. In this issue I am please to introduce the “**Extraordinary Missionary Month October 2019.**”

During the Angelus Prayer on World Mission Sunday, October 22, 2017, Pope Francis announced to the whole Church his intention to designate an extraordinary mission month for October 2019. Besides being the great purpose of the Pontifical Mission Societies, this Missionary Month is an occasion for the Church to renew its missionary zeal. The Extraordinary missionary Month falls on the centenary of the “**Maximum Illud**”, an Apostolic Letter by Pope Benedict XV (November 30th 1919). For the history of the mission, this document marks a decisive border for two reasons: it separated the work of evangelization from the work of colonization and insisted on the creation of a clergy and an autochthonous hierarchy in mission lands. The Apostolic Letter “Maximum Illud”, according to Pope Francis, called for transcending national boundaries and bearing witness, with prophetic spirit and evangelical boldness, to God’s saving will through the church’s universal mission. The commitment to personal and communal conversion to Jesus Christ crucified, risen and alive in his Church will renew the ardour and passion for witnessing to the world the Gospel of life and paschal joy (Luke 24:46-49) through both proclamation and demonstration of Christian living.

Towards the end of the missionary encyclical, “**Redemptoris Missio**”, St Pope John Paul II wrote, “I see the dawning of a new missionary age, which will become a radiant day bearing an abundant harvest, if all Christians, missionaries and young Churches in particular, respond with generosity and holiness to the calls and challenges of our time”(No.92). These are the prophetic words that announced a “Karios”, a time of grace, a privileged moment for the mission.

The theme of the Extraordinary Missionary Month contains in itself the essential elements to be taken into account in planning and living this initiative. We received divine life during our bap-

tism and we become prophets, that is, announcers of the mystery of Christ sent by Him. Christ who sent us is also the essential content of the mission: The church does not transmit her own message, but transmits what she has received from Christ; that is, her own person.

This year, the Extraordinary missionary Month will be an opportunity to “renew the missionary zeal, and introduce the missionary dimension in ordinary pastoral care” according to Archbishop Dal Toso, President of Pontifical Mission Societies. Vatican II and Ad gentes – established the call of mission as the call to all who are baptized. The theme “Baptized and Sent” emphasizes that being sent on mission is a call that comes with baptism for all the baptized. Thus mission means being sent for salvation that brings about the conversation of both the one who is sent and the one who receives the message: In Christ, our life is a mission! We are mission, because we are God’s love poured out, God’s holiness created in his own image. Mission then, is our own growth in holiness and that of the world, beginning with creation (Eph. 1:3-6). The Missionary dimension of our baptism, thus, becomes a witness of holiness that bestows life and beauty on world.” (Pope Francis address to the National Directors of Pontifical Mission Societies, June 1, 2018).

On another note, we welcome Sister Juliana Tanye, f.m.m. a Franciscan Missionaries of Mary who becomes National Secretary for Holy Childhood Association. Sr. Juliana brings to us her experience as a missionary and her work as secretary to a Bishop in the missions.

Wishing you God’s continued strength and blessings.

Fr. Alex Osei, CSSp
National Director

The Pope’s Monthly Prayer Intentions:

MARCH – For Christian Communities: That Christian communities, especially those who are persecuted, feel that they are close to Christ and have their rights respected.

April – For Doctors and Humanitarian Collaborators: For doctors and their humanitarian collaborators in war zones, who risk their lives to save the lives of others.

May – For the Church in Africa: That the Church in Africa, through the commitment of its members, may be the seed of unity among her peoples and a sign of hope for this continent.

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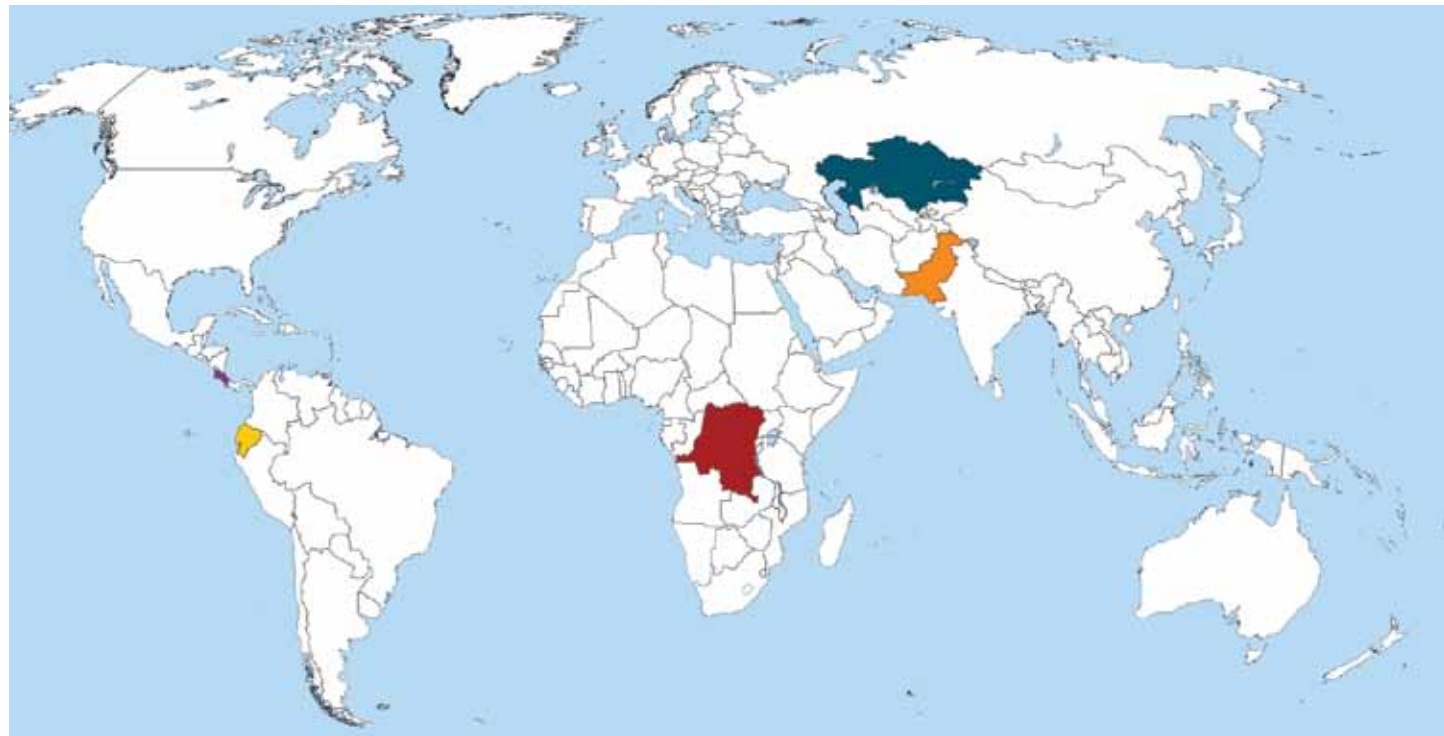
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Across the Globe



