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THE GENERAL COUNCIL OF THE SOCIETY

Editorial Board

Francis Barnes, Asst. Gen.

André Simonart, Sec. Gen.

Patient Bahati

Freddy Kyombo

Editor

Freddy Kyombo

petitecho@mafr.me.org

Translations

Jean-Paul Guibila

Steve Ofonikot

Jean-Pierre Sauge

Administrative Secretary

Addresses and Dispatch

Odon Kipili

gmg.sec.adm@mafr.org

Editorial Services

Guy Theunis

Dominique Arnauld

Correspondents

Provincial/Sector Secretaries

Msola, Rome

Internet

Philippe Docq

gmg.webmaster@mafr.org

Archives

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Postal Address

Padri Bianchi, Via Aurelia 269,

00165 Roma, Italia

Phone **39 06 3936 34211

Stampa Istituto Salesiano Pio XI

Tel. 06.78.27.819

E-mail: tipolito@donbosco.it

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EDITOR'S WORD

"Our mission in areas of violence and instability: our pastoral response" is the theme of this second issue. Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger, Nigeria, Southern Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo, the State of Israel, to name but a few, have all experienced their share of violence and instability. Our confreres who live in these countries have shared, to some extent, the concerns of the people among whom they live.

It is true that the Missionaries of Africa no longer receive the "visa for martyrdom" or do not seek it, but they know perfectly well that the only guarantee they have when they go on mission is that of serving God in the "CARITAS" at the heart of the charism that sustains the life of their Society.

They are in the field, they serve with the spiritual support of the Lord; it is with respect that we give them the opportunity to tell us how they live the pastoral ministry in these environments which aspire to peace without violence and instability.

Freddy Kyombo

Cover

Collaboration with the Government of Niger

PHOTO JOSEPH MAKOKA

African Proverb : *"Those who quarrel are those who make up".*

Meaning : Any conflict resolved at the negotiation table... why don't we start there ?

Walking alongside God's people in their struggles and sufferings

“I am the good shepherd, the true shepherd, who lays down his life for his sheep. The mercenary shepherd is not the shepherd, the sheep are not his: if he sees the wolf coming, he abandons the sheep and runs away; the wolf seizes and scatters them. This shepherd is only a hireling and the sheep do not really count for him” (Jn 10:11-13).

In recent years, the Sahel subregion has become the scene of internal disputes that generate violence and cause loss of life. This situation, which continually provokes displacement, especially of the poorest among the population, has a great impact on the life of the Church in Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso. We continue to pray for the liberation of Sister Gloria Argoti, who was kidnapped in Mali on February 7, 2017 and of whom there is no news. There is no news either for Father Pier Luigi Moccalli of the Society of African Missions, kidnapped in Niger on the night of September 17-18, 2018. Months and years go by but no one is ready to forget these unfortunate events.

Burkina Faso, for its part, has been experiencing deadly and increasingly frequent attacks in recent years. These are trials that challenge on a daily basis not only the Christian faithful but also the pastoral agents present in the sub-region.

Stanley Lubungo
Superior General



This issue of the Petit Echo offers us the stories of some of our confreres who wanted to share how they are living their missionary vocation in Africa among people who are suffer-



FOREWORD

ing and worried about their future. The reflection of a missionary confrere in South Africa shows that situations of insecurity are not exclusive to West Africa. In many countries today the mission is lived in a context marked by insecurity and suffering linked to all kinds of violence that endanger the lives of everyone. How do we respond to this situation as missionary pastoral agents?

The testimonies that we read in the following pages invite us to reflect on the deep meaning of our missionary commitment through the oath and on the meaning of Mission in a context of insecurity and suffering. Through the missionary Oath, we consecrate our lives to the service of the people of God in the African world. It is appropriate to meditate on the fact that our life is given! The gift we make of ourselves calls for many sacrifices so that we may become those who, through service, give life to others. The Mission is further realized in our communion with those to whom we are sent.

The various testimonies remind us that in contexts of insecurity and suffering, as in many other contexts, mission consists above all in walking alongside the people of God. Mission is compassion, it consists in being and feeling with those we accompany. This is the example that Jesus, the good shepherd, has left us.

Sent, following the example of Jesus to bring the Good News of peace and joy so that the people of God “may have life”, we suffer with the people of God, to see villages emptied of their inhabitants or children who cannot study because the schools are closed.

Many times we are faced with complex situations, where we can do nothing to change the situation. But our presence to welcome, listen and accompany becomes a source of encouragement that gives strength to those who suffer. The support of our presence allows them to continue walking in the hope of seeing the light on the horizon that announces the exit of the tunnel. We bear witness to the living hope of the victory of good over evil that the Christian faith confesses.

Without passing judgment on the right discernment that can lead a community where an individual may decide to leave his mission station because of insecurity, we must recognize that in such cases the dynamic

becomes quite different among the people of God. The latter, while measuring and accepting the gravity of the situation, feels discouraged, lost and even abandoned. It is a drama that many of us do not wish to experience.

The conflict that is responsible for the insecurity in the Sahelian sub-region of Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger is marked by a strong religious character. This is evident in the testimony of Father Eugenio Jover. Far from resigning ourselves to discouragement in the face of our powerlessness in the face of the rise of Islamist extremism, this reality challenges us particularly in our charismatic identity as ‘specialists’ of the encounter with Islam.

Today, more than ever, we are called to invest ourselves more in dialogue with our Muslim brothers and sisters. This is what Pope Francis invited us to do during our audience with him on February 8, 2019, when he prayed that the Holy Spirit would make us builders of bridges between people. Wherever the Lord has sent us, may we contribute to the growth of a culture of encounter by continuing to be servants of a dialogue which, while respecting differences, knows how to be enriched by the differences of others so that peace may come between people.

Stanley Lubungo M.Afr
General Superior



Signs of hope in a suffering population



Once known as a country of peace and fraternity, Mali is today living an unfortunate situation where its glorious past is collapsing. Since 2012, Mali has been subjected to a series of incessant, heavy and destructive acts of violence that are forcing its fragile economy and its young democracy to bow to the threatening instability. This violence is the toxic fruits of the multiple armed conflicts that are taking place all over Mali, and even beyond. According to some experts, these conflicts have taken on the current scale because of the political crisis of 2012. Other political analysts believe, on the contrary, that these conflicts are the direct causes of that crisis.

Be that as it may, the fact is that this political crisis has changed the political climate, as evidenced by the presidential election in April of that year. The culmination of this crisis was the overthrow of the electoral process with the coup d'état of General Amadou Haya Sanogo and his supporters. For public opinion, this reversal of the electoral process was the real crack from which the operations of the armed groups, which until then had used other, more passive means, erupted in an explosive manner. The most important of these groups is the National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (MNLA). This is the new face of the Tu-

areg rebellion that has long been fighting for the independence of Azawad. It is to this giant group that, according to some political analysts, other groups are allied, such as the Salafists and the Jihadists, with whom other groups of the same kind are constantly emerging.

These different armed groups plunge the country into incessant and violent conflicts. They exist in many forms and bear many qualifiers; intercommunal, interfaith, ethnic, economic, political, among others. Whatever their qualifiers, these conflicts disrupt daily life in Mali at all levels and throw the majority of the Malian population into fear, confusion and uncertainty. The consequences are multiple and serious; there is so much loss of life and material goods. Social cohesion is broken, giving way to anger, hatred and revenge. Little by little, mutual trust and fraternity give way to mistrust and prejudice. In the end, everything up-roots peace: war reigns. Despair and suffering have now taken hold! How long and by what means these conflicts will end, we do not know. The war is far from over; the suffering remains!

One desire: peace

Faced with this distressing situation, only one value is sought: the return of peace to Mali. Those most affected by these conflicts desire and seek it, just as one seeks daily bread. Because of what we live, see and hear, peace is worth more than anything else at this time that we are living in Mali.

Locally manufactured mine posed by jihadists





MISSION

We, missionaries of Africa, who work specifically in the Kayes region, this cry for peace from the Malian population in general, and in our region in particular, resounds every day in our ears and in our hearts, and shakes us. Faced with the armed groups, the perpetrators of these unfortunate events, we always feel powerless to take concrete action to restore peace immediately. We also feel powerless to bring material help to those affected in order to relieve and comfort them.

In spite of all this, we are never discouraged from contributing our little stone to the reconstruction of peace. Strongly convinced of the power of prayer, we always put ourselves into it, imploring God's mercy on his children. Our Sunday and daily Masses are therefore very often offered for the restoration of peace in Mali and for the relief of the suffering population. Regularly, groups of soldiers of various religions come to ask us to pray for them and to bless them before they leave on mission. We always do so with all the seriousness that this requires, because we believe that in this time of war, our spiritual role is to strengthen the spirits of these men who put their lives on the line to protect the population.

