



MISSIONS TODAY

VOL 77, NO. 3

Summer 2019

**Project Report: Spreading the Good
News in Taichung Diocese - Taiwan**



Also in this Issue:

Aiding Catechetical Instruction in Ghana

**Archbishop Protase Rugambwa: Forming Priests
According to the Heart of God**

A Visit to St. Charles Dispensary in Kibao, Tanzania

And more.

The Society for the Propagation of the Faith

National Director's Message

Mission Today Message Summer 2019



As each second turns into minutes and days turn into weeks, October 2019 is in the making, Extraordinary Missionary Month is around the corner. We gather everyday and every Sunday in worship of our saviour Jesus Christ. We are in the process of learning and knowing about Jesus and the learning never ends. It is Jesus Christ who provides meaning to our existence.

As baptized Catholics, we have the duty to respond to the command of Jesus “to go to the whole world and proclaim the Gospel to every creature” (Mk. 16:15). Obeying this mandate is not an option for the Church. It is her “essential task”, for the church is “missionary by her very nature” (Ad Gentes). If she is not missionary, the Church loses her identity. Evangelization is the grace and vocation proper to the Church, her deepest identity; she exists in order to evangelize” (Evangelii Nuntiandi).

The Extraordinary Missionary Month provides us the impetus as Pope Francis decreed,” to be permanently in a state of mission,” As baptized Catholics, we are called to take part in the church’s missionary work. We need to allow ourselves to be moved by the Holy Spirit and beyond our everyday concerns, offering our prayers and talents so that others may come to know and believe in Jesus Christ.

You are Baptized and Sent – You are the Church of Christ on Mission in the world. In Baptism we received the divine life by virtue of which we are prophets, heralding the mystery of Christ. Jesus Christ is the content of mission: the church does not communicate her own ideology or message, but rather what she received from Christ, namely Christ Himself.

The Pontifical Mission Societies exist to support the preaching of the Gospel to every nation and to care for and support the church and its people, especially where Christianity is new and young. You may not be able to travel to a mission land, but you can learn about the work of missionaries and share the information with others, who in turn, would do the same.

In this summer issue, you will read about Propagation of Faith projects in the diocese of Koforidua, Ghana and Taichung diocese in Taiwan. The editor in page eleven presents to you the worldwide network of Pontifical Mission Societies. Pages 12- 13

provide information on Holy Childhood projects and news from Canada.

We will know how missionaries are educating children, training of catechists and throw more light on how a missionary priest and religious are formed. Archbishop Protase Rugambwa, Secretary of the Congregation for Evangelization of Peoples, presents in Page 17 the formation of priests. Formators are called to participate in the Church’s missionary activity. The end of this edition brings us to question our call to service, the essence of our missionary life – “to walk in the path of the Master- Jesus Christ.”

Go, tell the world around you about the Jesus you have found and worshipped.

God bless you and together we will build the Kingdom.

Fr. Alex Osei, CSSp
National Director

The Pope’s Monthly Prayer Intentions:

JUNE: FOR OUR PRIESTS: That priests, through the modesty and humility of their lives, commit themselves actively to solidarity with those who are most poor.

JULY: For Justice Administers: That those who administer justice may work with integrity, and that the injustice which prevails in the world may not have the last word.

AUGUST: For Families: That families, through their life of prayer and love, become ever more clearly ‘schools of true human growth’.

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Across the Globe



■ ERITREA - Young Eritreans celebrate the first Youth Day in the history of the national Church

Asmara – 550 delegates representing The Youth of the four Epar- chies came together in celebration of the first National Youth Day of its kind in the history of the Church in Eritrea.

Distance, economic strains and government policy were some of the obstacles that prevented young Eritreans from taking part in the World Youth Day celebrated at the end of January 2019 in Panama. Given these circumstances, the National Pastoral Office wanted to organize a similar event for its youth at a national level.

The former Apostolic Nuncio of Eritrea and Sudan, Mgr. Hu- bertus Matheus Maria van Megen delivered the message which Pope Francis gave to the World Youth in Panama, which made the Eritrea Catholic youth feel part of the world youth: “Pope Fran- cis loves you, the beautiful people of Eritrea. Your faith is in your blood and in your soil. He often asks me about you and he prays for you since he understands your situation”, said Archbishop van Megen.

As a result, the young people expressed their gratitude to Pope Francis and promised to continue to pray for him and the Church, as well as expressing their hope and deep desire that one day, Pope Francis may visit Eritrea. An edited version, taken from Agenzia Fides, 3/5/2019.

■ ITALY - Persecuted because they tell the truth and announce Jesus Christ

Rome - “It might be hard for us to believe, but there are more mar- tyrs today than in the first centuries because they speak the truth and proclaim Jesus Christ... particularly where religious freedom is not guaranteed. But also in countries where, in theory and on paper, they protect freedom and human rights”. - Pope Francis, reflecting on the prayer intention for March, 2019 which is dedi- cated to persecuted Christians. The 27th Day of prayer and fasting in memory of the missionary martyrs was celebrated on March 24.

According to data in Agenzia Fides’ possession, in the years 2001- 2017 the total number of pastoral care workers killed was 416. During the year 2018, 40 missionaries were killed, divided be- tween 35 priests, 1 seminarian, and 4 lay people.

Even in the first few months of the year 2019, 5 priests have already been killed. The Church recognizes them as examples of life and self-denial. An edited version, taken from Agenzia Fides 3/3/2019.