■ ECUADOR - Young people who evangelize young people: leadership training workshops

Azogues - “Our apostolate is the mission Ad Gentes, in particular the evangelization of young people”, says Juan Manuel Rubín de Celis Alba, national coordinator of the “Movimiento Juventud Católica México” (JUCAMÉX). The organization is currently in the diocese of Azogues, Ecuador, from 17 April to 17 May, to lead the first training seminar on leadership for the youth of parish communities, movements and schools of the diocese.

The methodology followed in the workshops involves four phases, explained the coordinator. “First of all young people discover the importance of taking care of themselves in order to improve themselves as leaders, then they work on how we approach others and God. The third phase is to see how to create projects for young people, set goals, have dreams, learn how to delegate, work as a team. Finally we comment on the characteristics of the good leader. “In addition, young people, as a final work of the course”, prepare projects for their parish groups and present them to all participants”, adds Juan Manuel, who concludes that in his opinion this methodology “has greatly helped the youth of the diocese of Azogues”.

JUCAMÉX is the Catholic youth movement of Mexico characterized by a missionary spirit: its purpose is to proclaim the Gospel to the whole world, with the guidance of the Holy Spirit, according to the motto: “Christ sends us and the world needs us”. *An edited version taken from Agenzia Fides, 05/14/2018.*

■ DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO - St. Anthony of Padua School in Boma rescues abandoned children

Kinshasa - In the city of Boma, Fr. Roger Pholo is one of the priests who have dedicated themselves to providing education for needy children. His vehicle is St. Antony of Padua school of which he is the co-founder.

The school is located in the district of Sindi, a shanty town in the city of Boma. Hundreds of families from all over the province have settled, hoping to find work in the city. The children of this district are forced to walk for more than 5 km to go to school. As a result, many children do not attend school. “When Fr. Roger Pholo started the pastoral work in our neighborhood; he could not remain indifferent to our misery. There was no electricity or running water. There was not even a school, where hundreds of school-age children live. So he decided to do something concrete to save our children’s future”, says a parent.

Fr. Roger brought together neighbours and some friends to create the Association of the Works for Disadvantaged Children (Œuvres pour l’enfance défavorisée OED). Thanks to OED, the St. Anthony of Padua school opened its doors in September 2016 with 4 primary level classes. The other classes followed during subsequent school years.

Today the school has 10 classes and 225 pupils. A pump installed in the school’s gardens provides water to the neighborhood and children can do their homework and play in the school building gardens even after sunset.

But Father Roger is far from satisfied: “I want to offer these children a decent learning environment, some buildings are unplastered and without floors. All this work is necessary to ensure a dignified infrastructure for the good of our children”. *An edited version, taken from Agenzia Fides, 04/19/2018.*

■ COSTA RICA – Young People: Transforming reality in the light of the Gospel

San Jose - “Young people are a treasure for our people, a wealth that generates joy, hope, the ability to dream, to show sensitivity and solidarity for those who suffer. In these difficult times, God calls each one by name, so that he may be the protagonist in the transformation of these realities, a transformation in the light of the Gospel and of the magisterium of the Church”. This statement was issued by the leaders of the Latin American Youth Pastoral at the conclusion of the XIII Youth Pastoral Regional Meeting for Mexico-Central America in the city of San Jose, in Costa Rica.

Delegations from Mexico, Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica and Panama participated in the meeting with the aim of reflecting, in communion with the universal Church, on youth Pastoral in the region.

“We are thrilled - the note continues - because the Church has set its sights on young people and promotes spaces for participation so that young people, with their dynamism, will know how to renew structures and pastoral action”.

In launching an appeal to Bishops, priests, laity, educators, and in particular to the families themselves, the delegates were asked to “revitalize the accompaniment of vocational discernment and of the young”. At the same time they invited “to prepare themselves for the next World Youth Day, a moment of grace that the Church gives to our region”.

