



MISSIONS TODAY

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Spring 2018



The Society of Saint Peter the Apostle:

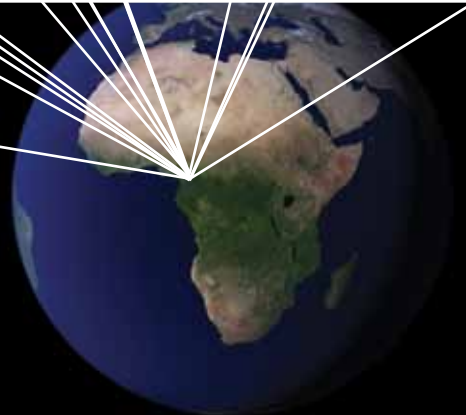
"Ask the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into his harvest field." (Matthew 9:38)

The Pope's Message for World Day of Peace

Spotlight Reports from: Laos, Uzbekistan,

Building the Faith in Nigeria

Special Report from India



The Society for the Propagation of the Faith

Message Of His Holiness Pope Francis

For The Celebration Of The 51st World Day Of Peace

In November, 2017, Pope Francis released his message for the World Day of Peace, which is celebrated each year on January 1st. The date of the release of his message coincided with the feast day of St. Frances Xavier Cabrini, patron saint of refugees and migrants.

Migrants and refugees: men and women in search of peace

“You are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God’s people.”

1. Heartfelt good wishes for peace

Peace to all people and to all nations on earth! Among these whom I constantly keep in my thoughts and prayers, I would once again mention the over 250 million migrants worldwide, of whom 22.5 million are refugees. Pope Benedict XVI, my beloved predecessor, spoke of them as “men and women, children, young and elderly people, who are searching for somewhere to live in peace.” In order to find that peace, they are willing to risk their lives on a journey that is often long and perilous, to endure hardships and suffering, and to encounter fences and walls built to keep them far from their goal.

In a spirit of compassion, let us embrace all those fleeing from war and hunger, or forced by discrimination, persecution, poverty and environmental degradation to leave their homelands.

We know that it is not enough to open our hearts to the suffering of others. Much more remains to be done before our brothers and sisters can once again live peacefully in a safe home. Welcoming others requires concrete commitment, a network of assistance and goodwill, vigilant and sympathetic attention, the responsible management of new and complex situations that at times compound numerous existing problems, to say nothing of resources, which are always limited. Leaders have a clear responsibility towards their own communities, whose legitimate rights and harmonious development they must ensure, lest they become like the rash builder who miscalculated and failed to complete the tower he had begun to construct.

2. Why so many refugees and migrants?

Saint John Paul II pointed to the increased numbers of displaced persons as one of the consequences of the “endless and horrifying sequence of wars, conflicts, genocides and ethnic cleansings” that had characterized the twentieth century. To this date, the new century has registered no real breakthrough: armed conflicts and other forms of organized violence continue to trigger the movement of peoples within national borders and beyond.



Yet people migrate for other reasons as well, principally because they “desire a better life, and not infrequently try to leave behind the ‘hopelessness’ of an unpromising future.” They set out to join their families or to seek professional or educational opportunities, for those who cannot enjoy these rights do not live in peace. Most people migrate through regular channels. Some, however, take different routes, mainly out of desperation, when their own countries offer neither safety nor opportunity, and every legal pathway appears impractical, blocked or too slow.

Many destination countries have seen the spread of rhetoric decrying the risks posed to national security or the high cost of welcoming new arrivals, and thus demeaning the human dignity due to all as sons and daughters of God. Those who, for what may be political reasons, foment fear of migrants instead of building peace are sowing violence, racial discrimination and xenophobia, which are matters of great concern for all those concerned for the safety of every human being.

All indicators available to the international community suggest that global migration will continue for the future. Some consider this a threat. For my part, I ask you to view it with confidence as an opportunity to build peace.

3. With a contemplative gaze

The wisdom of faith fosters a contemplative gaze that recognizes that all of us “belong to one family, migrants and the local populations that welcome them, and all have the same right to enjoy the goods of the earth. When we turn that gaze to migrants and refugees, we discover that they do not arrive empty-handed. They bring their courage, skills, energy and aspirations, as well as the treasures of their own cultures; and in this way, they enrich the lives of the nations that receive them. Those who see things in this way will be able to recognize the seeds of peace that are already sprouting and nurture their growth. Our cities, often divided and polarized by conflicts regarding the presence of migrants and refugees, will thus turn into workshops of peace.

4. Four mileposts for action

Offering asylum seekers, refugees, migrants and victims of human trafficking an opportunity to find the peace they seek requires a strategy combining four actions: welcoming, protecting, promoting and integrating.

“**Welcoming**” calls for expanding legal pathways for entry and no longer pushing migrants and displaced people towards countries where they face persecution and violence. It also demands balancing our concerns about national security with concern for fundamental human rights. Scripture reminds us: “Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers, for by so doing some people have shown hospitality to angels without knowing it.”