■ TOGO - There is no mission in Africa without women

Kara - “Today in Africa, mission cannot be conceived without direct, close and effective collaboration with women. In our con- tinent women are a fundamental link in the missionary activity of the Church”: so stated Fr. Donald Zagore, theologian and mis- sionary of the Society for African Missions (SMA) to Agenzia Fi- des, on the occasion of International Women’s Day.

“Women are the strength and vitality of African churches. With their dynamism and their constant availability, they keep the flame of faith alive, especially in the most remote areas where the presence of men is sometimes almost non-existent”.

“Through them, faith is transmitted to children, the face of the Church of tomorrow. In Africa, women bring children to church, show them the way of faith, the way of God. Theirs is a very origi- nal way of doing mission. If our Churches in Africa continue to live today, it is thanks to the indefectible genius and commitment of women”, emphasizes Fr. Donald.

However, the theologian expressed concern over the lack of respon- sible leadership roles for women in the Church. “The problem is that, in the guide of our churches, women are often put aside. In Africa, in fact, it is easier to have many women in the choir, to read the liturgy, but it is equally difficult to have women who hold important roles of responsibility. This is not due to the inability of women, but to the simple fact that women remain, even in the Church, prisoners of male power. A cultural phenomenon that ex- tends its roots at an ecclesial level”.

“The real challenge today in Africa is to offer opportunities for women in the management of ecclesial life. A woman’s voice must be heard in the same way as a male’s voice, because the Church does not only belong to men. In our churches 90% are women”. *An edited version, taken from Agenzia Fides, 3/8/2019.*

■ SOUTH KOREA - 26 priests, religious and lay Kore- ans now ready for *missio ad gentes*

Seoul - 26 Korean Catholic priests, men and women religious and lay people received the solemn missionary mandate after complet- ing a cycle of studies and missionary formation. They are ready to begin their mission ad gentes experience, “bringing in the depths of the heart the desire to proclaim the Word of Jesus and the love of God to every man”. So stated the Missionary Center of Golom- bang in Seoul. The ceremony sanctioned the 25th missionary sending for the 26 pastoral workers, after four intense weeks of formation.

Kim Jong-geun, a member of the “Catholic Korean Overseas Mis- sionary Education” and president of Seoul National University, states that the number of Korean Catholic faithful sent abroad as missionaries every year since 1999 has reached 750: 108 priests, 550 men and women religious and 89 lay people. Of the 26 new missionaries, 10 are being sent to five Asian countries, two to Af- rica, two to South America, and seven to North America. The remaining five missionaries are waiting for a destination.

“I cannot wait to immerse myself in this experience”, says Lee Seung-min, a Korean parish priest who will be sent to a parish in Monterey, Mexico next April. “I will go there with an open mind and heart, and will meet and get to know the people. I will live every moment as a gift from God. Ready to witness and announce his love”.

Sister Choi Jin-young, of the religious women of the Holy Fam- ily describes the purpose of her mission calling as wanting “... to

overcome the barriers of different cultures, languages, history and traditions: we bring to all the peoples of the world (the) baby Jesus to share the love of God”.

The training sessions touch on a variety of different areas: mis- siology, churches and Korean missions, social issues, international issues, human rights history, Korean history, understanding the nature of multi-cultural and multi-religious societies. The course reaffirms and clarifies the aims, attitudes, practices and spiritual- ity of the mission while also seeking to prepare the missionaries for their work in its most practical aspects.

The auxiliary Bishop of Suwon, John Moon Hee Jong, exhorted the newest missionaries to “always be humble missionaries and without prejudice, to take care of the local lay people, to cultivate the relationship with priests and religious of the local Churches in carrying out their pastoral service and evangelization”. An edited version, taken from Agenzia Fides, 02/22/2019.

■ MALAYSIA - Malaysian youth: “World Youth Day has strengthened our faith”

Kuala Lumpur - The 51 pilgrims from Malaysia who attended the World Youth Day (WYD) in Panama (January 22-27) have been strengthened by the faith they witnessed and are raring to share their experiences with their friends and family in Malaysia: says Archbishop Aaron Matan- jun, at the head of the community of Kota Kinabalu, and says: “(WYD) has indeed been an exciting experience for us. Throughout the week, we made friends and had experiences that we will never forget. One of the things that im- pacted us would be how nice the Catholics from (the Diocese of) Colón were towards other Catholics from all over the globe. This made me realise how we Catholics should be receptive to others regardless of their background. Hence we pledge to be more re- ceptive to the will of God and to always say: Thy will be done”. The Archbishop added: “Our two weeks of journey in this foreign country has truly given our youth countless memorable memories, we prayed and played together as a family for one week”.

“Praise the Lord, I had a fruitful trip. This was my first ever World Youth Day (WYD).

Both the Days in the Diocese in Colon and WYD in Panama City (where) I stayed with a foster family were a great experience for me as the family really treated me very well, just like a real family member”. Josephine Mary Agustine, from Kuala Lumpur Archdiocese, described her feelings as, “Thanks to Almighty God for giving me this opportunity of a lifetime which cannot be sub- stituted. Participating as a pilgrim in the World Youth Day is the most meaningful moment in my life”.