In view of this event, on March 15, the registration period was inaugurated for World Youth Day, which will be held in Panama from 22 to 27 January 2019. The Youth Festival will seek to unite young people from around the world by sharing their artistic and religious talents and experiences of faith and life. *This is an edited version of the original report found in Agenzia Fides, 03/17/2018.*

■ PAKISTAN - Seven new Franciscan priests for the Church in Pakistan

Lahore - Friar Francis Nadeem OFM Cap, Provincial of the Capuchin Friars in Pakistan announced the ordination to the priesthood of seven young friars. “It is a great joy for us, Franciscans in Pakistan and the whole Church in this country to celebrate the priestly ordination of seven deacon Capuchin friars of our Custody. We entrust them to God that they may be faithful followers of Christ, of the Church and servants of the Pakistani people, close to the people without any discrimination of religion, culture or ethnic origin

The celebration took place on Saturday 30 November in the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart in Lahore and the celebrant was Archbishop Sebastian Francis Shaw “Thanks to God’s grace the number of Capuchin friars is growing. We ask everyone to pray for the community of capuchin friars who bring to Pakistan a message of brotherhood, service of the poor and commitment to furthering justice and peace in the country;” said Fr. Francis Nadeem. “These young priests - he said – are a gift to enable the local Church to be ever more dedicated to pastoral service, to the celebration of the sacraments and the announcement of the Gospel in our nation. Fr. Inayat Bernard, Rector of the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart in Lahore, and also director of the Santa Maria minor seminary in Lahore stated that since 2015 a total of 30 seminarians have been ordained priests. More young men studying at the National Institute of Theology in Karachi and at the St Francis Xavier Major Seminary in Lahore are the promise of a rosy future for the Catholic Church in Pakistan”, says Fr. Inayat, recalling also “numerous vocations to the female consecrated life: a sign which instils confidence and hope despite difficulties”. *An edited version, taken from Agenzia Fides 12/03/2018.*

■ KAZAKHSTAN - “The beauty of being small” in the Kazakh Church

Almaty - “When I think about the Kazakh Catholics, I am always amazed at the greatness of their faith. They do not have ancient traditions and Catholic roots, but I see a profound devotion to the Church, to the Pope, to the Eucharist, to the Rosary, to every aspect of our faith”. This is what Mgr. Josè Louis Mumbiela Serra, Bishop of the diocese of the Holy Trinity of Almaty says to Agenzia Fides. The Bishop reports: “There are faithful who walk many miles to take part in the Eucharistic celebration every day. There is great enthusiasm and it is also very good for us as pastors, because we do not feel alone”.

“In Kazakhstan - he continues - we Catholics represent a very low percentage, less than 1%. To cite an evangelical metaphor, I would say that the Kazakh Catholics are like a grain of salt: invisible in food, but able to change its flavor”. And he adds: “I always tell our faithful that the wealth of Kazakhstan is not oil, it is not gas or energy: the progress of Kazakhstan depends on what this Christian community can be. We are few, but we must be aware of the importance of our presence”.

According to Mgr. Mumbiela, “this is the beauty of being small: we are few, we do not have great pastoral programs, and we do what we can and what Providence grants us”.

According to official data provided by the Kazakh Ministry of Foreign Affairs, more than 17 million inhabitants of the country, about 26% are Christians, and 1% of whom are Catholic. In Kazakhstan there are 4 Catholic dioceses, for a total of 70 parishes. There are 91 priests in the nation, including 61 diocesan and 30 religious. *An edited version, taken from Agenzia Fides, 10/20/2018.*

Project Report: The Diocese of Gizo

Western Province, Solomon Islands



Bishop Luciano Capelli, SDB

The Diocese of Gizo is one of three Dioceses in the Solomon Islands. It was formed from the Vicariates of North and South Solomons in the early 1960s. It encompasses three Provinces: Choiseul, Santa Isabel, and the Western Province. It spreads over an area of 12,600 square kilometres, populated by 129,000 people, of whom approximately 14,000 are Catholics. There are seven Parishes, 12 priests, 12 Dominican Sisters, and eight brothers (four Marist, two Dominican and two Diocese). The current head of the diocese is Bishop Luciano Capelli, SDB, who was ordained Bishop for the diocese in 2007.

There are a few larger settlements. Gizo, a town of 3,500, is the headquarters of the Diocese and is an administrative centre for the Western Province. Noro, the official overseas port for the area, has a fish cannery and other light industry. At Ringi Cove is one of the few sustainable logging industries in the Solomons, and Taro, the Provincial Centre for Choiseul also is a small administrative centre. Otherwise, most of the people of this area live in small coastal villages, accessible only by outboard powered canoes.

In 1956 the first group of Australian Dominicans arrived to assume responsibility for the Diocese of Gizo which had been created on the 15th of November, 1956 Most priests of the Diocese are locally trained Dominicans and Diocesan clergy from the local communities. Dominican nuns also help to serve the needs of the local communities, with contributions as teachers, nurses, and in a variety of pastoral positions. The early mission was well assisted by many men and women volunteers from other countries like Australia and New Zealand. Now all sisters working in the Diocese are from local communities.

The Diocese consists of seven parishes, all of them spread over several villages. Catechists care for the Catholic needs of these communities on a day to day basis, supported by regular visits from the Parish Priest. Because of the vast distances between these parishes, it is not unusual for Bishop Capelli to visit via boat or airplane. Here is the bishop arriving at one of the out-lying parishes by airplane.