This fact of prayer is not ours alone. The Church in Mali has made it an indispensable means for the restoration of peace in the country. Thus, through its Liturgical Commission, it has formulated a national prayer for peace in Mali for the use of every member of the faithful. It is up to us, pastoral agents, to disseminate it and to sensitize the faithful to pray it daily.

In our Christian community, we have lost Christian soldiers in the jihadist attacks, leaving their families homeless. What message do we bring to the widows? By extension, what message can we give to the survivors of the villages ransacked by these jihadists? Sometimes we don't know what to say except to say a few words of encouragement to give them hope. We consciously take it upon ourselves to be "signs of hope" among the suffering population. We see ourselves as bearers of hope through our quality of welcome, listening and closeness to the population. The objective is always to stimulate people to believe that all is not over. That God always remains master of the universe and that he will intervene in his time to renew everything. We also visit civil au-



Clétus with some of the faithful after a mass.
Among these faithful, a soldier who died during a jihadist attack a few months later.

thorities, traditional leaders and leaders of security institutions to support and encourage their efforts to rebuild peace. Through personal encounters we try to make people understand that the struggle for peace must always begin with oneself; hence the need for peaceful coexistence on the spot.

As for our faithful, our message at this time of distress is that of St James: “Take with a very good heart, my brothers, all the trials you go through, knowing that the test to which your faith is subjected produces endurance...”. (Jas 1:2-3). We are convinced that endurance will help our faithful to be the “leaven” of hope and courage in their environment. Our Christians are therefore called to be “new paths for a new Mali”, as recommended by the Episcopal Conference of Mali. It is within this framework that, despite the dangers of the attacks, we always dare to travel long distances to meet our faithful to celebrate with them the Eucharist, the perfect sign of hope. We also take advantage of these encounters to give various adapted formations for the consolidation of their Christian faith.



Experts explain the security situation in Mali during the Diocesan Assembly of Kayes in 2020.

In collaboration with the local Church, we unite our efforts with theirs in order to restore hope to the population. It is within this framework that we unite with the bishop of the diocese of Kayes and all the other pastoral agents, each year, during the diocesan days to formulate appropriate themes to better live the pastoral year. The deterioration of peace in Mali has strongly influenced this year's theme. We therefore want to live this year by focusing our efforts on building peace, justice and unity through peaceful coexistence. The theme is formulated as follows: "Baptized and sent, let us be peacemakers who promote justice and unity in the Diocese of Kayes". We live this theme at all levels in the details of daily life, such as our personal encounters with one another. In this time of conflict and violence, we are conscious of the importance of every gesture we make, for our actions can comfort and relieve, or overwhelm and destroy.

Cletus Atindaana

Our mission in the zone of violence and instability: Our pastoral response



This is a sharing of our missionary zeal which flows from our faith in Jesus Christ, sent as missionaries to Africa in a specific environment with clear apostolic aptitudes (Mt 10:16): “It is out of obedience to the Spirit and out of love for Africa that we respond to the call of Jesus. Disciples above all, we follow him and listen to him. Sent, we become apostles, witnesses of the resurrection. “(CA 2010, page 23).

It is a reality that our world today, the Sahel region of West Africa in particular, has been experiencing violence and instability for some years. It is a great challenge for the mission and for me who spent ten years of missionary life in this area of insecurity due to the religious fundamentalism of Islam, radicalization and violent extremism. We saw Christian Churches attacked and burned in Niger in 2012 and 2015. We have seen parishes of Missionaries of Africa temporarily closed in Gao, Mali, in 2012 and in Aribinda, Burkina Faso, in 2019 in the Niamey sector of the West Africa Province. We learnt of kidnappings of pastoral agents by unknown persons, armed men, bandits, jihadists, Islamists, in Niger, Burkina, Mali and Nigeria. In our parish of Zinder in Niger, in the region



Catholic Committee for Justice and Peace Education of Zinder Parish after a teaching on universal brotherhood

of Diffa, it is the sect of Boko Haram that continues to threaten Christians and terrorize the population. Our mission in fracture zones, violence, insecurity and instability is to be bearers of hope, love and reconciliation in line with our charism as missionaries of Africa: “Listening to the Spirit, faithful to the inspiration of Cardinal Lavignerie, we do not cease to respond to the prophetic mission that the Church has entrusted to us to the African world and to the believers of Islam” (CA 2010, page 22).

From September 18, 2018 to today, that is to say March 2020, the European Ministry of Foreign Affairs’ “Crisis and Support Centre”, declared two thirds of the country of Niger as red zones (formally discouraged) and the last third as orange zones (discouraged unless there is an imperative reason). There is no light green zone (reinforced vigilance) or dark green zone (normal vigilance). It is in this region that the missionaries of Africa live the prophetic mission of the Church. This creates feelings of fear, anguish and distress for the people because, at any moment, anything can happen, especially kidnappings and terrorist attacks. The situation is not easy for the stagiaires and young confreres appointed to our Province of West Africa (PAO).

These conflicts are linked to religious convictions. This rise in radicalisation and violent extremism has repercussions throughout the country. Radicalisation is a process leading the individual or a group to a fixed, closed position, based on the belief that this position is without any alternative (extremist belief). There is a clear will to impose one's beliefs, values, opinions, ideology, and vision, without any possibility of compromise: rejection of any compromise and aggressiveness towards difference; apology and culture of hatred towards the other. It is intolerance towards others who do not fit into the same pattern of thinking and acting.

This violent extremism is a consequence of radicalisation, i.e. the use of force and violence to solve a problem. It has many consequences on the lives of victims, for example, loss of life and property, disrespect for human dignity, abuse of children and vulnerable people, exodus and migration to Europe and elsewhere, food insecurity caused by the Boko Haram threats. Let us also add psychological, moral and spiritual trauma, as well as feelings of fear, hatred and revenge on the part of Christians.

Like our Blessed Martyrs of Algeria, we are convinced, through our missionary vocation, that "peace in Africa and elsewhere in the world is conditioned by inter-religious relations; It is therefore important that the values of dialogue be promoted so that believers work together, for example in associations oriented towards peace and justice, in a spirit of trust and mutual help, and that families be educated in the values of listening, fraternity and respect for others, beyond fear" (Synod of Bishops for Africa, 4-25 October 2009, No. 11).

A session on trauma healing was given to the faithful of the parish of Zinder following the unfortunate events of 16 and 17 January 2015. The confreres continue to offer the Christian faithful trainings on God's love, forgiveness and reconciliation.

We continue to collaborate with the government on a religious level in the fight against radicalisation and violent extremism in the regions of Zinder and Diffa.

We continue to teach young people about universal brotherhood, especially tolerance in the service of cultural and religious diversity. The



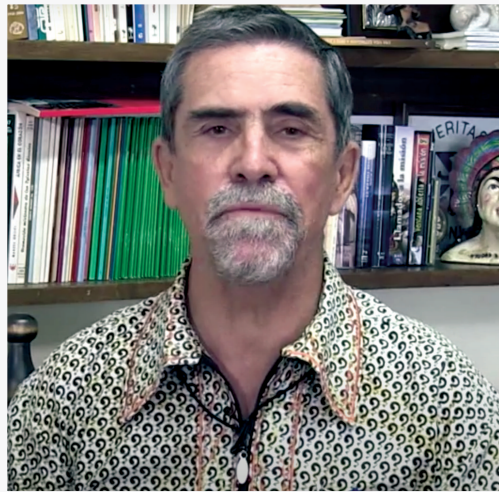
La Communauté de Zinder avec le Supérieur Général

programs “Tattalin zaman lahiya” of the CRS and “Zaman Tare” of CAFOD (through CADEV Niger) are tools for us missionaries to promote social cohesion, peaceful coexistence and religious freedom.

We continue, with prudence, to move out of “our comfort zones” for liturgical celebrations to the faithful in the red zones of Diffa and Nguigmi. We favour encounter and dialogue because “from now on we can no longer see an enemy in any man for whom Jesus died on the cross”.

Joseph Francis Makoka

Situation of the population in the Burkinabe Sahel (June 2019), consequences for pastoral ministry.