Malaysia is a multicultural country with a Muslim majority founded on secular principles. Christianity in Malaysia is a religion practiced by 9.2% of the population. Two thirds of the 2.6 mil- lion Christians live in eastern Malaysia, in the provinces of Sabah and Sarawak (Malaysian Borneo), where they make up 30% of the population. An edited version, taken from Agenzia Fides, 02/18/2019.

Project Report: Ghana

The Diocese of Koforidua, Accra, Ghana



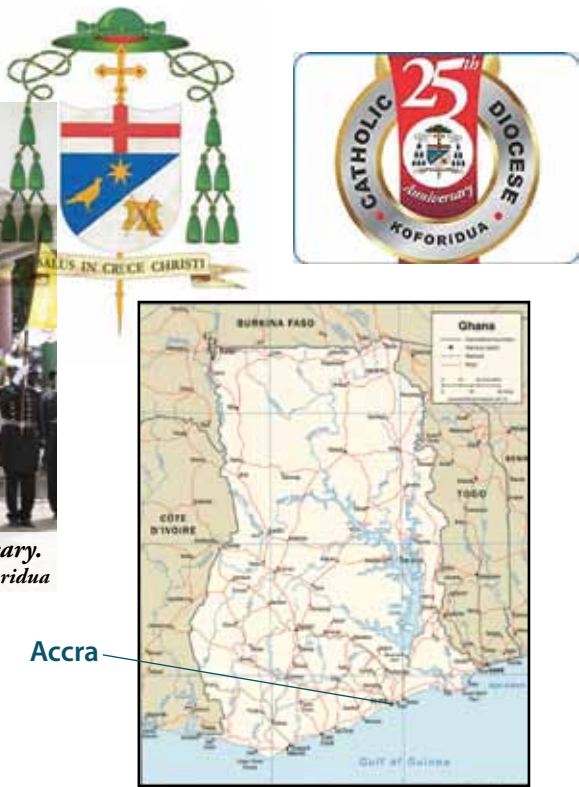
Bishops and Priests gathered in celebration of the diocese's 25th anniversary.
Photo: Diocese of Koforidua

Catechists play an important role in evangelization throughout Africa. They are the ones who provide the basic religious instruction for those interested in joining the Catholic faith, as well as those who wish to be better informed about their religion. Many catechists are lay people, supporting the work of priests, nuns and deacons by reinforcing Catholic teaching in their communities.

In 2017-2018, The Society for the Propagation of the Faith (English Canada) provided funding for the development of instructional programs for catechist candidates as well as providing the resources for existing catechists to carry on their work. If you would like more information about this diocese, visit their website at: www.kofdiocese.org. The diocese celebrated its 25th anniversary in November of 2017. A summary of the support we provided follows below.



Three newly ordained priests with their Bishop Most Rev. Joseph Afrifah-Agyekum in August, 2018
Photo: Diocese of Koforidua



This report covers the activities of the Diocesan Catechetical Commission from October 2017 to September 2018.

MEMBERSHIP:

The Catechetical Commission of the diocese is made up of a Priest Director, a Coordinator/Secretary, and two representatives from each of the five deaneries in the diocese (a priest and a layperson). This gives the Commission a membership of twelve.

MEETINGS:

During the year under review, the Commission held two meetings at the Diocesan Pastoral and Training Centre, Koforidua. The first meeting took stock of the Commission's activities during the previous year and planned the activities of the current year. The second one assessed the level of progress made as far as the implementation of the programme we designed was concerned.

The executives of the Diocesan Catechists' Association also had two meetings within the period.

FORMATION PROGRAMMES:

The office organized two formation courses within the period. Two catechists each from all the parishes and quasi-parishes in the diocese attended. Those trained were equipped to train their colleagues in their respective parishes and quasi-parishes. The first formation programme took place in April and the second one was held in June.



Catechists in training during a formation course.

CELEBRATION OF CATECHETICAL WEEK:

Reports from the parishes indicated that the celebration of the 2017 Catechetical Week was very successful. The booklets for this year's weeklong celebration have been distributed to the various parishes and quasi-parishes.

DEANERY PROGRAMMES:

In the month of August, some deaneries held their annual deanery courses for all the catechists within their respective deaneries. Three deaneries out of the five held their courses. The Director and the Coordinator visited and interacted with them during the programme.

NATIONAL MEETINGS:

Two members of the Commission joined their colleagues for the National Catechetical Commission meeting at Shai Hills in the Accra Archdiocese from 23rd to 27 October 2017.

Ten members of our Diocesan Catechists' Association joined their counterparts across the country for the National Catechists' Congress at Tamale from 2nd to 5th August, 2018. Four other catechists from the diocese were also sponsored by their respective parishes for the afore-mentioned congress.

The Commission selected a team to participate in the study session on the Catechesis on the Eucharist and the New Evangelization booklet. The Commission will be organizing special training sessions on the booklet in order to reach out to all Catholics in every corners of the diocese.

COMMON SYLLABUS FOR TEACHING CATECHISM:

The office is preparing a syllabus for the teaching of catechism in the diocese.

SPECIAL RESEARCH:

The Office in collaboration with our major seminarians conducted a research into why many Catholics do not patronize Church programmes during the weekdays. The responses from the field would be used to improve upon weekday programmes to attract more patronage.

FUTURE PLAN:

The Office intends to embark on an intensive training of our catechists to ensure effective work. Details of the training programme to be rolled out are being discussed by the Diocesan Catechetical Commission.