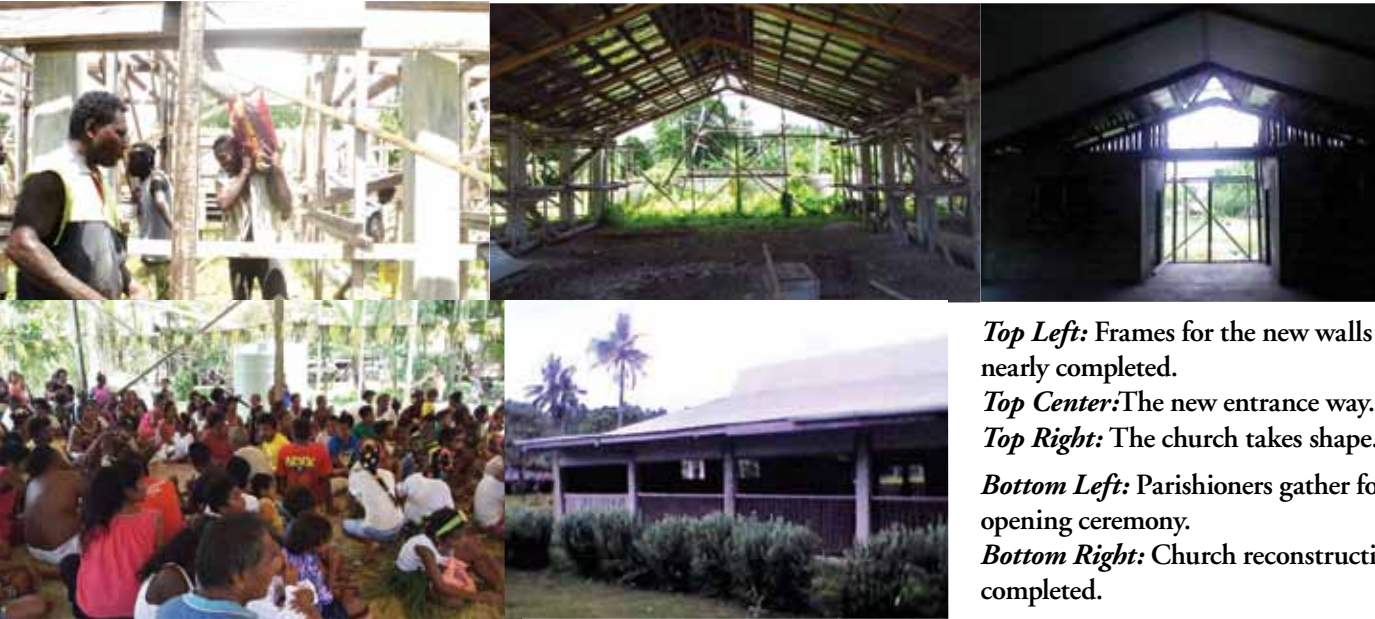
By plane and boat the bishop visits his parishioners

In 2017, the Society for the Propagation of the Faith (Canada) linked with Gizo Diocese to provide much needed financial assistance. We supported:

- the reconstruction of the mission station at Nila, Holy Rosary Parish (\$18,000)
- the reconstruction of the church for migrants at New Mandia Titiana (\$18,000)
- Provision of funds for fuel, important to the evangelical efforts of the catechists and priests, as well as enabling regular liturgical celebrations to occur (\$20,000)
- Provision of funds for the education of new catechists as well as the continued support of existing catechists.(\$15,000)
- Provision of funds for the Diocese's Ordinary Subsidy. This is a fund that supports the day to day running of the Diocese. (\$33,000)

Here is a portfolio of photographs depicting the various projects we supported:

Reconstruction of the Church at New Mandia Titiana



Top Left: Frames for the new walls nearly completed.
*Top Center:*The new entrance way.
Top Right: The church takes shape.
Bottom Left: Parishioners gather for the opening ceremony.
Bottom Right: Church reconstruction is completed.

Reconstruction of the Mission Station at Holy Rosary Parish, Nila



Top Left: Priests' Residence destroyed by fire.
Top Right: Using local resources for the wood framing of the new residence..

Bottom Left: The residence takes shape
Bottom Right: Bishop Capelli blesses the new residence as part of the official opening ceremony.



Top: Female Pastoral Team Members with Bishop Capelli

Bottom: Preparing the new catechists



The Fuel Subsidy: Keeping the Faith “Moving”



Top left: The Diocese’s “mother ship” named Galilee heads out for another round of pastoral visits
Top right: Bishop Capelli on board the “Galilee”. Note the valuable fuel drums surrounding him.

Bottom left: The Galilee delivers a team of visiting doctors providing medical aid to the islanders.
Bottom right: St. Peter’s Parish members arrive home via the Galilee and a local tractor.

Bishop Capelli gratefully acknowledged your efforts on behalf of his diocese in the following letter that accompanied his financial accounting of the distribution of the funds:

CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF GIZO



**+ Luciano Capelli, sdb; Bishop's Residence, PO Box 22
Gizo, Western Province, Solomon Islands**

Rev. Fr. Alex Osei, C.S.Sp, National director Mission Societies
2219 Kennedy Road
Toronto Ontario, Canada M1T 3G5

martedì, 5 febbraio 2019

Dear and Rev, Fr Alex,

I am happy to report to you about all the projects, one by one, which your office and benefactors sponsored in my diocese last year 2017, at Gizo, Western Province of the Solomon Islands, lost in the center south Pacific at the heart of Melanesia.

I am providing here a list of expenses document signed by our administrative officers containing a list of expenses sustained by our diocesan office for this past year's program with and for the catechists

Needless to say that your help and the benefactors' contributions have gone a long way in helping us to rebuild rotten structures, to form personnel and keep the diocese going and even becoming slowly but gradually less dependent on foreign aid. Please thank all benefactors for us and tell them to rest assured of our daily prayers for the intentions dearest to their heart.

Sincerely, on their behalf

+ Luciano Capelli, sdb

Bishop Luciano Capelli, SDB
Gizo Diocese, Solomon Islands



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Bishop Luciano Capelli, SDB

KENYA: A Thousand Miles

in Search of a Religious Vocation: The Story of Prisca Zulu

By Sr. Grace Candiru, MSMMC, ACWECA Communications Coordinator This article appeared in AMECEA Online News on 11/02/2018.