Few people know what happened on Sunday, May 12, 2019 in the small town of Dablo, in the north of Burkina Faso: the rapid arrival of more than 50 dhijadists on 27 motorcycles. Some of them burned two maquis (bars), burned the ambulance of the dispensary and stole the medicines. The others began to surround the church. The Mass had just started, but the terrorists closed the doors and ordered people not to move. They stole what the people had on them and demanded that the Christian leaders come out. The young priest Simeon Nyampá had the courage to hide the mass servers under the altar, then he tried to get out through the Sacristy; when they saw him, they shot him a few meters away. Outside, they made the five leaders lie down and then shot them; among them were the one who played the tam-tam and a 23-year-old scout leader. As they left, they burned the choir's books and shot at the tabernacle.

This barbarity strikes far more than the corona virus pandemic. Since 2015, gendarmes, policemen, schoolchildren and villagers have suffered the fury of the Islamists in the Sahel region. In 2016, the group “Ansarul Islam” claimed responsibility for several deadly attacks against the army. In 2017, the number of victims increased. This is not comparable to what happened in 2018 and what we experienced in 2019. From the city of Djibo, the terrorist acts moved to Arbinda and from there they progressed to Dori and the south. The vigilante groups reacted, and in January 2019 there was the massacre of 200 Fulani, many of them innocent people.

This caused so much panic among the population that they fled, abandoning their villages. People took refuge in localities with gendarmes, creating a serious humanitarian situation. A Catechist and a Protestant Pastor were kidnapped in 2018; in March 2019, it was the Parish Priest of Djibo, Father Joël, who was kidnapped when he had just visited a village; his whereabouts are unknown today.

More than 2,000 schools and colleges in the Sahel and elsewhere are still closed, as teachers have fled for fear. The terrorists do not want French to be taught: “Let the children learn Arabic and the Koran!” Is the whole population to convert to Islam?



Drilling carried out in Arbinda by the Catholic mission: the man on the right is Zakaria, the courageous caretaker of our house, which has been empty for more than a year.

Crossing a marigot during the rainy season, after mass on a Sunday, in Pelehote. This village has been empty for more than a year.



The terrorists have opened a new branch since Good Friday 2019 by attacking churches. On that day, they entered the chapel of Djika, filled with people who had come for the Way of the Cross. They were looking for the catechist, who had gone into hiding. After driving away women and young people, they shot the four or five men they had picked out. As they left, they set fire to a school. Two weeks later, the Protestants suffered another attack, killing 6 people. Two days later, there were four dead among the people carrying a statue of the Virgin Mary to Baam. And on May 26, 2019, in the region of Ouahigouya, a new attack took place against a church that claimed the lives of four faithful, including the catechist.

The current situation

The situation in the Burkinabe Sahel is therefore sad: the villages are empty; only the animals occupy them. The parish of Arbinda, which was entrusted to us, and the neighbouring parish of Gorgaji are closed: fathers and abbots had to leave, as well as the nuns. The other parishes of the diocese of Dori are running at a slow pace and pastoral work is limited to the centres; no one dares to venture out on roads that have become very dangerous.

Terrorist violence has spread and gained ground towards the south and east of the country: Barsalogo, Fada, and now Sebba, suffer daily



A catechist and his wife freed after 4 months of captivity by the jihadists.

from attacks that each time lead to new displacements of populations. The number of refugees exceeds 750,000 people, poorly housed, malnourished, without work...

Where are we going? Looks like the terrorists are trying to create a territory for themselves where they can rule and impose their ways. Since many are cattle herders, they want to be able to graze their herds without being hindered by farmers. The

government is reluctant to negotiate with them. The military option does not seem to be working because there are so many victims. Everything is suspended until the general elections next November, when the person elected president will have to decide.

Two things seem to me to be appropriate and a third to be worth mentioning.

1) That the world does not forget the refugees in the Sahel and that we continue to support the living together of Muslims and Christians. The terrorists want to provoke war between us; they will not win, because we continue to work for interreligious dialogue.

2) That we cultivate peace: like health, it is a gift to be asked of God in prayer, says Philippe Ouedraogo, the Cardinal of Ouagadougou.

3) To know that in the Sahel we have since 2019 our first martyrs: the dozens of Christians killed while they were praying. And among them two priests, a Salesian (Spanish) and an diocesan priest from Burkina Faso. May they intercede for the peace and well-being of the people of Africa.

Eugenio Jover

South Africa: A Place of Conflict and Beauty



South Africa is a place of conflict and beauty. We are constantly reminded of this as we walk and share our encounter with others. When Apartheid ended in 1994 we began to look upward and trust in a vision of hope filled with a brighter future. That hope and trust is still there but the motivation has changed and it is interrupted within the context of a violent society. It is well documented around the world that South Africa is a society where the basic daily activities are governed by crime, social unrest/racism, economic division/apartheid, gender abuse, xenophobia, political fatigue and a basic lack of trust in the other. It is difficult to build a society when the essential ingredients are missing and insecurity prevails.

As a pastoral response, we as Missionaries of Africa endeavour to be different from the norm. Our living amongst the people, our response to the cries and needs of the people are felt by our constant awareness and fundamental option for those who are deeply affected, revealing a living God experience. This missionary experience is a call from within that enables us to go where others and even the locals are too frightened to



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go. It enables us to respond to the cries of a victim of rape and bring a sense of healing; it enables us to go into the squatter camp where crime is the political party that governs. We rely on the advice of the people but at times you have to believe in yourself to go where it is a NO go area. This fundamental trust and option allows us to respond where many others have ran in the opposite direction. Confreres have lost their lives as a result of this option and other confreres have been traumatised to the point where they do not want to return.

Last December we remembered the tenth anniversary of Fr Louis Blondel who was shot dead by teenagers. One teenager after serving nine years in prison for the shooting of Louis was shot dead three weeks later upon his release. This is a daily nightmare for the people of South Africa, will they make it home to a place of safety and once in their homes are they still safe? One can say it is a constant struggle.

It is also our nightmare. When we attend a night vigil, our parishioners are very aware of our vulnerability. They travel with us to “keep us company” but it is more to keep us safe. That is the value they place upon us and surely we as missionaries need to place a similar value upon the people we serve, the value of life. When doing the night vigils you often hear gun shots in the distance. The fundamental option comes into play; do we decided not to go or do we go and trust in God and the people to bring us home safely. The people greatly admire us for our dedication and response as so many people including their own have let them down. In some way it empowers their image of God and hope in humanity that we walk by their side and by their struggles.

Last November we had the sad reality of the xenophobia attacks but we also heard how our Christians helped in removing the goods from the stores of foreigners and placing it in their homes for safe keeping, a proud moment where our Christians have come of aged and embraced the values of Christ.

A reality that is very revealing to me is that when you have a violent society over a period of time one tends to accept it and live with it protecting oneself and ones responsibilities. This has created a society that looks after number one first, followed by the other, can one blame them

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at times? But another reaction reveals itself as well in South Africa whereby the community comes together. We are part of a group called the Community Policing Forum who invite us to pray with them when they are on patrol. This is a group that was set up by the community to help the police to police the area. You have Muslims, Hindus and Christians and those of no faith involved in the group, breaking down walls and building bridges. They put themselves at the service of the community and at times risking their lives to build a better society based on security and trust.

After so many years working in Ireland and now in South Africa for the last eighteen months, I can honestly say I'm happy to be back in a place I call home. Have things changed since I was last here, I can honestly say Yes but the struggles and the basic challenges to survive are still a daily motivation to live. When you have a society where over 50% of our youth are unemployed and with little hope it does reveal a sense of hopelessness. When you have a rape every three minutes and 60 people shot dead daily there is a certain melt down in society. As a pastoral response, we need to instil a sense that every person is an image of God. But such a response needs to begin with ourselves where we represent the image of God in all our endeavours and encounters. We pray that we continue to take the fundamental option for good, revealing a God that is fundamentally with the people in their struggles and fundamentally helping people to hope.

P.J. Cassidy





Coronavirus without Xenophobia



We are living in a tormented time that worries and humiliates us. Indeed, we thought, thanks to our knowledge and the means at our disposal, that nothing important could escape our control and that our situation of “well-being” was assured. We believed that we were the absolute masters of our world. Now a small virus, which we call coronavirus, is defying our knowledge and destroying our well-being.

The dramatic progression of this coronavirus has meant that, as an emergency measure, we are forced to live in quarantine. Pope Francis warns us that this situation should not be experienced as “a saviour who can”. The coronavirus must not lock us up in a closed cupboard to live on the fringes of everyone. The protection of our own life must not drown our love for others. In our lives, we sometimes isolate ourselves to regain our strength in order to better serve others.