APPRECIATION:

We are very grateful to the Bishop and all those who have been supporting our programmes. We also thank all priests for their contributions to our programmes. To all of them we say we are very grateful.

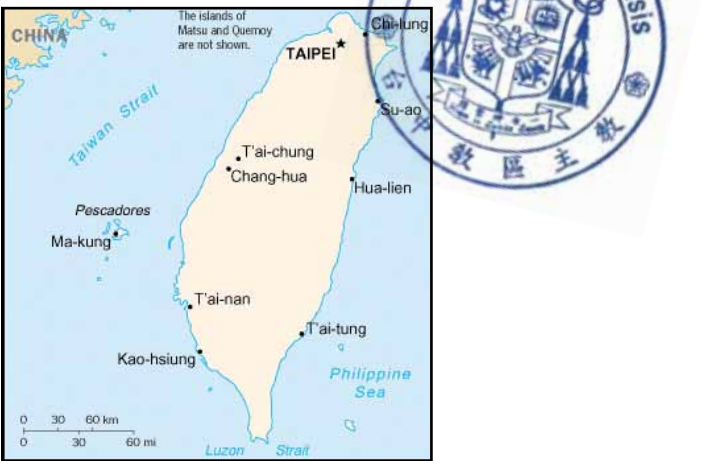
REV. FR. CHARLES BONIFACE AHENKORAH
DIOCESAN DIRECTOR OF CATECHETICS



Catechists gather with their Bishop followed the concluding mass for their meeting.

Project Report: Taichung Diocese – Taiwan

The Diocese of Taichung, in Taiwan, is made up of 71 parishes serving the pastoral needs of over 30,000 Catholics.



Dear Pontifical Mission Societies of Canada:

Greetings and best wishes come to you from me and the Catholic Diocese of Taichung in Taiwan.

We gratefully acknowledge every help rendered to our Diocese by The Propagation of The Faith and thank you for the monies granted as subsidy. This financial support has been sent to us for two projects namely: Catechetical Subsidy and Ordinary Subsidy. We have put them to good use and hope to be worthy of your continued support.

Here below I present a report of our different activities aimed at catechizing and evangelizing. I also present you with the relevant pictures as documentation of files from our diocese on the projects.

SUNDAY SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

The Sunday school activities that are organized for the children as well as the youth in the different parishes of our Diocese, aim at instilling the seeds of faith in them as well as help them progress in their life of Faith. Lessons and Games, including Bible games and quizzes all lead to opening of the doors of Faith and giving a deeper understanding of the Faith.



FORMATION PROGRAM FOR CATECHISTS

Formation programs are organized for the Catechists with the view that they may in turn be able to teach and lead more to the Old Fold of Christ the Good Shepherd. These programs are organized once a month, each time for a period of six hours and more.



YCS AND OTHER YOUTH ACTIVITIES

The Young Christian Students Movement (YCS), and the different programs organized for the Youth in the diocese, enable the youth to get together and know each other, as well as set the needed platform for them to share their faith and become stronger in Faith as well. The Youth Day Celebrations, different Games and activities like Volley Ball, Basket Ball Matches etc., can also become great moments of Faith Sharing and growing together in the Lord.



YCS AND OTHER YOUTH ACTIVITIES



We continue to labor hard for the propagation of Faith that more and more may come to know and love the Lord, and that one day, all may be part of the One fold with One Shepherd Jesus Christ.

Thank you very much for every support.

God Bless you.

Fraternally yours in Christ

+ Martin Su Yao Wen

Bishop of Taichung.



Photo courtesy: Institute of the Incarnate Word (IVE)

+ Martin Su Yao Wen

All photos in the article are provided courtesy of Bishop Martin Su Yao Wen

VATICAN

The Pontifical Mission Societies: “a worldwide network of prayer and charity at the service of the Pope”

Vatican City - “How can we define the Pontifical Mission Societies in one sentence? They are a worldwide network at the service of the Holy Father to sustain the mission and the young Churches through prayer and charity. We should consider the Pontifical Mission Societies and their charismatic service for the Church’s mission in light of the Church’s mandate to be a sign and instrument of salvation for the world”. Archbishop Giovanni Pietro Dal

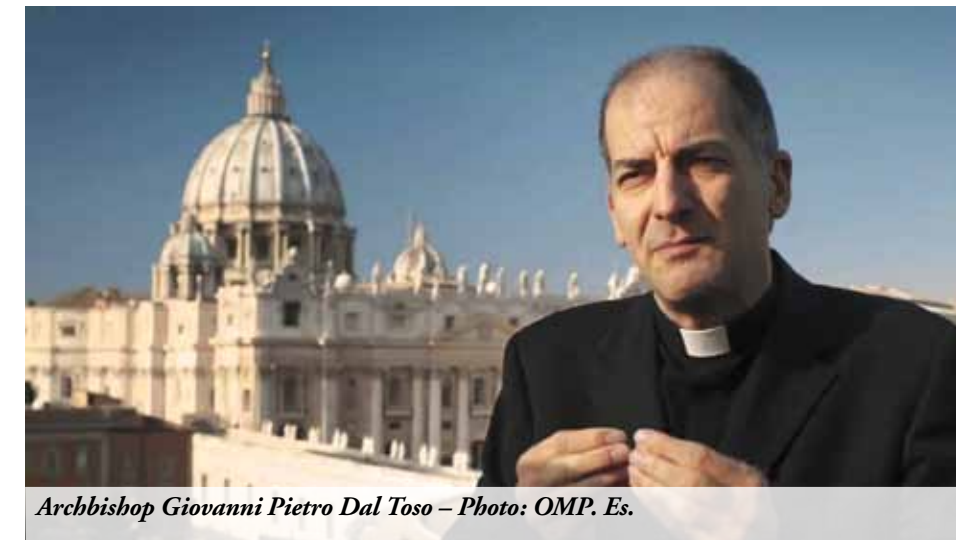
feel alone, but rather supported by the whole Church. In fact, just as no one can believe alone, no one can be a missionary alone. The whole Church is (the) subject of evangelization, and therefore no missionary is alone, but supported by the rest of the Christian community, in whose name he carries out his mission”.