Sr. Prisca Zulu is a Zambian nun who joined the Sisters of Mary Immaculate of Nyeri-Kenya, (SMI) in 2004. On 24th October 2018, the Congregation celebrated the Centenary of its foundation at Mathari. Here in Kenya, the AMECEA Online traces the vocational story of Sr. Zulu who left her home to travel more than a thousand miles to follow her vocation against the wishes of her family and friends. This article has been edited



Sr. Prisca Zulu, SMI (third from right) with members of her congregation. Photo: AMECEA

At the time you joined the Sisters of Mary Immaculate, the Congregation had no community in Zambia. How did you find yourself here thousands of kilometres away from home?

I had never heard of the Sisters of Mary Immaculate of Nyeri (SMI). But when I was still in Zambia I came across a pamphlet of their Congregation in one of our bookshops. At that time, I had visited my sister who is also a nun and in my free time I decided to take a walk to the bookshop where I chanced to find this pamphlet.

I read it and became interested because I had never seen an old African sister before. By the way, their oldest Sister is 106 years old and according to their Mother Superior, Sr. Mary Isaac, the sister still does a bit of gardening and is still able to walk 500 metres to the parish church for morning mass. I felt attracted to the Sisters when I read about their charism which was written in the pamphlet “The Beatitude of purity” it attracted me very much.

Since the pamphlet had contacts, I started communicating with the then vocation promoter, Sr. Agnes Wambui. After communicating with her for some time, she invited me for a ‘Come and see’ session of their Congregation. At that time, I could not come immediately since I was still in college.

But when I completed, I decided to come. It took me three days to reach the Novitiate at Mwea by bus. I set off from Lusaka in Zambia and had a stopover in Dar es Salaam in Tanzania where I spent a night. I had a challenge in communicating with the people as I did not know Kiswahili, the commonly spoken language there. But in Dar es Salaam, I met a Kenyan business woman who was travelling to Kenya and she helped me.

We reached Nairobi on Sunday night and that time I had no Kenyan currency. I had not taken into consideration the fact that I had to use another currency. Fortunately, I had some US dollars. That night the lady took me to one of the night clubs where she helped me to change the dollars and from there she took me somewhere where I spent the night because I did not know anyone.

The following morning, she came for me and took me to the Matatu (minibus) which was to take me to Nyeri with an instruction that, “The moment you see a hospital, know that you have reached Nyeri Town.” So I boarded and after reaching somewhere I thought I had reached and I alighted from the Matatu. But after asking the people around, they told me I was still far from my destination. So I had to board another Matatu which then brought me direct to the Novitiate.

After alighting along the road, I left my bag by the roadside. I did not know that there are robbers; in Zambia it was very rare to be robbed just like that. I went off to the hospital to find out where the Sisters lived. Luckily I met one of the Sisters who worked in the hospital and she asked me a few questions. I showed her the letter which the Superior General had written, inviting me for the ‘Come and See’. On my return from the hospital, I found the bag was gone. They then took me to the novitiate where I spent the night. It was on the following day that I was taken to Mathari, where the Postulancy and the Mother House presently are. And this is how I found myself in SMI.

What was the reaction of your parents when you told them that you wished to join a Congregation in Kenya?

My father thought that I was insane. He told my sister who is a



Sr. Zulu with Pupils from one of the schools run by their congregation

Photo: AMECEA

nun to talk to me. My sister talked to me but I told her that is where I feel my heart belongs because I was really eager to join the Congregation. Even after being talked to, my father was not satisfied and he went on to seek the intervention of the Rector in the seminary where he taught.

The Father Rector talked to me but still I told him that I have decided to go. I came to Kenya and spent some months with the Sisters, and then I was told to go back home. They told me I could still come back if I wanted to join them. I went home and stayed for three months and eventually came back to begin my formation.

What was the greatest cultural shock you encountered considering it was a totally different people, culture, language and food?

The first thing I noticed immediately was the food, which was completely different. Apart from rice whose preparation is almost same, they had ugali whose preparation was totally different from ours. The ugali from here is very hard while ours is very soft.

Then according to our culture as Chewa people, it is very hard to find a lady doing a lot of work like feeding animals; in my culture that work was strictly for men. But when I joined my formation, we used to feed the animals.

It was somehow very challenging but at the same time I used to find fulfilment in that. I realised that there is no difference in what a man can do and what a lady can do and that all of us have got the potential to do something. And when it came to liturgy, I could not understand anything. However, because the rite of Mass is the same, I was able to follow.

What was the general impression of your parents after your return from the three months’ experience of the ‘Come and see’ in Kenya?

The first thing my father asked was, “Are you happy where you are? Of course they had to look at my physical appearance. Their comment was that I had changed and that I had become so different because when I went home I had a head band – this is a

head tie given to young girls who wished to join, or have joined, the Congregation. He questioned if that was what I wanted and when I firmly said ‘Yes’, he let it be.

Honestly, I experienced a lot of discouragement from the other people. They had a lot of reasons for discouraging me from going far away from the family. Others even suggested that I should join the Congregation where my sister is so that I would be near my family. However, because my heart was here, I just felt I had to come back.

Looking at your journey of vocation over the years, what do you find most fulfilling in your vocation?

What I find very fulfilling in my vocation is doing everything for God. If one does things to please people or to meet the expectation of others not God, one can become frustrated. If in the beginning I did not stand firm, if I followed the advice of my family, I would not be here. I would be somewhere else. However, because I was firm in my convictions, I am here up to now and, I really feel happy and fulfilled.

Each and every day, I strive to win heaven, and that really motivates me. Even when I meet challenges, I look up to Jesus as my model. I know am not the first to encounter that challenge, and that is a source of encouragement in my vocation. Also, looking at our Foundresses - the way they joined the Congregation and the challenges they encountered, I realise that what I have undergone is nothing compared to what they experienced.

So what really inspired you to join religious life?

Sisters do have more time for praying compared to others. I wanted to be prayerful. I confirmed this when I visited my sister in the convent and I saw that they were prayerful. By the time I joined, I had already completed my training and I had experienced this first hand that out there, there is no much time for one to pray. Above all, I just had an admiration of Sisters; they really inspired me.