In my youth, I heard a word that hurt me: “homo homini lupus”; man cannot be a wolf to his fellow man. Looking at any man as a wolf is a very serious mistake that destroys our relationships. God saves the world



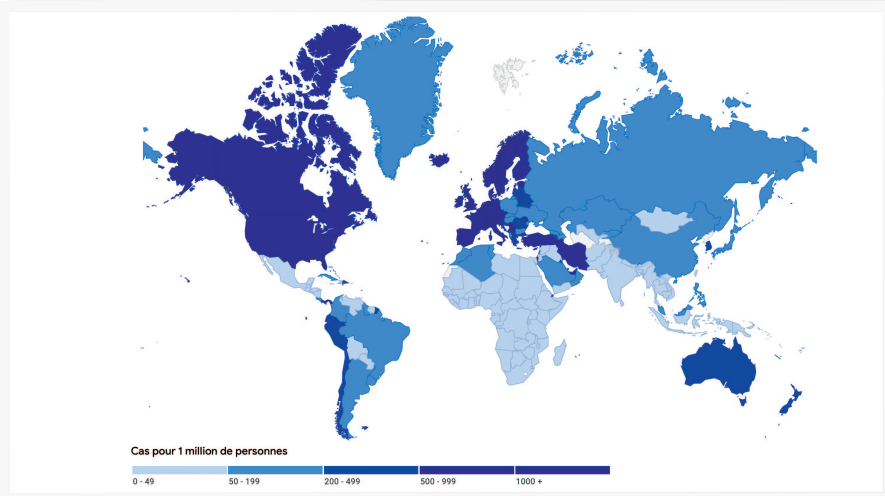
Blood is red for everybody

when he tells us: love one another as I have loved you. And God shows us his love when he dies for us on the cross.

In this time of quarantine, we thank and celebrate with great joy the courage and self-sacrifice of so many people who devote themselves to care for the sick suffering from the attack of this coronavirus. Some have not recognized the face of Christ in these sick people; Christ will undoubtedly recognize them and will know how to welcome them into his Kingdom of Love.

The total victory will be that of a world united in battle.

China, Italy, Iran, the United States, Spain, France, Japan, Senegal, Israel, South Africa, Korea, Rwanda, etc., so many countries committed to the fight against the coronavirus, offer us the image of a new world being born in the collaboration against this cruel scourge of coronavirus. The victory will be that of all united. The vaccine will also be the fruit of united researchers who speak different languages among themselves. In this struggle, hand in hand, new bonds of friendship will be born. Those who have died in China, Italy, Japan, Spain or Burkina Faso, etc., will be our dead. A new world is at our doorstep.



Le monde entier est atteint par le Covid-19

It is no longer enough for us to see the coronavirus away from our country. If we want to enjoy the beauty of Kilimanjaro, it will not be possible if the coronavirus is still there. We will not be able to visit our neighbouring countries if the ghost of the coronavirus is hidden there to devour our health. There will be total peace when the coronavirus will no longer find a place in any corner of the world.

It is with great joy that we see that in China the coronavirus is being defeated. We also rejoice with the sick who have regained their health. We admire the generosity of the people placed at the service of the sick, as well as the great economic means employed to deliver all those who suffer from this coronavirus. We hope that these efforts will culminate in total victory all over the world.

We cannot forget the poor countries that do not have the economic means to defeat this scourge and feel threatened by the fear of seeing this virus spread among their people. Without international collaboration, they will not have the means to defeat the coronavirus. The final victory will be that of the family spirit that God has willed to establish in our world: we are all children of God.

German Arconada

Tranquillising Development in the Name of Religion



Religion in its originality has a great role to play in the development of humanity. It neither contradicts nor does it stand as a tranquilliser or an opium to human development. Of course, religion is an encounter between a person and the Creator. It may also be described as person's drive toward Ultimacy – the Divine, the Sacred, the Holy, the More, a Something Greater. A loose definition of religion is simply 'whatever matters most for a person; whatever the Ultimate Concern is'. 'Religio' means "I tie or bind myself to that which is decisive and essential." Though its major concern is to cater the spiritual aspect of a human person, it as well recognises that a person is not only spirit but also matter. It is for this reason that when missionaries were sent to different parts of the world, they did not end up at the pulpit proclaiming the Good News with empty words. They very much proclaimed the Good News through education by building schools, improving people's health by building and sustaining hospitals, by opening up new areas even those which were remote; thus, constructing roads and bridges in order to reach those areas; introducing and encouraging people not only to cultivate or grow food crops but also cash crops. Those missionaries embraced the integrity of creation as part of their mission. That is why



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mission compounds were an exemplary to this fact as they made sure that trees and flowers of different spices were well kept or cared for without compromise. Fruits, orchards and vegetable gardens were part of their identity. One could easily identify a mission compound from afar. In other words, development was part of the package of their mission, practicalising and impacting the Social Teaching of the Church (STC).

The gospel of prosperity of which Fr. Richard Omolade calls, “The Poverty of the Prosperity Gospel” as it is shrouded with sweet language that is quite seductive and appealing, promising believers that suffering will never be their portion, only prosperity in all aspects of their lives (cf. The Good News about Christian Suffering, p. 39), is totally against the original meaning and understanding of religion. Popular preaching exalting miracles, breakthroughs, sowing of the seed and emphasis on ‘give and it will be given unto you’ are systematic manipulations of tranquillising development through or in the name of religion. Some pastors and preachers misinterpret or manipulate Scriptures for their own personal gain. In implication, they try to convince people that ‘God rewards laziness and poverty.’ ‘Simply pray, go to the vigils and weekend long prayers, and fast as much as possible, and give what you have to the pastor, and the rest will be rewarded to you.’ These pastors give the impression that, you can reap where you have not sown; you can get something – even instantly - out of nothing as long as you can offer what you have to your pastor and he or she will pray for you. The devil will be defeated and the way to success will be unblocked; hence, opened unto you. This is a dream of immediate relief like tranquilliser. The sick, instead of taking them to the hospital for proper scientific treatment, spiritual attack is brought in or instigated; hence, the sick are taken to the pastor in order to cast out the devil or bad spirit. It is a way of blindfolding the congregation or those concerned whose thinking and reasonability is tight up; religious or rather spiritual manipulation at its core. No wonder quite a number of pastors and preachers today are so rich while the congregation, the people around them remain detrimentally poor. Media platforms are crammed with adverts about miracles. Significantly, ‘miracle money’ stands tall above any other miracle. The ‘tippex’ believers¹ run from one

¹ ‘Tippex believers’ are the so called ‘believers in vacuum’ who simply hang around

place to another in quest of miracle money. How can progress and development come in such a circumstance, especially in Africa?

Missionaries, even our own confreres, namely White Fathers, following the example of Jesus himself, did not try to tranquillise development through religion. They proclaimed the Gospel holistically and in its authenticity. And that is what we are called to do today not only in Malawi or where we work as missionaries, but also in Africa as a whole, to preach the Gospel in its positivity focusing on the messages which add values to the real life of a human person such as hard work, creativity, punctuality, honesty, dedication, commitment, perseverance and a sense of responsibility to the community. Part of proclaiming Good News is to encourage people, the faithful or congregation, to clean and maintain their surroundings, to be creative and innovative instead of complaining or waiting for the government to do everything for us or get collar-job employment. Reading the signs of the times, we should rather preach the gospel of working hard to producing goods and services out of systematic planning and critical thinking and analysis that can be synthesised accordingly. That is how the noble citizens function for the progress of their country.

The northern pole, highly developed part of the world – Europe and America – where many of our people of our time have or dream to migrate for green pastures did not reach that stage out of nothing or out of vigils, miracles and empty, manipulative, ‘prayer-grammar’ of their pastors. Their high standard of living and their strong economy which is at the level of competitive global scale did not occur out of religious superstition, or through shouting, ‘Alleluias and Amens!’ Citizens made a lot of sacrifices because of the love of their countries. Tranquillising development through religion is totally against God’s intentionality. Jesus has given us the norm strictly internalised, integrated and followed by our fathers in faith, ‘intacted and intagliated’ in the Social Teaching of the Church! The Benedictine monks would say, ‘Ora et Labora.’ Tranquillising development in the name of religion is to entertain both economic poverty and the poverty of mind. It is being cocooned in poverty!

looking for miracles from one church/ministry to the other. And they are difficult to be convinced otherwise.



The world in an area of turbulence



Speaking of “zones of violence and instability”, we tend to think immediately of guns, machetes and other weapons of mass destruction . But today’s scenario is one of a world war without the sound of boots, the crackling of bullets and the detonation of bombs. All is quiet! And yet, everyone is holed up at home, frightened by a “common and invisible enemy” that can arise from anywhere. Nations are literally destabilized; they had not foreseen this, despite their advanced technology. The “coronavirus” - alias “Covid-19” since we have to name the common enemy - appeared in faraway China and everyone was inclined to make sometimes disparaging comments about the eating habits of our “cousins from the East”; all of them were far from imagining that in our time when the earth has become a “global village”, what comes out of Wuhan in China can reach your doorstep twelve hours later. Nothing is too far to reach us anymore.