“From a structural point of view - continued Dal Toso - the PMS are both universal and local. They are coordinated at the universal

level by the four International Secretariats, under a single President, and entrusted to the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples. The local dimension manifests itself in the fact that we have about 120 National directions that in turn support the diocesan directors”.

“The great task of the PMS - the President said - is that of raising missionary awareness. Indeed, in accordance with the teachings of the Popes and the Council, the mission is a task entrusted to the whole People of God. The PMS have the special mandate to keep this missionary spirit alive, and this is ultimately the goal intended for the celebration of the Extraordinary Mis-

sionary Month of October 2019”. *An edited version, taken from Agenzia Fides, 3/5/2019.*



Archbishop Giovanni Pietro Dal Toso – Photo: OMP. Es.

Toso, President of the Pontifical Mission Societies (PMS) made these remarks during his speech at the formation and refresher Course for the National Directors of the PMS in English.

The Archbishop reminded the participants to, “... keep in mind that we are talking about a charism. I expressly use the term “charism”, because our Mission Societies would not be comprehensible without the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. This is evident if we consider the historical context in which they were founded. Various saints lived in the Diocese of Lyon at that time: St. John Maria Vianney, St. Peter Julian Eymard, founder of the Congregation of the Blessed Sacrament, St. Peter Chanel, who later became apostle and martyr in Oceania. The missionary charism of the PMS was born in this context of holiness to sustain the mission through prayer and charity”.

The Archbishop, pointing out the specific charism of the PMS, recalled that “our foundress, the venerable Pauline Jaricot, gathered her friends to pray and take up collections for the missions. This charism, this gift of the Holy Spirit, is a concrete way to participate in the subjectivity of the Church in the fulfillment of the missionary mandate. The Church, precisely as a body made up of members, is a promoter of evangelization. The support we offer has a very important function: to help missionaries to not

Project Report: Tanzania - Holy Childhood Association: St. Charles Dispensary – in the Diocese of Iringa - Kibao, Mufindi, Tanzania



Diocese of Iringa

Last October, we received a project report from the Sisters of St. Charles Borromeo who are working in the African nation of Tanzania. HCA Canada provided them with financial support for their multi-pronged approach to the spiritual, emotional and physical needs of the people they serve in Kabao-Mufindi, located in the Diocese of Iringa. Here is an excerpt taken from their website that describes the history of their work thus far in Africa:

“In giving heed to the spirit who inspires and directs, the then Superior General Mother Andrea with her council and the help of Fr. Stephan Chemmalakuzhy SDB inaugurated the first mission in Africa on 31st of May, 1997 at Iringa, Tanzania. The pioneers of the mission were Srs. Punithavathy Fernando, Mangala Mary, and Jansi Jai. The mission since then is growing and now has 24 Indian missionaries, two sisters from the place who form six different communities”.

(<http://stcharlesgeneralate.org>)

Srs Mangala Mary and Jansi Jai are the authors of the report which follows below. I am confident that you will be as deeply moved and impresses as we were as we read through their detailed report.

ST. CHARLES DISPENSARY
SISTERS OF ST. CHARLES BORROMEO
P.O. Box 33, KIBAO, MUFINDI, TANZANIA
Date: 16/10/2018

Dear Holy Childhood Association Members of Canada:

With hearts full of gratitude, we the Sisters of St.Charles Borromeo and the little children at ‘NURU’ Kibao dispensary, at Mufindi, in the Diocese of Iringa, greet you with great appreciation.

We gratefully appreciate your generous financial assistance made available to us in the past years. This has gone a long way enabling us to give of our best to the little ones under our care and prepare them for a better future.

The number of these children as usual has been fluctuating, some for a longer period while others for a few weeks and even a few days. All those who come to us will be given the maximum love, care and attention.

We sincerely thank you once again for your spiritual, moral and financial support and encouragement extended to us to continue God’s mission entrusted to our care. With help of clergy we try to organize regular Eucharistic celebrations, prayer services for the patients, baptism, confession, last sacrament to the sick and the dying.

Thanking you once again for all the support and encouragement extended to us. We take this opportunity to wish you a “Joyous Christmas and grace filled New Year” We remain yours gratefully in the cause of the poor and the underprivileged under our care.

Sister Mangela Mari Anthony
Sister in Charge
NURU Kibao Dispensary

REPORT ON OUR SOCIO- PASTORAL ACTIVITIES:

ST.CHARLES DISPENSARY: - the 76-bed dispensary is made up of various departments including: “out patients, in patients, voluntary counseling and testing for HI V/AIDS, TB clinic, RCH clinic, Nuru and Malnutrition unit”. We get about 45-50 out patients per day especially when other dispensaries run short of drugs or when patients’ needs become more serious they are referred to our dispensary from other centres.