Given the challenges you experienced as you discerned your vocation, what advice can you give to parents whose children want to follow a way of life that is probably different from their dreams?

My advice to parents is that if their son or daughter wants to do something, they should give the child an opportunity and help that child to fulfil their dream, especially if it is not something negative. If that aspiration is from their heart, it will not come to be stopped; it will keep burning. Therefore, as parents, it is their responsibility to nurture the dreams and aspirations of their children. At times, children may have doubts but the encouragement they get from parents may build their confidence.

And to young people, it is important for them to listen to the voice within their heart. There are many things that they may have in their mind but my advice to them is that they listen to the voice within and follow what is in their hearts, and not their minds.

Sometimes in discerning their vocation, young people may look at what the majority are saying and start to follow the path of that majority. They ought not to be afraid to be different and follow a



New Postulants of the Order.

Photo: SMI

path less followed. If that is what their heart wants, let them stand for it; even if in the eyes of the world they may seem foolish, let it be. They need to ask God for that grace of enlightenment and courage.

For more information on the Sisters of Mary Immaculate at Nyeri, visit their web-site at: <https://www.msomi.org/>

In Vietnam’s Central Highlands faith is spreading

Lay ethnic Jarai missionaries spread Catholicism despite state antagonism

This is an edited version of the original story which appeared in ucanews.com 10/17/2018.

Pleiku City, Vietnam

Every Sunday, Paul Rmah Bral and a partner, along with other friends working in pairs, travel around on motorbikes in Vietnam’s Central Highlands region introducing villagers to Catholic values.

Bral, a 60-year-old ethnic Jarai, which is part of a wider group known as Montagnards, who speak a Malayo-Polynesian language. Christianity was introduced to the animist practising Jarai by French Catholic missionaries in the mid-1800s.

Bral and other lay missionaries, known as *giao phu*, have for the past two decades been bringing more villagers into their fold in Kon Tum diocese. *More than 16% of the million persons living in its area are Roman Catholics. The diocese covers an area of 25,728 km² of central Vietnam.



Landscape in Kon Tum Province – Photo: Violetbonmua, Wikimedia.org [cc-sa-by-3.0]

“It is the happiest thing in life to know that God creates and loves us, and to bring His love to our brothers and sisters,” said Bral, a former Vietnamese language teacher who embraced Catholicism in 1995 and was baptized in 2000.



Sanctuary of Kon Tum Cathedral. Photo: Bùi Thị Đào Nguyễn – Wikimedia.org [cc-sa-by-4.0 Int.]

He and dozens of other villagers, including his wife and son, attended weekend catechism classes held at the Redemptorist-run Evangelization Center. Local communist authorities in the Central Highlands, which borders with Cambodia, pressured locals into withdrawing from their study sessions. Bral and his son were forced to do community work and fined when they refused to obey the directive, something that inspired others to resist the harassment.

His wife, Maria Com Khit, said government officials confiscated their hymn books, bibles and musical instruments.

Now Bral himself teaches catechism, and despite government pressure, the practice of Catholicism in his district continues to grow. In one village alone, called Pok, where Khit comes from, the number of faithful has reached 190. They regularly gather to pray in an old 40-square-meter cow shed used as a chapel. Priests from other places visit to provide pastoral services. Because the chapel is so small, many worshipers must stand outside during services.

“Following God means you have to accept tough challenges and even loss of earnings,” Bral said of his dedication to Church pursuits. The couple’s five children are banned from working for local companies or public bodies. In addition, Khit said a rubber company seized two hectares of her farmland.

Government officials had said she and her family would be rewarded with land if they stopped converting other villagers to Catholicism, she added. “I asked them if the dog knew its master. Yes, it does,” they replied. I told them ‘Why don’t you know your boss? God created you.’ Then they left saying nothing.”

Khit said her children, as well as nieces and nephews, serve as catechists, conduct choirs, play the organ at services and participate in Catholic associations.

Bral said Catholicism attracts many people because its values bring them a better life.

People no longer feared ghosts and had mostly abandoned costly practices of animism such as offering animal sacrifices. A couple of years ago, villagers were suffering from severe drought and shamans from other places asked them to sacrifice a white buffalo. But Catholics prayed to God and dug dams to irrigate their farms, leading to many non-Catholics also deciding not to make sacrificial offerings. Bral said in the past people sacrificed poultry and cattle for others who were ill, but now medical treatment was often preferred.

November is still a time for the decorating of tombs and local priests have translated the Bible and other holy books into the Jarai language. “We try our best to bring God’s love to as many people as possible for their benefit,” Bral said, adding he is sustained by his love for telling people about Jesus.

His lay missionary son, Francis Rmal Hyun, 39, said *giao phu* such as him must set a good example to other villagers by practicing their faith in daily life.

“We pledge to follow God until our last breath and believe that He never leaves His children destitute and miserable,” Hyun said.

French Bishop Martial Jannin, the first bishop of the local Church, built the Kontum missionary seminary in the 1930s. The original timber seminary building is still in the compound of the Bishop’s House and displays old maps, musical instruments and tools used by missionaries of the past.

In 2016, Kontum diocese had 330,394 Catholics, including 226,789 members of ethnic groups served by 2,121 *giao phu* lay missionaries.

*Source: catholic hierarchy.org



The Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception – French-built wooden church Photo: Renaud d’Avout d’Auerstaedt, wikimedia.org [cc-sa-by-3.0]

Pontifical Association of the Holy Childhood:

Project Report: ARCHDIOCESE OF TORORO, UGANDA



Most Canadians do not appreciate the value of clean, drinkable water. It is a commodity we take for granted because we rarely, if ever, experience shortages. This is not the case in many parts of the world, including the six schools in this report. There have been water shortages for many years, requiring the staff and students to travel great distances in search of it. The Holy Childhood Association of Canada was pleased to be given the opportunity to assist these schools and their students at developing a water management program that included the purchase of six 10,000 litre tanks to hold both trucked in water and rainfall. From the expressions on the children's faces, it is very obvious how happy they were to receive this gift.