“**Protecting**” has to do with our duty to recognize and defend the inviolable dignity of those who flee real dangers in search of asylum and security, and to prevent their being exploited. I think in particular of women and children who find themselves in situations that expose them to risks and abuses that can even amount to enslavement. God does not discriminate: “The Lord watches over the foreigner and sustains the orphan and the widow.”

“**Promoting**” entails supporting the integral human development of migrants and refugees. Among many possible means of doing so, I would stress the importance of ensuring access to all levels of education for children and young people. This will enable them not only to cultivate and realize their potential, but also better equip them to encounter others and to foster a spirit of dialogue rather than rejection or confrontation.

“**Integrating**”, lastly, means allowing refugees and migrants to participate fully in the life of the society that welcomes them, as part of a process of mutual enrichment and fruitful cooperation in service of the integral human development of the local community. Saint Paul expresses it in these words: “You are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God’s people.”

5. A proposal for two international compacts

It is my heartfelt hope this spirit will guide the process that in the course of 2018 will lead the United Nations to draft and approve two Global Compacts, one for safe, orderly and regular migration and the other for refugees. Only in this way can the realism required of international politics avoid surrendering to cynicism and to the globalization of indifference.

6. For our common home

Let us draw inspiration from the words of Saint John Paul II: “If the ‘dream’ of a peaceful world is shared by all, if the refugees’ and migrants’ contribution is properly evaluated, then humanity can become more and more a universal family and our earth a true ‘common home’ and sisters.

Franciscus

From the Vatican, 13 November 2017

This is an edited version of the original text. To view the complete text, please visit: https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/peace/documents/papa-francesco_20171113_messaggio-51giornatamondiale-pace2018.html



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National Director's Message

Mission Today Message Spring 2018



As I reflect upon what spring-time means to me, I cannot but think about all the new life that is being brought into this world. It is Lent! Some people sacrifice by giving up favourite things for Lent. Others set out to start doing more for those around them. The Irish poet and playwright, Patrick Kavanagh, wrote that one dies when one stops believing in the masterpiece we will begin tomorrow. His message of hope provides a perspective to Lent that goes beyond the usual giving up or doing more take on the season. This Lent can go further along toward the masterpieces circumstances require and God created us to become.

C.S. Lewis wrote this as an allegory of the winter of the soul that entraps all of us until we are rescued by the Son of God. Without rescue we are entrapped in a perpetual winter of broken relationship with God. But when we allow Him to come into our world, He breaks the curse of the winter in our soul and begins the process of bursting forth in new life within us. Lent brings the death and Resurrection of the lord more insistently into the horizon of our lives and our world. Before the Lord, “we are all weak and needy, poor in who we are, rich in him” (Fran-

cis Cardinal George). We are grateful for our various vocations and we rejoice in that poverty that opens us to God’s grace. Let us observe together in prayer, penance and almsgiving.

Your prayers and financial support means a lot to our missionaries. Through the letters we receive from them we know that you are changing lives in the missions. They appreciate all that you are doing. Please keep missionaries and their various places of work and people in your Lenten journey

In this issue of Mission Today, we present Pope Francis’ 51st World Day of Peace message which calls us to welcome and protect over 250 million migrants worldwide. It carries the spotlight report from Timor, Uzbekistan, Laos, and more. The Society of St. Peter the Apostle is profiled. This society supports the training and education of Priests, Seminarians, Sisters, brothers and leaders of the Mission Church. Through the work of St. Peter the Apostle, Seminarians and Religious are provided with resources, books, scholarships, food and housing including priests who are studying to be formators in seminaries. Without your financial assistance, many of our brothers and sisters in mission countries would not be able to continue this very important vocation. Could you please lend some support to them as part of your Lenten journey?

May you be abundantly blessed this Lenten and Easter season of love.

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The Pope’s Monthly Prayer Intentions:

MARCH: Formation in Spiritual Discernment

That the Church may appreciate the urgency of formation in spiritual discernment, both on the personal and communitarian levels.

APRIL: Those Responsible for the Economy

That economists may have the courage to reject any economy of exclusion and know how to open new paths.

MAY: The Mission of the Laity

That the lay faithful may fulfil their specific mission, by responding with creativity to the challenges that face the world today.

Spotlight on: UZBEKISTAN

The “big family” of a Small Church

Tashkent – On October 8, 2017, the tiny Catholic community in Uzbekistan celebrated its first female religious profession. Fr. Jerzy Maculewicz, OFM Conv, and the apostolic Administrator of Uzbekistan, described the event in these terms: “Our Church is very small, but for this reason we feel a big family. We all know each other and are very close... on the occasion of the first female solemn religious profession of the Uzbek Church; the whole community of the Sacred Heart Cathedral of Tashkent actively and spiritually participated in the celebration. It was a very touching moment ... I saw many people weep with tears of emotion. It is a sign that, although slowly growing from a numerical point of view, (the Church) is strong in spirit, by the grace of God”. At the present time, there are five parishes with about 3,000 baptized, distributed throughout the major cities of the country. Specifically, there are about 700 active baptized members in Tashkent while the others are distributed between Samarcanda, Bukhara, Urgench and Fergana.