The most common diseases are: - Acute Respiratory infections, Pneumonia, Bronchitis, Malaria, Anemia, worm infection, Diarrhea with dysentery, Dental caries, Malnourishment of the children under five and opportu-



nistic infections due to HIV/AIDS. Among the seriously ill who are admitted 90% of these cases are due to HIV/AIDS.



Voluntary Counseling and Testing for HIV: - We offer daily testing for HIV to the people in our V.C.T centre. About 75-80 clients are tested for HIV each month. The clients who test positive are counseled and send for C.T.0 (Care and Treatment Centre) where they are provided with free medicines and

ARVs (Anti Retro Viral drugs) if necessary. The negative clients are counseled to protect themselves against this pandemic disease. This is a free service provided to the people and it receives a good response from them.

Tuberculosis clinic:

- Around 30- 45 new cases are detected per year through sputum examination in our lab for pulmonary TB. They are treated for TB with drugs provided by the government.



education programs on nutrition, malarial prevention, HIV, as well as providing them with foods for a balanced diet, the importance of cleanliness and healthy home making for the mothers. All services and transport to and from the dispensary are provided free of cost.

RCH Clinic: -We check the weight of the children and for those who are under acceptable standards we give them special attention with food and medicine. We provide mothers and mothers-to-be with

Boarding for the 15 Orphan children: - Presently the dispensary has 15 orphan children under its care. These children are sent to normal school in the neighborhood. We assist them in their studies at home. Children are given opportunities to contribute their time in service to others and to improve their talents. They also attend the Eucharistic celebration on Saturdays, Sundays, feast days and on special occasions. There are many more orphans living by themselves in the surrounding villages. The help we give to these children is a drop in the ocean.



Malnourished Children: - The children we assist range in age from birth to 11-12. The children are provided with free examinations, treatments, beds and meals cooked by us. We also provide them with warm

clothes and other clothing until their physical condition improves. Some of these children are assisted in pursuing their studies.

Care of the sponsored children:

We also help 40 children, who stay with their guardians, because their parents are HIV/AIDS victims. We provide them with the necessities of life so they can continue their studies. Regular Spiritual animation is done to assist them in growing their faith. When needed they are called to the centre and they stay with us free of cost. We are happy to see their growth.



Pastoral care: We accompany the parish priest to the nine sub-stations of our parish to provide pastoral care to the people and assist the priest to care for the people of our parish. We help the children, the aged and all those who are need of our help in our own little ways.

Sr. Mangala Mari Anthony
Sister in Charge



Pontifical Association of the Holy Childhood: NEWS AND ACTIVITIES FROM OUR SUPPORTERS ACROSS CANADA

From Thunder Bay, Ontario:

The St. Anthony's Parish Youth Group with assistance from the parish's Children's Liturgy Group hosted a candy sale over two weekends prior to St. Valentine's Day in February. This annual event is a parish favourite, hitting all the right "sweet spots" as the children both raise awareness about the needs of children in dire situations elsewhere in the world and collect funds to direct towards the work of the Holy Childhood Association. Pastor, Fr. Luigi Filippini can be seen in the background. Well done, St. Anthony's Parish youth!



From Fraser Lake, British Columbia:

The St. Andrew's Parish Youth Group has been supporting the Holy Childhood Association for several years now. Spearheaded by Kathleen and Mae Steiner, the group continues to work hard for the needs of children world-wide. This year, one of the highlights of their HCA program was the CWL Christmas Bazaar. The children raise awareness of the HCA by soliciting donations from the parish community with special emphasis on gingerbread creations!



Society of Saint Peter the Apostle WHO ARE THE MISSIONARY PRIESTS?



Father Matthias Kotoka Amuzu

Through Baptism we are incorporated as Christians into the priestly, prophetic and kingly offices or ministries of Christ. By virtue of our baptism, Christ Jesus calls all his followers to become missionary; that means to be sent beyond your territory to different places, cultures and countries to spread the Good News of Christ. The Lord Jesus

Christ chooses some to be priests, some to be religious men and women, and some who remain laic. Each one is called according to his or her status and vocation.

A missionary priest belong to a particular congregation, and through his training he becomes comfortable with leaving what looks and feels "normal" to the rest of his society. They are willing to get out of their comfort zones and experience different cultures in order to share the gospel where it is needed. Missionary priests are sent to wherever there is desperate need for the message of Jesus.

Diocesan priests who are ordained for a particular diocese are also sent on missions to carry the Gospel to people outside their territories. They also serve the people of God in different capacities. In this regard they also have become missionaries.

The Spirit of a missionary priest flows from his personal response to the mandate Christ entrusted to His disciples: "Go out into the world; and proclaim the Good News to all creation" (Mark 16:15).

This great commissioning needs a deep commitment to Christ Jesus; a radical commitment, emanating from Christ's sayings to His followers, "You did not choose me. No, it is I who chose you; to go and bear fruit, fruits that will last" (John 15:16). Christ is the foundation and focus of the missionary priest.