Today, the whole world is at war! But as often happens, there are wars within wars. Let us leave aside the “conspiratists” whose imagination is certainly overflowing, but who have the advantage of denouncing the “scientific pettiness” between the major powers, with their share of secrecy which gives free rein to all suspicions on the part of those who are convinced that they are preparing bad tricks against us in order to establish their domination.

The most disturbing thing is the war between those who are supposed to find solutions to curb the pandemic: doctors, pharmacists, researchers of all kinds; they cannot agree on how to treat this disease that has taken a frightening number of lives, in times of peace. What is the molecule that really cures? What is the right protocol to follow to provide effective care? What vaccine to use and where to test it? Behind all of this are indecent questions: “Who will win what? Who’s going to make a profit? Who’s going to give this deal to?” It feels like they fell on their heads.

The panic in the “advanced” countries arose in terms of the number of beds available and to be made available in hospitals, the number of ventilators for the sick in great distress, the appropriate way of detecting the disease and also the best way of preventing contamination. The economic survival aspects quickly found short-term solutions to enable citizens to continue to live calmly in spite of the health emergency measures. Billions of euros were announced in Europe to support large, medium-sized and small businesses, to support the economy which had indeed panicked in the stock markets. They have managed somehow to calm people’s spirits, although complaints are not lacking.

This same war in the third world has other issues at stake. In addition to the “crowned virus” which has already appeared everywhere, there is the economic crisis which did not wait for the arrival of Covid-19. If we consider only Africa, it is clear that many countries were already experiencing violence and instability caused by misgovernment, Corruption that gangrenates society, instrumentalized rebellions, systematic looting of raw materials by multinationals, etc.... But for the poor people in the neighbourhoods where we work, when you ask them how they are living this pandemic situation, they often answer, somewhat ironically: “Padre, the disease is certainly there, no one denies it. But asking us to stay in confinement, they are asking us to starve to death... The rest of us are living “at daily rates” (they pay us on the job)”. For them, there is war! That of the belly. It must also be taken into account. So, what pastoral approach for these people?

Freddy Kyombo

Giuseppe Bologna 1931 - 2019



Here is a true Israelite! In saying this of Father Giuseppe Bologna, we are not borrowing a metaphor, but simply telling the truth. Indeed, his great-grandfather was an Italian Jew who converted to the Catholic faith in the 1830s. Giuseppe was able to verify this personally in the archives of the Kingdom of Piedmont. At the time, the administration had to register a change of religion. As proof of his Jewishness, there is still his surname, Bologna, the name of a town in the north-central part of Italy. In the eighteenth century, when the Jews were summoned

to adopt an Italian name, some took the name of a town to recognize each other. By the way, this choice proved to be a death trap during the Second World War because it made it easier for Nazi-fascist squads to spot Jews. Those who were caught unfortunately ended up in the extermination camps.

Diocesan priest

Giuseppe was born in Agliano, in the Province of Asti (Piedmont), on 14 April 1931. It was there that he received his Christian initiation. In 1942 he asked to be admitted to the seminary of Asti. There he studied and completed his secondary school education up to the baccalaureate and the year of philosophy.

During this time, he proved to be a thoughtful young man, enthusiastic about his vocation, gifted with a keen intelligence and solid piety. The diocesan seminary does not report anything special for this time, apart from a surprising “escapade”. Giuseppe is passionate about the mountains and at the age of 18-19 he has a great desire to climb the Matterhorn, a peak be-



tween Italy and Switzerland that rises to 4468 meters above sea level. He made arrangements with experienced mountaineering friends because the ascent of the Matterhorn is hard and very dangerous. He knew that he would never get permission from his superiors, because they could not take it upon themselves to let him embark on such an adventure, so he decided to act on his own and set off on the sly. A friend is charged with announcing it after he's gone to the Rector. The climb, although very difficult, went without accident and Giuseppe immediately returned to the seminary. He was reproached by the superiors, but they forgave him for this sprain, given his common sense and his fidelity to his vocation.

He then began theology and on April 11, 1955, he received the diaconate. It was during this period that Giuseppe, with the advice of his companion, deepened his love of prayer. He decided to devote four hours a day to prayer. He will remain faithful to it until the end of his life! The Eucharist, the Office, the reading of the Bible, the Rosary, silent adoration... filled his days, which were always so busy!

He was ordained priest two months later, on June 29th, and

was appointed curate in the large parish of San Damiano d'Asti. Close to the people, he was loved by everyone. The bishop of Asti, considering his priestly lifestyle, appointed him, still very young, vice-rector of the diocesan seminary.

Missionary White Father

Meanwhile, Giuseppe felt strongly the call to mission "ad extra", which he had already thought of during his years of study. He knew the White Fathers through Fr. Vito Novo, also from Asti. He was in no hurry. He thought and prayed over it a long time. Then he spoke to his bishop, who agreed. Giuseppe then contacted Father Bosa, Provincial of Italy. On June 18, 1964, the bishop granted him the faculty to leave.

The novitiate took place at Gap in 1964-65. The Father Master did not consider him as a novice, but as a collaborator. After the novitiate, he left for a pastoral training course at Mours; it was there that he learned of his appointment for Eastern Zaire.

On December 21, 1965, he was in Bukavu to learn Swahili. "It was not easy," wrote a confrere who worked with him, "but he managed



to express himself quite quickly and, throughout his stay in the mission, he never stopped perfecting his linguistic knowledge. This allowed him to be close to the people, to understand them, to make him understood and to preach in a clear way that was appreciated by those who listened to him”.

He was admitted to the temporary oath in 1966 and to the perpetual oath on 12 December 1967. He was then appointed to Mutesa where he stayed for only one year and then spent a year in Kalima until 1970. There, he had to face work at the limit of human strength. There are three of them at the mission, but they have to take care of 20,000 Christians, scattered over a territory 150 km in diameter, with roads that are often impossible. In spite of the difficulties, they live this time as a gift. But it doesn't last.

On the breach

Bishop Pirigisha, Bishop of Kasongo, called upon him because he intended to use his help to deal with a situation of serious tension and conflict. Giuseppe himself spoke about it in a letter to the Provincial of Italy: “The local priests,” he wrote, “rebelled against the bishop, guilty in their eyes of

having been chosen from among the clergy of another diocese and another tribe, and they set him up against all Christendom. They did everything they could to make him go away. The bishop would have left if the White Fathers had not courageously sided with him. He had even been booed in his cathedral and interrupted when he spoke... I was called here to face this situation and first of all to work to bring about the reopening of the cathedral, which had been banned, while waiting for an Apostolic Visitor” (February 1, 1972). For a whole year, Giuseppe remained alone as parish priest of the cathedral with a Christianity of 8,000 Catholics. Things did not get any better with the local clergy; the Christians, on the other hand, changed their hostile attitude towards the bishop.

With the departure of the bishop's secretary for health reasons, Giuseppe was called upon to replace him. He accepted, knowing that he would not be a mere “paper-pusher” in a diocese that has neither Vicar General nor Chancellor. Many problems would obviously fall on him.

At that moment, the Italian Province began to ask for him to come to Italy, because it needed him for the training of young people.



Ivo Guisson, Regional Assistant of Kasongo, wrote back. He reiterated what Giuseppe had already written, but added that his departure would be an irreparable damage to the parish: "This parish is highly traumatised... after two years of patience, we return to a healthy situation, thanks to Giuseppe's work and know-how. To take him away now would risk destroying what has been painfully built" and he added that as secretary he replaced the bishop on many occasions (9 February 1972).

The confreres of the Kasongo area were well aware of Giuseppe's work and spirit. In 1973 they chose him as Regional Councilor. But excess of work and worries had weakened him. In 1976, he asked for a sabbatical year in Rome. He returned the following year and was assigned to the parish of Wamasa as curate.

Regional Assistant

In 1979, a new charge awaited him. He was appointed Regional Assistant for Kasongo. Taking into account the distances and the difficulties of communication, he actually played the role of Provincial. Just as he was close to the Christians, he was to his confreres. Every year he visited them all three times,

in spite of the poor state of the roads. A number of confreres criticized him because of being severe, but all recognized the example he set and the solid piety rooted in the Word of God that animated him.