Sacred Heart Cathedral, Tashkent. – Photo by: Abdullais4U, Wikimedia.org [cc-sa/by-3.0]



Main Aisle leading to Sanctuary. – Photo by: Bobyrr, Wikimedia.org. [cc-sa-by-4.0]

Faith in this Central Asian nation, formerly part of the Soviet Union, was accompanied in its growth under Pope John Paul II’s pontificate. The late Pope took a particular interest in seeing the Catholic Church develop in former Soviet Republics. Under the protection of Saint John Paul II - cho-

sen, not by chance, as a patron - the Catholic Church in Uzbekistan continues to live and witness the Gospel in a diverse territory from an economic, social and religious point of view.

The spiritual life of the community is centred on participation at mass and catechism that “takes place on Sunday, because the city is very large and often takes more than an hour to reach the church”, explains Fr. Maculewicz. There is also attention towards preparing liturgical periods during the year, through prayer meetings and spiritual exercises.

Uzbekistan is experiencing a constant economic development (GDP grew by 8% in 2016), but still has large sectors of people in need. According to Fr. Jerzy, “expenses for surgery, medicines or school books are prohibitive for many people”; for this reason, friars and religious working in the country offer material support, helped by the sisters of Mother Teresa. Social service is also a fruitful ground for dialogue with the dominant Muslim community: “We are in contact with several members of the Muslim community - continues the Apostolic Administrator - who carries out charitable actions. For example, there is a family of Islamic belief that founded a cultural center for disadvantaged children and we often work actively with them”.

There are also other opportunities for ecumenical and interreli-



The giant Chorsu market in Tashkent. – Photo by: Dan Lundberg, Wikimedia.org. [cc-sa-by-2.0]

gious encounters: “At the beginning of the year, during the prayer week for the unity of Christians, we organize meetings with members of other churches, usually Lutherans, Armenians or Protestants. On the occasion of the two major Muslim feasts we visit and bring our greetings to the Islamic community. Also this year, we will also attend a special conference on religious tolerance, organized by the local Islamic University”.

In Uzbekistan, 80% of the population professes Islamic religion, 8% recognize themselves in the Russian Orthodox Church. *This is an edited version, taken from Agenzia Fides, 11/03/2017.*

The Society for the Propagation of the Faith:

Project Report – INDIA

In 2016, the Roman Catholic Diocese of Jhansi, India, was granted permission to proceed with a series of projects including the construction of three convents and a priest's residence. You may wonder why Missions Today is only reporting on these projects now, but please understand that the timelines from project approval, to the allocation of funds, in this case from PMS Canada, through to the completion and final cost reporting on the projects is extensive.

Nevertheless, here is a wonderful example of your prayers and financial support for the Society being put to the best possible use.

The three convents built each represent a different order of sisters:

- 1. The Sisters of Mary Immaculate (SMI) located at Moth Village
- 2. The Sisters of Saint Augustine located at Pratapura
- 3. The Sisters of Suore Incoronata at Madavara

The Madavara Convent:



The Pratapura Convent:



The SMI Convent at Moth Village:



In addition, PMS Canada provided the funding for the construction of a priest's residence in Bhel Parish, Jhansi, Simravari,



Across the Globe



■ SEOUL: Catholic movement in Seoul helps bolster faith

A lay movement first established by Seoul Archdiocese 25 years ago has helped Catholics strengthen their faith, says the results of a survey.

The Basic Ecclesial Community (BEC) has proved to be effective in promoting Mass participation and Bible reading, according to the survey released by the pastoral department of Seoul Archdiocese on Aug. 17.

“Results from the survey shows that BEC is meaningful in evangelizing the faithful and revitalizing parish communities,” said Father Augustine Jo Sung-poong, the pastoral director of the archdiocese.

“In a gloomy situation where overall Mass participation rates are dropping, it’s an encouraging fact that the BEC participants are going to Mass more frequently,” he said.

Conducted Oct. 15 – Nov.13 last year, the survey interviewed 8,764 Catholics from all age groups in nine parishes. Among the respondents, 36.1 percent said they join BEC meetings.

The pastoral department compared the evangelization levels between BEC participants and non-participants. According to results, BEC participants are more active in almost all criteria including gospel proclamation, liturgy participation, communion with other Catholics and service to neighbors.

The survey also found that BEC participants go to Mass more frequently and spend more time in reading the Bible than those who do not join the movement.

The survey was conducted to review how the BEC has contributed to the evangelization of local Catholics. *This is an edited version, taken from ucanews.com 08/31/2017*

■ ZAMBIA - The Zambian Catholic Church celebrates the opening of the first ever Dominican Nuns Monastery.