In addition, Holy Childhood Association of Canada provided school supplies, including the desks pictured below and financial support to allow for teacher training and development.

Reverend Father Kisaka Moses, PMS Director for Uganda, writes to the children of HCA Canada his grateful appreciation for our support of the children of Tororo Diocese:

"The main activity carried out by this subsidy was the purchase of water tanks for primary schools in the Archdiocese of Tororo. We managed to cover six schools in the Archdiocese. There are many other schools that would have wished to have the same but the funds could not enable us. The school management committee and the pupils in these schools were very much excited. We delivered the tanks along with some desks to some schools. Some tanks are already in use because we did the installation and we are finishing up the rest. The schools that benefitted from this project are: Nagongera Girls' Primary School, Mulagi Girls Primary School, Gamatui Girls Primary School, Pallisa Girls Primary School, Shikhuyu Primary School and St. Angella Magale Primary School.

This project was received with joy and the children are the direct beneficiaries. The teaching and non-teaching staff also benefit from the same project. We would like to thank the Society of Missionary Holy Childhood for the love shown to our children. The schools that benefitted are now free from the dangers associated with long distances to look for water. The pupils will be able to attend classes without any excuse, especially the girl child (sic). The pupils and the parents are very happy and they pledge their full support towards the solidarity fund. (HCA world-wide Ed.)

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year,

Rev. Fr. Kisaka Moses, for

Most Rev. Dr. Emmanuel Obbo A.J. Bishop of Tororo Diocese

In addition to this subsidy, HCA Canada also provided funding for the purchase of medical supplies for the children, a meals program to provide a healthy lunch, tuition fees for needy students, salaries for the teaching staff, as well as technological support for the schools education programs. 10 schools received 20 desks each, a gift that was given as much attention by the students as were the water tanks. Having a place to write and keep their books was very important to them!



Coming this October...



EXIMIUS MISSIONIS MENSIS
OCTOBER 2019

For the first time, the Universal Church will devote the entire month to our central purpose: Evangelization and Mission.

On an annual basis, our universal Church has called upon all its members to celebrate the central mission and purpose of the Church: evangelization. One Sunday was set aside as the focal point for this celebration, one marked throughout the world by all its churches, parishes and dioceses. On this day, Catholics world-wide gathered to pray, to reflect and to contribute in whatever way possible to this central mission.

Pope Francis I wishes to give this mission even greater prominence in the life of the Church. He has designated October 2019 to be an Extraordinary Mission Month to further emphasize the important role to be played in furthering the missionary nature of the Church by all Catholics. The theme for this Extraordinary Mission Month is:

***“Baptized and sent:
the Church of Christ on mission in the world.”***



Society of Saint Peter the Apostle

WHY SHOULD ONE SUPPORT MISSIONARY WORK?



Father Matthias Kotoka Amuzu

Before I proceed to answer the question above, allow me to define and differentiate two important terms which sometimes are not properly used. They are **Mission** (missionary work) and **Evangelization**. A mission involves a continuous cycle of ongoing evangelization, discipleship and church planting in a different place, country, culture race etc. It involves the learning of the language of that place, culture, race, and the people's behaviour and life style. Evangelism on the other hand is the sharing of the good news with those around us, in our communities.

Now that we understand the meaning of the two words Mission and Evangelization, what is the value in supporting missionary work?

By virtue of our baptism, every baptized Christian is commanded by the Lord Jesus to go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. (Matthew 28:18-20) There are many ways we can be involved with this effort to encourage those who are studying to become priests, religious brothers and sisters, (ministers of the gospel). We can support them by praying for them during their training as well as for missionaries who are already in the field. We may also lend financial support to those who have heeded the call to go. Since they have left everything to carry on with this great commission which is our collective responsibility as Christians, they need our support to survive. They have to eat, they need shelter, they need water to drink, they have to be clothed, and they need a place to worship.

Not every one of us who can go on mission or go from one culture to another culture to do mission or missionary work. And since all of us can not go, and some are willing to be sent on our behalf, it should be our joy and duty to support these people in carrying out the Lord's work. St. Paul says in Romans 10:14-15 that "But they will not ask his help unless they believe in him, and they will not believe in him unless they have heard of him, and they will not hear of him unless they get a preacher, and they

will never have a preacher unless one is sent". This is the reason why we must all be involved in this mission.

The Labourers are Few:

In Matthew 9:37-38, Jesus said, "The harvest is rich, but the labourers are few. Therefore, pray the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into his harvest. This means we are all called to be involved, to play a part in the spreading of the gospel. We read in 1 Corinthians 3:9 that, "We are the labourers together with God". Let us join hands in planting, watering and reaping of the harvest.

Missionaries Depend on Our Support:

Scripture encourage us to pray and support those who offer themselves in carrying the gospel to various parts of the world. In 2 Thessalonians 3:3 we read that "the word of the Lord may run swiftly and be glorified... and that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men; for not all have faith". St. Paul thanked the church in Philippi for their contribution to his care (Philippians 4:10-18). Full time missionaries depend on prayer, encouragement and financial support to meet their spiritual, emotional and physical needs, so that they can give their utmost best to others.