In 1987, at the end of his term of office, he took a holiday in Italy and attended the session in Jerusalem. On his return to Zaire, he was again appointed to Wamasa, but this time as parish priest. The Italian Province, which had been asking for him over and over again, finally won its case and obtained his return in 1991. The center for the training of youngsters having closed, Giuseppe was assigned to missionary animation in Treviglio. The priests of the deanery soon discovered him, asking him for their recollections and for preaching. His charism also attracted many young students who often visited him and invited him to their meetings and camps. When Father Gaetano Cazzola left for Burkina Faso, he was appointed superior of the community. In 1995, having completed the triennium for which he had been called, he asked to return to Zaire. The confreres insisted that he stay for another year, to finalise the work of animation that he had started so well, but Giuseppe pre-



ferred to return to Kasongo where he worked as curate until 1999. It was the time after the genocide with the sometimes bloody unrest forcing missionaries at times to flee so as to avoid deadly risks. On their return, they sometimes found their mission stations ransacked and needing major repairs.

Giuseppe's last spell in Africa took place at the seminary of La Ruzizi, where he worked as a formator until 2004. Then came the farewell to his beloved Africa.

Return to Italy

Back in Italy, he did not retire. With the agreement of the provincial and the bishop of Asti, he engaged in pastoral work in San Damiano,

where he had worked as a young curate. He remained there for 14 years, until the end of his life. A lady of the town gave this testimony: Father Giuseppe had great humanity towards everyone and especially towards the sick whom he often visited; he was a man of prayer and great cultural openness.

He died on 22 October 2019, caused by a tumor. He suffered a lot from it, but never lost his lucidity. His funeral revealed the measure of his spiritual and human worth: three bishops and 40 priests concelebrated Mass in a church crowded with the faithful. Thus entered into his eternal Easter this son of Abraham, according to the flesh, but also according to faith.

Aldo Giannasi

Giuseppe Mattedi 1926 - 2019



***T**he Father who always smiled. That's what we called him and that's how we remember him. Many people who knew him were struck by that characteristic trait of Father Giuseppe Mattedi.*

On the morning of September 9, 2019, at Treviglio, the community of the White Fathers, together with relatives, friends and acquaintances and a large number of diocesan priests, accompanied Father "Bepi" on his last trip. After the funeral Mass celebrated in the church of

the Conventino, next to our community, the body was buried in the priests' chapel in the nearby cemetery.

Bepi was born in Bolzano on 23 February 1926 to a Tyrolean father and German mother from Munich. His family was forced to immigrate to Turin when he was a child because of the difficult political situation in South Tyrol. Even as a child he experienced in his own flesh the tragedy of so many displaced persons and refugees whom he would later meet in his missionary life. Throughout his childhood and youth he suffered from a health problem that often caused him to vomit, which weakened him greatly, but whose cause was never known. One day his mother put a picture of Blessed Therese Ledochovska under his pillow. The next day, he woke up cured and stopped vomiting.

Second of 5 children (4 boys and 1 girl), he finished his middle and higher studies at the diocesan seminary of Giaveno (Turin), following the example of his older brother who had become a diocesan



priest many years before him. It was during these seminary years that Father Gramaglia of the White Fathers, originally from Buttigliera d'Asti, came to visit. He spoke about his missionary apostolate in Uganda. Bepi was struck by his simplicity and his love for Africa. Three seminarians asked to join the Missionaries of Africa, but only he and Fr. Milone were accepted. In 1947, he left for Tunisia for theology. In 1949, he was at Maison Carrée in Algeria for his novitiate and then returned to Tunis. In 1952, he took the oath and joined definitively the Society; he was ordained deacon and priest in 1953. Here is what his Formators wrote of him: "good judgment, very upright, generous and constant will, firm and flexible. Excellent character, gentle and kind, very delicate, charitable and helpful, cheerful and reserved, very good confrere".

In 1953 he returned to Italy where he was asked to take care of the children in the minor seminary of Parella (Ivrea), then in the newly built minor seminary of Treviglio (BG). While admitting that he had limited teaching skills, he tried to make fruitful that good nature and gentleness of character that would always distinguish him, and also the unshakeable tenacity that was

another of his characteristics.

In 1961, he left for Africa. This time, the destination is the small country of Rwanda, where he will spend 45 years. One day in January 1970, as he was driving towards Gisenyi, someone waves to stop him. He stopped and this person gave him a telegram announcing the death of his mother.

In 1991, I had the chance to visit him in the parish of Rukomo where he was the curate. This parish is on the border with Uganda and there were gunshots heard there day and night. People were being attacked and killed.

His superiors recognized in him a man of great value, of great regularity, of extraordinary capacity for work. He really loved the parishioners, and he had learned the language so well that no instruction was too much for him. Frank in his relationships, very sincere in front of the confreres, broad and open, he was a magnificent confrere, very apostolic.

He had the opportunity to go several times to Kibeho, the place of the apparitions of the Virgin Mary, to celebrate Mass there and to meet the two visionaries Alfonsina Mumureke and Marie Claire



Mukangango who was later killed during the genocide.

In 1994, the year of the genocide, he was forced to leave the country, but he went to help Rwandan refugees in Tanzania and Burundi. In 1997, he returned to Rwanda where he stayed until 2006, when he returned to Italy for a hip operation that also revealed other health problems. He was advised to say goodbye to Rwanda and the mission in Africa; he did so reluctantly at first, but quickly adapted and faced the challenges of the new situation with surprising vigor.

In spite of some difficulties, Fr. Bepi has never shied away from the demands of life. During the 13 years he spent at the Treviglio residence, he carried out his priestly ministry in many surrounding parishes. In the community, he is a

nurse, priest, gardener, security guard, newsroom assistant, barber and more.

In the last five weeks of his life, an infection resistant to countless medical treatments, caused redness all over his body, swelling and finally dryness and detachment of the skin. After a few days of home care that did not lead to any improvement, he was admitted to the hospital in Treviglio. He responded very well to the first course of treatment and showed encouraging signs of recovery. Unfortunately, the infection worsened due to another pathology taken at the hospital. His health rapidly declined. In the last few days, he received many sedatives. The Lord freed him from his agony by calling him to Himself on Monday, September 9, 2019.

Aldo Giannasi

Erich Brink 1940 - 2019



Erich Brink was born in Münster on 6 November 1940 to a single mother. At the age of two, Erich was taken in by the large family of Hermann and Maria Stöer in Meppen in the diocese of Osnabrück. Erich remained strongly marked by this family, which was very committed to the values of the Gospel. From 1947 to 1955 he attended elementary school and from 1955 to 1958 he trained as a carpenter. Later as a Brother, he was appreciated not so much for his intellectual work than well for know-how: he was a very good carpenter.

As early as 1958 he felt the call to a missionary life; he asked the Missionaries of Africa to be accepted as a candidate. On January 30, 1959, he entered the postulancy in Langenfeld. From August 9, 1959 to August 9, 1961 he was at the novitiate in Hörstel where he took his first oath. Then he went to the scholasticate at Marienthal, Luxembourg, for three years.

In November 1964 he arrived at Navrongo in Ghana where he worked in carpentry and construction. It was also at Navrongo that he took his solemn oath on 15 August 1968. In 1972 he interrupted his stay in Ghana; he was first at Hörstel in 1974, then for a few months in London to perfect his English. In February 1976 he returned to Ghana to the Diocese of Wa. From April to October 1978, he followed courses for the brothers in Rome and returned to Ghana in the Dioceses of Wa and Tamale. In 1986, he was appointed to Zambia where he arrived in September and was employed in construction. His health, however, obliged him to return to Europe.

Erich arrived in Germany in 1993. From 1998 to 1999 he spent a short time in Rome for work in the house and in the garden. Back in Germany, he was first in Trier for house work and then in Cologne as assistant to the local bursar; in view of his ever declining health, he accepted an appointment to the community of elderly confreres in Haigerloch in 2011; in 2017 he was welcomed by the community

of elderly confreres in München.

His life may seem unspectacular compared to that of most confreres. Nevertheless, Erich remained faithful to his missionary oath throughout his life. He died on 2 April 2019. The burial Mass was celebrated in our chapel in München on Wednesday, April 24; he was laid to rest in the cemetery of München.

P. Hans Vöcking



Félix Tellechea 1939 – 2018



Felix Tellechea was born on November 20, 1939 to Pedro Tellechea and Teresa Sanzberro in Echalar in the diocese of Pamplona, Spain. As is customary in the Spanish tradition, he is also named after his mother Sanzberro. He spoke easily of his family, his brothers and sisters with whom he had regular contact. One could sense that his family shared his mission.

On September 11, 1959, he began his formation with the White Fathers at Gap in France. From that time on, his formators noticed

in him the qualities of a rather practical man, of very good character and sociable, with a rather strong personality. A man of few words, he had good judgement. On June 26, 1963, he pronounced his perpetual oath in Carthage and received the order of diaconate. One year later, on June 29, 1964, he was ordained priest in Logrono.