Kabwe Diocese: The Dominican Nuns’ Monastery, called Divine Mercy Monastery, was consecrated and opened on 28th August 2017 in Kabwe Diocese near St. Augustine major seminary.

Bishop of Kabwe Rt. Rev. Clement Mulenga, SDB, co-celebrated the Mass with the Bishop of Bethlehem of South Africa Right Rev. Jan de Groef, M. Afr. The occasion brought together many Priests, Sisters and lay faithful from Zambia, Kenya, Tanzania and South Africa.

Founded by St. Dominic de Guzmán, the order is related to the Dominican Missionary Sisters that have been in Zambia since the 1920s; however, they live in enclosure. This means Dominican nuns’ whole life is devoted to prayer or to what in Catholic terms is commonly known as Contemplative life.

Beside prayer these Catholic Nuns work at many other apostolates, especially making Liturgical Vestments and Sacramentals.

Divine Mercy Monastery currently has 7 Nuns who came from the mother Monastery in Kenya and South Africa.

The Dominican Nuns become a third group of contemplative life after the Poor Clares found in Lusaka Archdiocese and now Ndola Diocese besides the Benedictine Nuns in Chipata Diocese.

■ VIETNAM - Indigenous congregation in Vietnam marks 70th anniversary

A congregation for ethnic women in Vietnam’s central highlands has marked 70 years of bringing Christian values to indigenous groups and helping the poor live with dignity.

The Daughters of Miraculous Medal Congregation, Vietnam’s only religious order designed for ethnic minority women, celebrated its 70th anniversary in November of last year.

French Bishop Jean Sion Kham of Kon Tum Diocese founded the congregation in 1947.

Bishop Aloysius Nguyen Hung Vi of Kontum and 70 priests concelebrated a special Mass at Kon Tum Cathedral. More than 2,000 people attended the event.

“The congregation is a clear sign of (the) love God gives ethnic minority women to bring the Good News to their ethnic groups in the diocese,” Sister Imelda Y Biut, superior of the order, said.

She said ethnic women do evangelization work effectively among ethnic groups because they understand the languages, cultures, traditions, and customs.

The ethnic Rongao nun said indigenous women play an important role in deciding major issues in families and villages.

“Ya [a Bana ethnic word meaning sister] teach ethnic women morality, catechism, and ways of educating children to be good Catholics,” she said.

The congregation’s 153 sisters from eight ethnic groups work in 32 communities in the two provinces of Kon Tum and Gia Lai. They look after and offer accommodation, food, health care and education to 800 orphans and disabled children at six centers. They also help preserve ethnic groups’ cultures and traditions that are being eaten away by modern society.

Kon Tum Diocese has 323,000 Catholics, two thirds of which are from ethnic minority groups who are served by 160 priests. *An edited version, taken from ucanews.com 12/01/2017*

■ UGANDA - Thousands of Youth to Participate in the 2017 National Youth Day Celebration

Over 5000 youths from across Uganda will converge in the Diocese of Kabale for the 2017 National Youth Day (NYD) celebration scheduled for December 12-17.

The NYD is a Church’s Day event for young people, and is typically celebrated every year in different dioceses. This year’s celebration will host not only youth from Uganda but also youth from Burundi, Rwanda, Tanzania and Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

The NYD is an opportunity for the youth to experience the universality of the church, to deepen their faith and grow closer to Christ in their daily lives, by means of prayer and the sacraments, together with other young people. This year’s celebration will run under the theme, “The Mighty One has done great things for me, and Holy is His name” (Luke 1:49) as released by Pope Francis. According to Joyce Zako, the National Youth Coordinator of the

Uganda Episcopal Conference, the daily realities the youth face are so challenging. Thus, by coming together, young people are able to discuss their most intimate aspirations and experience the Church as a communion, and make a commitment to the urgent task of new evangelization.

Refugees living in Uganda will also be taking part in this year’s NYD celebration as an association for the first time.

Meanwhile, during the week of NYD, there will be a number of activities including a welcoming ceremony, way of the cross, catechesis, confessions, devotions and reconciliation activities. There will also be other entertaining activities which include tourism, sports competitions, cultural exhibitions and cultural music performances. The youth will also be taken through discussion topics such as Youth and entrepreneurship, Youth and Politics as well as Youth and HIV/AIDS prevention and the Art of Choosing a Good Partner.

The NYD celebration was inaugurated in 1993 in Tororo Archdiocese.

An edited version, taken from a report by Jacinta W. Odongo; Media Officer, Uganda Episcopal Conference Amecea News Blog

■ TIMOR-LESTE: - New seminary looks to beat priest shortage in Timor-Leste

Asia’s most Catholic nation, Timor-Leste, has a new seminary to tap the growing number of young people who want to study to become priests after finishing junior high school.

The St. Joseph Seminary in Maliana Diocese is the country’s second minor seminary after Our Lady of Fatima in Dili, which had been the only place of study for young people aspiring to become priests.