We Have Been Blessed for a Reason

In Luke 12: 48, scripture has it that, "To whom much is given much is required". We have been given life, health, and freedom to read the word of God and to have our ministers preach to us. Many of us enjoy some level of prosperity and to some extent peace and tranquility. There are many of our brethren who are struggling and who are being persecuted for their faith. Some have no chance of hearing the word of God. We are called to help our missionaries reach out to these people. In so doing we will be storing treasures for ourselves in heaven. Let us seek the king-

dom of God and its righteousness first and all other things will be added unto us (Matthew 6:33).

Beloved in Christ, what will be your part in missions today? We should all be interested in sharing the gospel with those around us. And for all those in missionary fields, let us help by supporting their activities with all the blessings we have received from the Lord of the fields. Your support can come by way of prayer, finances, or time and labor for the work of ministry.

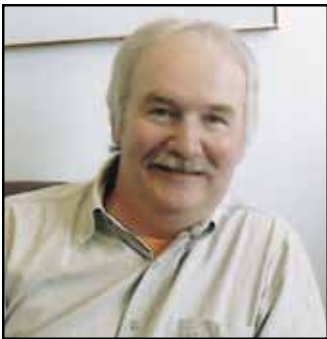
Beloved in Christ,

what will be

your part in

missions today?

The Editor's Point of View



“How does God show his love? With great things? No, he becomes small with gestures of tenderness, goodness”, he said. God stoops low and gets close. “Therefore, there is no need for grand speeches about love, but there is a need for men and women who know how

to do these little things for Jesus, for the Father.”

- Pope Francis, speaking on the feast of the Sacred Heart, Sunday, June 8 2018

I have never been one for grand gestures. If I want to recognize another's accomplishments, I prefer to do it in a small, non obtrusive way. Hallmark wouldn't be able to turn a profit if my way of thinking was universally adopted because anniversary celebrations of all types have no appeal for me. I have never craved the attention of others when it comes to my birthday, my promotion at work, my retirement from work and all the other 'special' occasions we have been taught are supposed to be celebrated.

Do we really need to spend the time and money attending functions we don't really want to attend, to celebrate another's special occasion when that other is someone I hardly know? Think of the many retirement socials you have attended over the years. Now, how many of them were events you really wanted to attend?

Sometimes I wonder if the real reason we practice such social customs is that we know we haven't done much in the line of the small gestures of tenderness and goodness that are presented to us as opportunities each day of our lives. We go because we feel we need to go, not because we want to express our love and esteem for that person at the centre of the celebration.

I think Pope Francis is on to something with his suggestion that God “stoops low and gets close”. It is far better for all of us to try to do the little things more consistently, than to wait around for

the grand opportunity. Case in point: A close friend or relative loses a loved one to cancer. What happens next? All involved are saddened and reach out to express their love and concern for the survivor. Funeral homes are visited. The book of condolence is signed. Now that I've done that, do I need to attend the funeral mass? Perhaps I should. Make my presence known. Extend one final offer to help the grieving in any way they need in the days ahead and then exit to wait for their call. When does that ever happen? Perhaps the neighbour down the road who didn't really know the person who died all that well, but takes the time to come by to shovel the snow for the widow without any show is the better approach. Small gestures. Or the friend from the tennis club who quietly makes a donation in the name of the deceased to the palliative care unit in the hospital where the person spent his final days is another better approach. What about the office associate who many weeks later calls the widow to see how things are going, and suggests she spend Christmas holidays with them so that she is not alone for the first Christmas after the passing of her partner? Another small gesture of tenderness and goodness.

I remember my mother, so many years ago, telling me she didn't want any grand speeches at her funeral. Better to make one's remarks known while the person is alive. Sound advice from a very down-to-earth woman.

Christ's call is actually very easy to follow when one realizes that he wants us to do the little things as often as possible. If we adopt his policy of always considering the other before oneself, then life becomes a little easier to live. Look for the opportunities to practise his message on a daily basis. Let those you encounter each day whether close friend or not know that you are aware of them, whether through a smile, a small favour, or an unexpected kindness.

However, one small caveat... please don't bring me a casserole. I don't like casseroles.

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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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

Our Deceased Donors

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

Wilhelmina Bouwmeester	Langley, BC	Betty Liskauskas	Burlington, ON
Joseph Carvalho	Brampton, ON	Lois Martin.....	Miramichi, NB
Gordon Cochrane	London, ON	Arthur Paolucci	Etobicoke, ON
Bernard & Theresa Cramer	London, ON	Gerard Parent.....	Windsor, ON
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Ann Hughes.....	Burlington, ON	Anthony Walsh.....	New Minas, NS
Lucie Lemcke.....	Wolseley, SK	Fern Wilchuck.....	Saskatoon, SK



Extraordinary Missionary Month Web Site Announced

Vatican City – The official Internet site for the Extraordinary Missionary Month of October 2019 has been released. The Internet site <http://www.october2019.va/> provides material, news and insights on the month announced by the Pope. Here you can download the “Guide for the Extraordinary Missionary Month October 2019”, which will also be published in paper format. It is a Guide made on the initiative of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples and of the Pontifical Mission Societies, which collects contributions from Christians all over the world and is aimed at Christians all over the world.

The purpose of the Guide is to serve the individual dioceses in their needs for missionary formation and animation, preparing the faithful to live the Extraordinary Missionary Month. The Guide will serve to inspire the creativity of local Churches and their Christians in addressing the challenges inherent to evangelization starting from the *missio ad gentes* and its context.

The parts of which the Guide is composed correspond to the spiritual dimensions indicated by the Pope: a personal encounter with Jesus Christ alive in the Church; the testimony of saints and martyrs of the mission; missionary formation: biblical, catechetical, spiritual and theological and missionary charity. The Guide is published in English, Italian, French, Spanish and Portuguese. *This is an edited version, taken from Agenzia Fides, 1/17/2019.*

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**For see, winter is past,
the rains are over and gone.
The flowers appear on the earth.
The season of glad songs has come.**

The Song of Songs 2:11-12