From October 1, 1964 to June 66, Felix was appointed to Italy for studies at the Pontifical Institute of Arab Studies. On September 1, 1966, he was appointed to Bou Nouh in Algeria. A year later he returned to Rome to complete his licentiate in Arabic Studies and Islamology. From October 19, 1968, he also followed a series of specialized courses in France and Tunisia in view of his ministry to the blind in Batna and Biskra. From 1968 to 1995, nothing stopped his commitment to the blind and visually impaired, except for the great retreat in Jerusalem in July 1980.

Two couples of cooperators who knew him during this period testify: “At that time, Felix ran the school for the blind in Batna. He was



completely committed to it and where we met those who became friends and with whom we are still in contact. Felix then offered Nelleke the opportunity to teach there, which she accepted. In this way our small community was in direct contact with the life of the often poor families of the Aures. This was a great richness for us, because it allowed us to get out of the cozy and sheltered world of development workers in Batna. »

On June 15, 1995, Felix was appointed to Spain to work in missionary animation. During this time he was also formator of White Father candidates in Madrid and in charge of the team involved in relations with Muslims.

On July 1, 1998, he returned to Algeria, this time to the diocese of Laghouat-Ghardaïa. His love for disabled people still pushed him to work with the handicapped in that city, as he did with the blind in Batna and Biskra. On November 1, 1999, he was elected Provincial Councilor. Between 2008 and 2015, he assumed several responsibilities in the diocese of Laghouat-Ghardaïa, including the role of Vicar General, Diocesan Treasurer, National Director for the OPM and parish priest of Ouargla.

In 2015, after 4 years in Ouargla, he returned to Ghardaïa where his presence was very much appreciated by the confreres and by the staff of the diocese. Bishop Claude Rault who knew him and worked with him testified: "Felix has left us, and he left as he lived, in the greatest discretion. He did not express himself on his new appointment in Algiers, as if his mission in Algeria were to end there, in this last departure. He had just received his last luggage from Ghardaia. He felt tired, but he was not a man who took too much care of himself. He was more sensitive to others, to the many friends from Algeria that he was leaving behind.

I remember him as a charming companion, with the right vision and discretion, humble service, sincere friendship. After passing the torch of Vicar General to his successor, he had gradually faded away, but he made a great impression on the people of Ghardaia, and of all the places he passed through.

His kindness was the key that opened doors, especially in the administrations where his delicacy and smile had become legendary. As Vicar General, I greatly appreciated his wisdom, discretion and rightness of vision. He loved Al-



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geria, he loved the Church of Algeria and served the Diocese with attention, dedication and kindness. I appreciated him very much, and I was not alone. »

On August 15, 2018, he returned to his post in Algiers, in the Rue des Fusillés, with the aim of helping in the training of the new staff of the Church of Algeria, teaching Islamology, Algerian language and culture. Thus, with a team of 4 he animated a session of liturgical Arabic for about fifteen participants coming from the different dioceses of Algeria. The participants greatly appreciated his dedication, his mastery of the language, the clearness and precision of his explanations. Although he was not enthusiastic about living in Algiers, one could feel in him a great passion and exaltation to transmit his experience

and knowledge to the young people.

On Monday, October 22, 2019, he died in a clinic in Algiers after a short illness due mainly to kidney failure not detected in time.

All those who have known Felix are unanimous: he was a man devoted to work with a rather strong personality! He was a discreet man, sometimes even too quiet, but very intelligent, efficient and practical. A very large part of his life was directed towards integration into the professional and life environment as well as towards bearing witness through service and professional work.

Buried on Algerian soil, Félix now rests in the heart of God whom he loved and served so much here below.

Anselme Tarpaga

Heinz-Josef Schäckel 1936 - 2020



Heinz-Josef spent the years of his youth in the pretty little town of Neheim-Hüsten in Sauerland. His parents, Josef and Florentine, gave their four children a good Christian upbringing despite the disruptions of war.

Heinz-Josef attended primary school there from 1942 to 1951. After receiving First Communion on Easter Day 1945, he was allowed to serve mass until the end of his schooling. On June 1, 1951 he began a commercial training which he took with the professional examination as a commercial assistant

in 1954. In 1955 he went to a construction company and worked there for two years as a commercial employee in the administration. During these two years he also led a Catholic youth group. Through this work with the young people his decision to become a priest matured so that he could be completely at the service of the Church. He wants to enter a congregation to proclaim the Word of Christ in mission later on. Thanks to his secondary education and for this purpose he attended the evening archiepiscopal college “Collegium Marianum” in Neuss from 1957 to 1961. He also worked half a day at the savings bank in Neuss, which later helped him in his work as a bursar in various positions.

From 1961 to 1963 he studied philosophy with the White Fathers in Trier, made the novitiate in Hörstel and in 1964 went to Totteridge/London for theological studies. There he took his missionary oath on June 15, 1967 and was ordained priest by auxiliary bishop Johannes Degenhardt, later cardinal, at the “Patrokli” cathedral in Soest on June 28, 1968.



His first appointment in Africa took him to Nigeria in 1968. By boat he travelled from Marseilles to Lagos. In Ilesha he learns Yoruba and works in the parish of Saint Peter and Paul in Ile-Ife. His regional writes: "Heinz-Josef did a very good and difficult job, especially in the outstations, although he was usually expected to do less spiritual and apostolic work. The attention to the children was especially close to his heart in all his activities at the hospital. With the permission of the bishop most of his gifts for the mission went into this project.

In February 1971, he was appointed diocesan bursar, secretary and also coordinator of social and development projects in the diocese of Oshogbo. Bishop J. B. Adedokun, greatly appreciated Heinz not only for his competence and discretion, but also for the good understanding that has always existed among all. In 1975, the German Province included Heinz in its personnel planning to take over the reference office for Africa in Missio. Thus, in 1981, Heinz Josef receives his appointment for Germany. For Bishop Adedokun it was a sacrifice he made, renouncing this good missionary. However, he asked for a transitional period of six months

to introduce a native priest to his work. Heinz-Josef is sick at heart to have to give up this responsibility that was fulfilling him. He writes: "Personally I am not at all happy to be called back, but, if one insists, I cannot refuse; the Lord's ways are like that". His provincial remembers this reaction of Heinz-Josef. To help him prepare himself for the new challenges, Heinz-Josef took part in the great retreat in Jerusalem before beginning his appointment in Germany.

On September 28, 1982 Heinz-Josef assumed the Provincial Treasurer's office in Germany. In 1983 a heart condition began to affect his working energy. A heart transplant is performed in December. With this operation the problem seems to be solved. During his nine years as director of finances, he was highly esteemed by his confreres in the Province and in Rome, and also by other persons, institutions and dioceses that had their accounts in Cologne, thanks to his tidiness and precision. "He was a confrere who knew how to take responsibility, who had good judgement, who said what he thought without beating about the bush and who had no difficulty in making decisions, even of great importance".



After nine years in charge of finances, the Superiors in Rome offered him two new and interesting tasks in Africa. He could choose between being in charge of the Diocesan Treasurer's office in Tamale (Ghana) and to be in charge of construction works in the Diocese of Hoima (Uganda). Heinz-Josef preferred to wait for the decision of the Superiors in Rome, because both countries were new to him; he saw both proposals as a new challenge. Waiting for the decision in Rome, he followed courses of ongoing formation in London and Regensburg "to recharge the human and spiritual batteries before resuming work and going back to Africa". The decision of Rome was in favor of Uganda. In the Diocese of Hoima, he was already expected because the then director, Brother Max Gmuer, had been appointed for Mozambique. Heinz-Josef became not only a good administrator of the various activities such as the garage, carpentry, tile making, construction and the training of young workers, but also a prudent adviser to the bishop concerning his projects and their realization for the infrastructure of the diocese.

Unfortunately, he got heart problems again in spite of the good climate in Uganda. He had to return to Germany every two years for a heart check-up. From 2004 he had to take Macumar. In the course of examinations in 2006, three narrowed passages in the heart were discovered which urgently require two transplants. In 2007 he returns to Uganda, but with the intention of handing over his responsibilities. In February 2008, he returned to Germany for good. There he was appointed sector bursar in Cologne and took care of the administration of the White Fathers' Foundation.

After a second spinal operation, his health deteriorated, especially his weakened heart. He was treated in intensive care. In the last months of his life he was cordially cared for by the Ursuline Sisters in Hersel where his own sister lived. Their community offered him a room within their enclosure to be able to accompany him in his great suffering. It is there that the Father called him on February 22, 2020. He found his final resting place in Linz.