Every year, at least 300 young people try to enroll at the Our Lady of Fatima, which can only accept 90 people.

“I hope it responds to the expectation of Pope Francis for more vocations from Timor-Leste,” the apostolic nuncio to Malaysia and Timor-Leste, Archbishop Joseph Salvador Marino, said on Sept. 26 at the opening ceremony for the new seminary in Maliana.

Timor-Leste has total population of 1.3 million and 97 percent or about 1.26 million are Catholics. Only about 220 priests in three dioceses serve them.

“We still need more diocesan priests to serve [a huge number of] people,” Bishop Norberto Do Amaral of Maliana said, hoping that some will come from the first batch of 22 students admitted to the seminary this year.

The seminarians, he said, will study as regular students at the college, and in the afternoon, they will follow seminary formation. Bishop Basilio do Nascimento of Baucau believed that future leaders of the Timor-Leste Church would come from this new seminary.

“I’m proud that this place has become a seminary and the hope of the Timorese Church,” said the prelate, who was a student at the college. *This is an edited version, taken from an original story by reporter, Thomas Ora for ucanews.com 09/29/2017*

The Society of Saint Peter

WHAT IS OUR MISSION AND PURPOSE?

“Then he said to his disciples, “The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few.
Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field (Matthew 9:37-38).”

Indeed, the harvest is plentiful and the labourers are really scanty. This is the call by Jesus to all of us Christians, and St. Peter the Apostle Society is doing their best to be a champion of this mission of Christ in the world.



The St. Peter the Apostle Society (SPA) is the branch of Missio responsible for the training of clergy and religious in mission dioceses. Through prayer and finance, it provides younger churches in the developing world with the essential help they need to train their own priests and sisters.
Today, the Society of Saint Peter the Apostle is established in 157 countries. With your prayers and generous support, it supports 1,111 mission dioceses and funds the training and formation of 116, 843 major seminarians; 10,000 novices, 104,351 minor seminarians, 3,122,653 Catechists. It also supports 670,330 Religious Women, and 54,229 Religious Brothers.



The training and formation of priests and religious has four dimensions, established by Pope John Paul II in his encyclical known as *“Pastores Dabo Vobis”*.
In this document, Pope John Paul II described the principal foundations for priestly formation as having:

- 1. The Human Dimension:** The purpose of Human Formation is to assist the Seminarians in their task of becoming men of integrity with the personality necessary for priestly ministry in the Church.” The community life of the seminary and the various services and co-curricular programs of the human formation program are ordered to assist the Seminarians to grow in true freedom, to develop a solid moral character, to be well oriented to the truth, to become men of communion, to evidence affective maturity, to be respectful of everybody, to exercise appropriate care for his physical well-being, to be a good steward with respect to temporal goods, and to be a confident leader.
- 2. The Spiritual Dimension:** In the area of Spiritual Formation, our Seminarians seek to grow in their relationship with Christ through prayer and contemplation.
- 3. The Intellectual Dimension:** In the area of their intellectual formation, the Seminarians seek to deepen their faith through study of philosophy and theology so that they may authentically proclaim Jesus as The Way, The Truth and The Life to the faith communities they serve. They learn the skills and develop the disposition necessary to be ministers of the gospel in all things and at all times.
- 4. The Pastoral and Apostolic Dimension:** In every Seminary, the formators make sure the Seminarians participate in supervised field education assignments. Placements include: parishes and outstations (varied cultural experiences),

hospitals, nursing homes, special education schools, prisons, senior citizens centers, social services agencies, hospices, schools, and soup kitchens.



The seminarians need formation houses and seminaries. They also need libraries, computers, books, dormitories, food, power, water, chapels, and
Classroom blocks. They need means of transport, classroom desks etc. In Africa, alone we have more than 600 dioceses. There are thousands of Dioceses all over the mission world that look to St. Peter the Apostle Society for financial assistance in providing the necessary logistics that are needed for the Seminaries and Formation Houses.

Besides the physical infrastructure, the Society provides subsidies for both Minor and Major Seminaries.
In other cases, priests and religious from these territories who need further studies and training, as determined by their dioceses or

religious congregations, are sponsored and catered for by St. Peter the Apostle Society. The task is very huge and demanding, but the only way we survive is because of generous people like you who continue to support and assist in forming men and women who are in our formation centers all over the mission world. Without your help, mission dioceses would struggle to fund the training of the priests they so urgently need. Even one new priest makes a world of difference to the lives of Catholics in remote areas, where Mass may only be celebrated once or twice in a single year.



There are many seminaries that do not have source of potable water, electricity, dormitories, classroom blocks, dining halls, furniture etc. But due to your generosity, St. Peter the Apostle Society is able to provide the seminarians with these amenities.