This call demands commitment for life to serving God in our neighbour. It is a commitment to take risks, face the unknown; walking by "faith and not by sight", as Saint Paul put it in (2Corinthians 5:7). Such commitment leads to the bridging of societal gaps, and is grounded in the celebration of the holy sacraments, especially the holy Eucharist which is the center, the apex, the apogee through which the power and grace of Christ radiates. Put another way, it is the generator and live wire of the Catholic Church.



The call to be a missionary priest requires that its recipients be servants of God's people, and a servant of God's word. It requires fealty to Justice and Peace.

HOW ARE THESE MISSIONARY PRIESTS FORMED AND TRAINED?

Individual religious congregations have their own spirituality and other a pastoral needs that require additional years of formation.

The aspirant or candidate wishing to become a missionary priest must first complete a period of discernment and receive a recommendation for acceptance into a seminary before beginning his studies and formation.

ACADEMIC STUDIES:

The ordinary length of time to priestly ordination for an individual who completed university, or college, or secondary/ teacher training degree and has some pre-philosophical degree is six years.





The first two years focuses on philosophical studies followed by four years of theological studies. This may vary from one Religious congregation to another. For example, in some regional major seminaries in Ghana, Philosophical studies and Theological studies are both 4 years. Within the 6 years of formation, the candidate missionary priest will spend a spiritual year/pastoral apostolate in a parish. In some cases the seminarian will spend this period of internship in different fields of the apostolate.

SOCIAL, COMMUNAL AND PRAYER LIFE:

The formation of a missionary priest aspirant or candidate includes daily and regular prayer life, in form both individual and communal. He is required to attend daily masses and participate in receiving Holy Communion daily. There is periodic spiritual direction provided by his personal spiritual director, to enable his

personal growth and human formation. There are also regular spiritual meetings in group settings for ongoing formation and sharing one's journey with others. There are many other activities such as soccer, volleyball, basketball, table tennis, draft, Ludo etc. There are other important activities related to the social and communal life of the seminary.

During some vacations or holidays, the seminarian will be assigned to a parish, hospital, prison, tribunal etc. for pastoral experience and also to gain practical parish administration experience.

In the final year of his theological studies, and with the recommendation of his vocations director, and the director of formation, and the approval of the vocations committee in consultation with his superior, the seminarian is ordained to the diaconate, the final step before his ordination to the sacerdotal priesthood. After satisfying all the necessary requirements and receiving the approval of those in charge of his formation, he is ordained. He is now ready to take on his first missionary assignment, thereby becoming a missionary priest.



Photos Courtesy: Fr. Alex Osei C.S.Sp.

VATICAN

"Forming priests according to the heart of God"



Archbishop Protase Rugambwa

Photo: amecia news blog

Vatican City - Archbishop Protase Rugambwa, Secretary of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples in his opening remarks at the beginning of a new formation course for formators, stated that it "is part of the setting and preparation for the Extraordinary Missionary Month announced by Pope Francis for October 2019. The course intends to contribute to nourishing the spirit and the missionary passion in young Churches, in the five continents". Twenty-five Rectors and vice-Rectors from the Seminaries of the five continents participated in the course.

"We are convinced that the future of the Church depends on the quality of its priests", stated the Archbishop. "This is why our Dicastery considers formation, especially priesthood, as a priority, and is strongly committed to supporting not only formators but also the formation structures in mission territories. This happens through different modalities: the visits of the Prefect to the Seminaries on the occasion of his travels; the action of the Pontifical Society of St. Peter the Apostle; the service carried out by the Pontifical Urbaniana University to affiliated Institutes".

In Rome, the Pontifical Urbaniana University and five additional colleges host students from five continents: the Urban College for seminarians, Saint Paul, Saint Peter and Saint Joseph College for priests, and Mater Ecclesiae College for nuns.

"The decision to start a formation course for formators - continues Mgr. Rugambwa - is in continuity with the refresher course dedicated to the professors of the major Seminaries and Institutes affiliated to the Pontifical Urbaniana University.

The Archbishop explained the triple objectives of the course: "Offer adequate preparation to take on the direction of a Seminary; strengthen formation skills; update the participants on the challenges and current needs of priestly formation. To this end, we propose a program that includes master classes on various aspects of formation, but also practical exercises and group work with exchange of experiences".

Addressing the Rectors and vice-Rectors present, Mgr. Rugambwa said: "The future of the Church in Africa, Asia and Latin America is in your hands. You have an important responsibility to give your dioceses worthy priests, well prepared on a human, cultural and spiritual level, capable of carrying out evangelization. Today we need to form priests according to the heart of God, that is, priests who reflect a living image of Jesus Christ, Head and Shepherd of the Church".

"Your Seminaries, concluded the Secretary, are needed to form missionary disciples, in love with the Master, Shepherds with the smell of sheep, who live in the midst of them to serve them and bring them the mercy of God. It is necessary for every priest to always feel he is a disciple on a journey, constantly in need of an integral formation, understood as a continuous configuration to Christ. Be aware that the service you give to priestly formation is an excellent way to participate in the Church's missionary activity". An edited version, taken from Agenzia Fides, 02/20/2019.

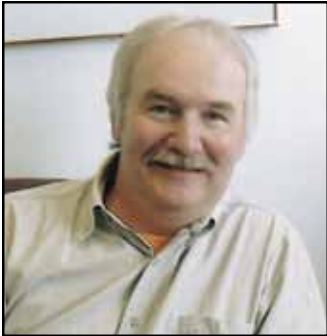
"Today we need to form priests according to the heart of God, that is, priests who reflect a living image of Jesus Christ, Head and Shepherd of the Church".