BY: Rev.Fr.Matthias Y.K.Amuzu
National Secretary

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Special Report: Nigeria

Building the Faith in Nigeria

Greetings from Nigeria:

From time to time, “Missions Today” receives reports from missionary orders on their activities and needs. These reports come from all over the world. When Father Alex visited Nigeria last summer to examine some of the projects that Canadians have sponsored, he spent some time with Father Kuha Indyer, a fellow Spiritan. Father Kuha offers our readers this report into his busy life and provides you with the motivations behind his decision to enter the priesthood.

God Answers Prayers

Fr. Kuha INDYER, CSSp

I was born in a small village called Akerigba in Ikov District of Ushongo, Benue State, Nigeria. Around the age of three or four, my father carried me on his shoulders to our village primary school, established by the Roman Catholic Mission, to watch a film that was shown by a Holy Ghost priest. At that time missionaries made use of a lot of audio-visuals for evangelization. The sight of the white man in cassock with a black cincture tied round his waist attracted me and I told my father: **‘I would like to be like that man when I grow up’.**

The desire to be like that man motivated me to start my schooling at a very tender age of five, according to the reckoning of the time. Early on, I made my intention to become a priest known to my parents; my father had no objection but warned me not to become a priest and act contrary to my priestly vocation as such action would bring shame to the family name. My mother was not happy over my decision.

After secondary school education, I applied to our diocese to be admitted for priestly training. I was turned down- the reason being that I was too young. However, the Spiritans admitted me instantly- I believe this was the path God had destined for me as I prayed as a child to become a Spiritan.

After eleven years of seminary formation, I was ordained a priest on July 15, 2000 and was sent to Ghana for my first missionary journey. While working in Ghana, I developed great interest in youth ministry and communications apostolate. In 2004, I was re-assigned to Nigeria where I was given permission from my religious superiors to start a project that would benefit the rural youth and the less privileged. I started the **Spiritans in Integral Development Foundation**, which was raised to the status of the development office of our province of Nigeria North-East in 2016. Over the years, SIIDF has executed the following projects: Holy Ghost College, Sankera, Benue State- 153 students have so far graduated from the school and 8 of them are studying for the

catholic priesthood. Spiritan Nursery and Primary School, Sankera, (2009) - we graduated the first set of 16 in 2017. Spiritan Youth Resource Centre, Chonku, Taraba State, 2015- activities to be carried out here for the benefit of the youth include: a skills acquisition centre to equip the youth with skills such as tailoring, computer operation, soap making, welding and fabrication, etc. We also intend to provide library services. Children of the rural area of Chonku would also be provided with a sound primary education as we have already built Fr. Vincent Griffin Nursery and Primary school at the Spiritan Youth Resource Centre.

With more resources, we can do more. My prayer is for God to bless us with benefactors/benefactresses to support us on this mission of improving the lives of the less privileged. In the meantime, I continue my faith journey in service to the people of Chonku.

A Photo Essay Illustrating the Various Projects Executed by the Spiritans from 2004 to date.



Academic Section at Holy Ghost College, Sankera, Benue State



A Cross Section of the Spiritan Nursery and Primary School, Sankera, Benue State



Graduates of Spiritan Nursery and Primary School, Sankera, in academic gowns



Junior Graduates of Spiritan Nursery and Primary School, Sankera, in school uniform, with Fr. Kuha Indyer, CSSp



A classroom block at Fr Vincent Griffin Nursery and Primary School, Chonku. Taraba State



Back View of the classroom block at Fr. Vincent Griffin Nursery and Primary School, Chonku, Taraba State



Some Pupils of Fr Vincent Griffin Nursery and Primary School Chonku, pose for a picture in front of the School Block



Improvised Living Quarters at the Spiritan Youth Resource Centre, Chonku, Taraba State



A teacher in class with pupils of Fr Vincent Griffin Nursery and Primay School, Chonku

The Accommodation of the Director of Spiritan Youth Resource Centre, Chonku, Taraba State, Nigeria



Children of Chonku village gather to watch the drilling of a bore hole at the Spiritan Youth Resource Centre, Chonku, Taraba State



Fr Kuha INDYER, CSSp examines the first water pumped from the bore hole at the Spiritan Youth Resource Centre, Chonku, Taraba State



Chapel under construction at Holy Ghost College, Sankera, Benue State, Nigeria.



Students on assembly ground at Holy Ghost College, Sankera, Benue State



Happy Pupils of Spiritan Nursery and Primary School, Sankera, Benue State.



Parents the newly admitted students of Holy Ghost College Sankera pose with their children after reception Mass in October, 2017



New and Old Students of Holy Ghost College, Sankera, pose for a group photograph after reception Mass in October



Some seminarians posted to Holy Ghost College, Sankera, Benue State

Spotlight on: Laos

Laotian Catholics prepare for Asian Youth Day

As part of their preparation for the forthcoming Asian Youth Day, twenty young Laotians participated in a formation camp that was led by three visiting Thai formators.

They represented all three ethnic groups — Hmong, Khamu and Lao Loum — and gathered at a youth development center run by the Sisters of Charity in the Lao capital, Vientiane, on June 17-18.

The young Catholics, who come from three out of four ecclesiastical jurisdictions in Laos, focused on team-building exercises that also strengthened their English skills.

A volunteer youth leader named Joseph said he is thrilled to have the chance to meet other young Catholics at the Asian Youth Day to be held in Indonesia from August 2nd to the 6th.

“It won’t just be about our new Laotian cardinal or the 17 mar-



Laotian youth write down their reflections after praying during the formation camp on June 17-18

Photo by : ucanews.com photo

tyrs beautified last December that will make the Laotian faith community known to the universal Catholic Church,” Joseph told ucanews.com.

“The young people and I are ready to bring testimony of how faith is lived in a communist country in which most citizens are Buddhists,” he said.

The new cardinal that Joseph mentioned was Bishop Louis-Marie Ling Mangkhanekhoun. Cardinal-designate Ling, 73, was one of five new cardinals announced by Pope Francis on May 21.

The 17 martyrs referred to were priests, catechists, and laypeople that were declared martyrs by the Catholic Church. They were killed between 1954 and 1970 during a period of anti-religious violence under Pathet Lao communists.

A religious minority

Being a third generation Catholic, Joseph, 27, said when he was at school, he was the only one putting up his hand when his class teacher asked who is not a Buddhist.



Christians make up about 1 percent of Lao’s 7 million people of whom about 45,000 are Catholics.

Since a young age, Joseph has noted great misunderstandings among local people about Christianity. “People spread rumors that mothers who want to baptize their babies need to sleep with a priest,” he cited as an example.

BK, an ethnic Khamu working in the government, said that the country’s ruling communists had limited their freedom of faith. “But the harder the situation is, the stronger our faith is,” said BK.

Getting help from outside

Explaining the presence of the Thai formators, Joseph said that local youth leaders connect with the other young people by making friends with them and “since they trust and share their personal issues with us as friends, we cannot take up the role as formators.”

Joseph added that he received no formal training to become a young leader in the church but “adopts the approach of learning by doing”.

When guest speakers come from a foreign country, the youth tend to pay more attention, Joseph said. Spoken Thai and Lao are mutually understandable.

The Youth Desk of the FABC-Office of Laity and Family stages Asian Youth Day in cooperation with the Youth Commissions of the respective national bishop’s conferences. The event is held every three years

“Joyful Asian Youth! Living the Gospel in Multicultural Asia”, is the theme for the upcoming 7th Asian Youth Day to be held in Semarang Diocese, Indonesia. This is an edited version of the original story which appeared on ucanews.com 06/20/2017



Sacred Heart Church, built in 1928 in the capital, Vientiane.

Photo by : orbenbrinker, wikimedia.org. [cc-sa-by-3.0]

The Pontifical Association of the Holy Childhood: Project Report: Bangladesh

In 2016, the country of Bangladesh was a major recipient of Canadian support for a variety of projects. Keep in mind that we are only now reporting on the results of your support because the approval process, followed by the construction of the various buildings and properties takes some time. Nonetheless, we feel you will find the following report fascinating. It is written by Father Anton Murmu, the parish priest for St. John Mary Vianney Church, Mundumala parish, in the Diocese of Rajshahi. You can learn more about this part of the Catholic world by visiting their website at: <http://rajshahicatholicdiocese.com/>



Mundumala is a new parish in the diocese. It was established in 2007. At that time it was made up of 35 villages and 3,200 Catholics. But now, it consists of 66 villages and 4,800 Catholics. Constant evangelization is going on, and many young men and women are in training to be catechists. Our parish is made up of many tribal people who come from many different groups, including Santal, Mahali, Oraon, and Pahan.

Mundumala is a drought affected area. Every year, extreme summer heat damages crops, cattle and even takes human lives. Consequently, our parish feels the need to assist the local people



as best we can, providing them with medicines, food, the drilling of wells, and housing and clothing where needed.

Most of our people are very poor. They are landless day laborers who live and work on small farms where they work the fields in return for small amounts of food. Most of them are not able to provide their children with the basic essentials of life, including food, clothing, shelter, education, health care and recreation. Most children are forced by their parents to go to work in order to provide their families with some small income. Education is not considered necessary by many parents for their children.



We are trying our best to convince the parents of the importance of education by providing their children, as best we can, with a basic education at our boarding school. We provide food, clothing, lodging, school books as well as a basic introduction to the Christian faith. We believe that with your kind support and our



own efforts of being beside them will make them realize that they are not abandoned.

In our boarding school, we provide the children with religious instruction, regular classes in reading, writing and mathematics. The children also have the opportunity to participate in organized arts and sports activities. Nutritious food and medical care is also provided. All of this is made possible because you have



taken the time to provide us with the funds we so desperately need. The children attend church regularly and enjoy going to school. Please continue to pray for us and our underprivileged children.