The Pontifical Urbaniana (Urban) University in Rome

Photo: Alekjds - Wikimedia.org. [cc-sa-by-4.0]

The Editor's Point of View



Making That Leap of Faith

The other day, I came across this quote from the late Henri Nouwen, a Catholic priest, educator, and theologian and two words jumped out at me:

“The Christian leader of the future is called to be completely irrelevant and to stand in this world with nothing to offer but his or her own vulnerable self. God loves us, not because of what we do or accomplish, but because God has created and redeemed us in love.”

Can you guess what the two words are? How about “completely irrelevant”. In the at times overwhelming impact of secularism and materialism on our world, I often wonder why we bother continuing the struggle to find faith and meaning. Nouwen offers a counterpoint to self-doubt and despair. We must embrace our vulnerabilities and weaknesses and present them openly to those around us. Leadership, in a Christian sense, does not involve bravado. Being witnesses to the Gospel calls each of us to present what we are, warts and all, to the world beyond the pew.



Photo: pixabay.com

My little friend in the picture has reached the end of the road. Or has it? Staring off into space, pondering next moves is so very much like many of us. How many times have we had to reconsider entrenched positions on issues that seemed unmovable at the time, only to discover that the solutions lay in taking more interest in the positions of others? I can walk back along the stem

and return from whence I came, or I can make the leap that faith requires in order to reach the next stage of my journey.

Our Church calls us to be mission-centred in everything we do. I have always struggled with this concept. How am I supposed to “do mission” in a world that sees faith as weakness and spirituality as suspect. No, better I sit quietly in my pew, pay my weekly tithe, and return to my regular life post Sunday. But that approach means I must return to what is possibly comfortable but also most certainly bland and pedestrian. Better still, I make the conscious effort to offer my vulnerable self to all whom I encounter. In subjecting myself to others, I become Christian. The lady in front of me in the grocery store lineup ends up being a dollar short. I offer her a loonie and move on. The driver beside me needs to change lanes to make a turn up ahead. I defer and let him in. The street person asks for help. I give it in a small way and move on. If God can love me for just being me, surely I can pass a little of that along.

For the final word on all of this, I turn once again to Henri Nouwen:

“Did I offer peace today? Did I bring a smile to someone’s face? Did I say words of healing? Did I let go of my anger and resentment? Did I forgive? Did I love?”

These are the real questions. I must trust that the little bit of love that I sow now will bear many fruits, here in this world and in the life to come.”

For more on the life and works of Henri Nouwen, visit:

<https://henrinouwen.org/about/about-henri/his-life/>

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:

- Frank Bartosek.....Edmonton, AB
O. Paul Cormier.....Halifax, NS
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World Digital Campaign

Every man and woman is a mission

*“I am a mission on this Earth;
that is the reason why I am here in this world.”*

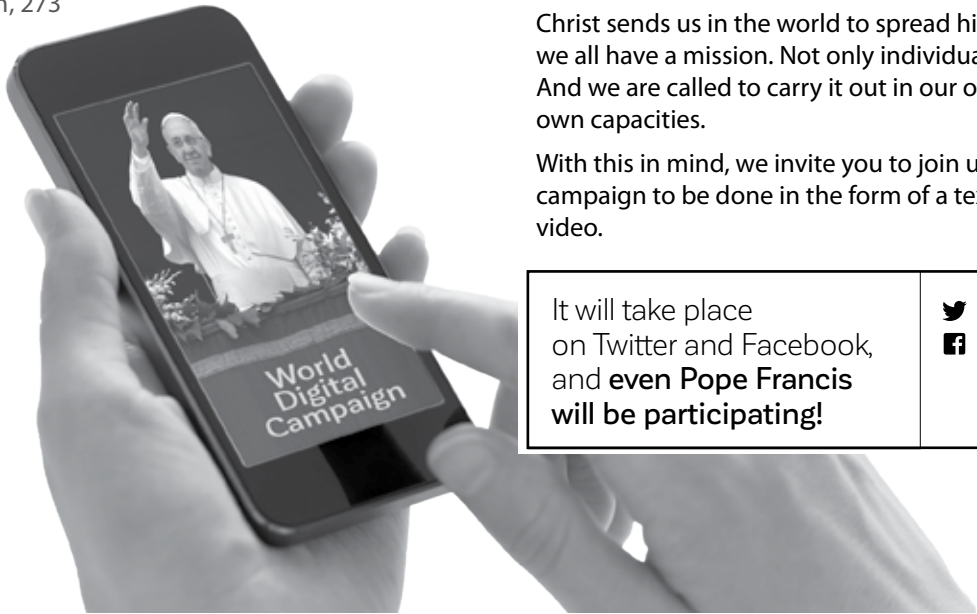
Evangelii Gaudium, 273

What is your mission?

The Extraordinary Missionary Month of October 2019 is an opportunity to emphasize, like never before, the very identity of the Church, which is missionary.

Christ sends us in the world to spread his message of love. Thus, we all have a mission. Not only individually but also collectively. And we are called to carry it out in our own way and within our own capacities.

With this in mind, we invite you to join us for a world digital campaign to be done in the form of a text, a picture or a short video.



It will take place on Twitter and Facebook, and even Pope Francis will be participating!



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**"And know that I am with you always;
yes, to the end of time".**

Matt 28:20