The Pontifical Association of the Holy Childhood: Canadian Stories of Service:

Greetings from St. Josaphat Elementary School in Saskatchewan:

We just wanted to pass on this picture of our "Licence for a Day" Charity for the Holy Childhood Association from our two grade 7/8 classes. Our crew had a variety of options to purchase for a toonie donation, such as Hot Chocolate mug fill-up, wearing PJs, eating lunch in another classroom, etc. Our students are donating \$174.00 from their Advent Calendar Daily Challenge on December 14th. I have attached a picture to share with you as well.

Shannon LeCouffe & Arkin Kauf

St. Josaphat School



Mission Conversations with the Editor

No One is Saved by Themselves



Illness, and by that I mean prolonged illness, is a solitary journey. It is a trek that one takes on one's own. The person afflicted by illness may be accompanied to a certain degree by those who care and pray for their situation. Tending to the sick is considered a corporal work of mercy and is most laudable work. Nonetheless, the experience of being seriously ill is a burden borne primarily by the person visited by sickness. Advice may be given. Treatments offered and performed. Cards and flowers may be forwarded. But in the end, you are left in the small hours of the night to confront your illness on your own.

It is in those singular moments that one faces the reality and pain of their situation. Questions arise that under normal circumstances never need be considered. Will I get better? What if this is my new normal? What will the morning bring? Being ill for a lengthy period of time can be very isolating. I am reminded of the description given by an injured NHL player, who, being out of the team line-up for some weeks, came to see himself as no longer part of the team. Replaced by a substitute player, the team continuing to play its games week after week, the injured player felt lost when visiting the locker room and eventually stopped going. Much the same for those of us who are seriously ill. There are only so many times the healthy can visit until those moments of awkwardness creep into the room and you find yourself telling them that "you are tired and need to rest" or that "their visit is very appreciated but that they needn't feel any pressure to come so often". This reflection's theme is not about self-pity and/or doom and gloom despite my opening. In fact, it is in reflecting on one's illness that one arrives at a deeper understanding of life's purpose and meaning.

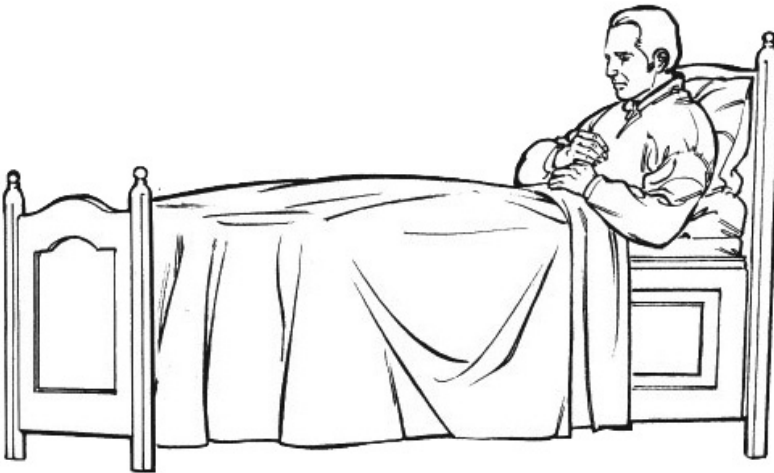


Image courtesy: mmormonshare.com

"A glad heart is excellent medicine, a spirit depressed wastes the bones away."

—Proverbs 17:22

Paul Coady
Editor

Federico Fellini, the Italian film director, who himself suffered from a series of illnesses, once said, "My relationship with my body has changed. I used to consider it as a servant who should obey, function, give pleasure. In sickness, you realize that you are not the boss. It is the other way around". He has a point. We take too much for granted in this brief existence of ours. Illness and setbacks are not considered until they present themselves in our bodies and our minds, forcing us to confront the greater issues of life. In those quiet hours of the night, the ill move beyond the trite clichés and aphorisms of daily life and instead ponder greater meanings. How have I contributed to making my existence meaningful for others? Is there a person better off because of me? What has been my impact on the world around me?

Those of us who are fortunate enough to come out the other side of a serious illness with health restored, even if only partially, and who have taken the lessons of their illness into the brighter light of health, find that they no longer see life in the same way. It is the experience of survivors of disasters: first, guilt and wonder at their personal survival, and then a changed outlook on the meaning behind their existence. Prolonged illness offers possibilities for change that no other experience in life can. It is in recognizing the opportunity that one heals beyond the common healing of the body. No amount of medicine, cards, calls or flowers can bring one to this realization. It only occurs through one's personal reflection offered during the quiet, isolated moments of illness.

In Remembrance

Our Deceased Donors

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

- Rose Anstey.....Niagara Falls, ON
Anne Beaudet.....New Westminster, BC
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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!

"The chief beauty about time is that you cannot waste it in advance. The next year, the next day, the next hour are lying ready for you, as perfect, as unspoiled, as if you had never wasted or misapplied a single moment in all your life. You can turn over a new leaf every hour if you choose."

Arnold Bennett

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