Günther Zahn

Toon Vanden Avenne 1926 - 2019



Toon was born on 12 May 1926 in Izegem, in the Province of West Flanders. His father ran a wholesale seed business. Toon followed the classical humanities in his hometown. Active in the student movement KSA, he became a member of the anti-alcohol league, a promise he kept until the end of his life. In September 1945, one month after the death of his father, he joined the White Fathers in Boechout. After the novitiate in Varsenare, he followed the first year of theology in Marienthal, the other years in Heverlee. On July 21, 1951 he took his missionary oath and on April

12, 1952 he was ordained priest. During his years in formation Toon was very much appreciated. He was simple and kind; he was very tactful. He was always in a good mood, “a happy man who makes people happy around him”. He was always ready to be of service and a good organizer. He was pious and deeply religious. Many of his teachers referred to him as an ‘elite subject’. A negative point: “a tongue too well hung”...

After a few months of military service at the University of Leuven, Toon was appointed Treasurer at our philosophy house in Boechout in March 1953. He also taught liturgy. Appointed to Rwanda, he flew to Nyundo on April 27, 1955. He began in Nyange where he learned the language and, a few months later, he was appointed Treasurer and Director of schools in Muhororo. His great concern: to prepare pupils for secondary school. He launches the Xaveri movement, started a cooperative and took care of the constructions. In 1959, he was sent to Birambo as director of the teacher training college. After a year in Ruhengeri



and a few months in Kigali, he was during one school year inspector of schools in Kagbayi. At that time Rwanda had only three dioceses, the fourth (Butare) had just been created. Toon had to travel tens of thousands of kilometers in his small VW to bring the salaries to the teachers. The diocesan clergy gave him the nickname 'Kinyamateka', 'the one who talks too much'.

During his first holiday in 1962, Toon organizes a big fund-raising event, with the explicit support of Archbishop Perraudin of Kabgayi. In September 1963, he made his great retreat at Villa Cavaletti. In November of the same year, Toon became curate in Rwankuba and, a few months later, parish priest in Rulindo. In 1965, Father Jules Severy, the Regional Superior, noted that Toon worked a lot, but that his loquacity did not go down well in the highly politicized environment of the teachers. His sense of justice made him a go-getter: "He totally misses 'diplomacy' in the Rwandan sense". The government's school reforms were not to everyone liking. Many Tutsi teachers were being sacked. On 23 December 1966, Toon was expelled from the country. He wrote a letter to President Kibanda, who replied that the decision

was upheld, but that given his desire to return to Rwanda, it would only be for twelve months.

In February 1967, Toon again became Treasurer in Boechout; he was also in charge of preaching retreats to young people. The year having passed, Father Severy felt that the time had not yet come for an eventual return. In 1970, Toon wrote letters full of hope, but the Immigration Service in Kigali turned a deaf ear. Several attempts by the Regional office failed, a letter to the president remained unanswered, and attempts by other influential people were unsuccessful. In August 1971, Toon accepted an appointment as curate at Mweso in Congo and then became director of the college where he also taught religion. In January 1975, he left Africa for good.

Toon was then appointed 'quêteur' (mission promotor) and joined our community in Berchem. At that time the Province had four mission promotor. "Toon sends hundreds of letters day after day to beg," notes Nuntiuncula in December 1975. His confreres helped him to fold the letters and the transfer slips. A thousand donations arrived in this way each year. It was not a pleasant task, but Toon saw it as a



way of making the White Fathers known and tried to establish a pastoral relationship with the donors. In March 1989 he was appointed procurator at the Keizerstraat in Antwerp. Toon gave himself heart and soul to this work for years. He had inherited a commercial spirit from his family and was rightly proud of it. The procurator also served other congregations. In 1990, for example, 150 tons of goods were shipped to Africa by ship or plane, as well as a thousand registered items. All of this had to be purchased, packaged and shipped. By 1997, the figure had risen to 275 tons. Toon could of course count on excellent employees, whom he greatly appreciated. Toon cared about his family and never missed a party or meeting.

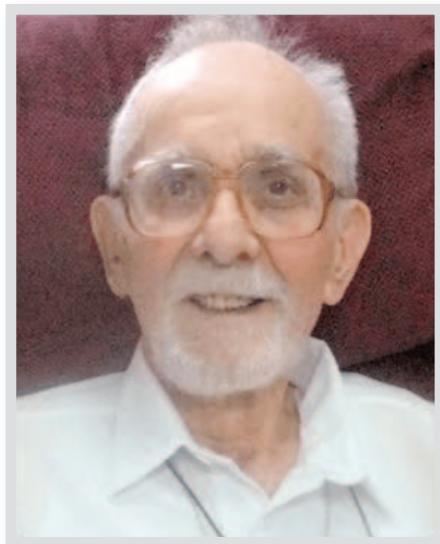
Already in 1998, it was decided to phase out the activities of our procure in Antwerp and to use “Wereldmissiehulp” (Universal Missionary Aid) instead, a kind of super-procure for the congregations.

In fact, the transition took a lot of time. Although his right-hand man, Mr. Paul De Schutter, was increasingly taking over the effective running of the procure, Toon had too good a heart to refuse requests. In the last years, however, he came less and less to the office. He continued however to take good care of the flowers in the inner courtyard and to collect the leaves in autumn. In December 2017, he finally agreed to go to Avondrust, where he was very happy and grateful for the care provided. After a few days in hospital at St. John’s in Brugge, he passed away peacefully on 15th January 2019. A faithful servant joined his Master.

The farewell liturgy was celebrated in a crowded chapel, as all our communities were well represented and his large family was present in large numbers; many friends and acquaintances also made a point of being present at the farewell.

Jef Vleugels

Maurice Desjardins 1930 - 2020



Maurice was born on August 31, 1930 in La Tuque, in the Diocese of Trois-Rivières. He was the son of Wilbrod Desjardins and Blanche Aimée Pagé. He belonged to a large family of nine sisters and five brothers.

After completing his basic education at La Tuque School and St-Zéphirin College, he attended St-Joseph's Seminary in Trois-Rivières where he took the classical course. During all these years, from 1937 to 1952, he went through all the stages of scouting.

Maurice was hypersensitive, which made life together more difficult, which also explains his rather complex career. But in interpersonal encounters, his relationships were pleasant.

He showed a great love for his family and a very strong spirit of compassion for the wounded in life and for all those who suffer.

After having made his request in February 1952 to be accepted by the Missionaries of Africa, he entered the novitiate at Chomedey de Laval on August 14 of that same year. Five years later, on February 1, 1957, he was ordained a priest at the Scholasticate in Eastview on the outskirts of Ottawa. One of his Formators wrote of him: "He is rather shy. He is a very serious and supernatural man, entirely given to the fulfillment of his duty of state, down to the smallest details. He is devoted and conscientious. He is well educated and delicate. He speaks little; it would seem that he would have to develop more and acquire more confidence and initiative. »

In September of the same year, he went to Dorking, Great Britain,



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to learn, according to custom, the “British Way of Life” before leaving for Africa, more precisely for Tanzania where he was appointed.

It was in Irambo, in the diocese of Mbeya, that he began to learn the local language, Swahili. It was in December 1957.

For 17 years, from 1957 to 1975, Maurice exercised his pastoral ministry, sometimes as curate, sometimes as parish priest, in various parishes of the Diocese of Mbeya. During this period, the bishop recognized his talents in accounting and appointed him to the Diocesan Treasurer’s office from 1966 to 1970.

After a leave of absence in Canada in 1975, Maurice did a year’s study of Counselling at the University of Ottawa. The following year, he was appointed to the Treasurer’s office in our community on the Boulevard l’Acadie in Montreal.

From December 1977 to 1983, Maurice became the first chaplain of La Macaza prison, a reformatory institution located in the Laurentians, an important and delicate ministry that our confrere carries out with joy and great generosity.

In 1983, he asked to return to Tanzania for a year. He was curate in the parish of Mwambani, in the Diocese he knew well, the Diocese of Mbeya. After one year, he preferred to return to Canada.

Maurice then resumed his ministry as prison chaplain, but this time it would be at the Sainte-Anne des Plaines prison. He carried out this pastoral ministry in the prison for eight years, from 1984 to 1991. The prisoners greatly appreciated his presence.

In 1991, our confrere was appointed to the Quebec City community, on the Chemin Sainte-Foy. For three years, he rendered various services in the community and in the Diocese of Quebec.

In March 1994, Maurice returned to Tanzania where he was curate in the Dioceses of Singida and Tabora. Unfortunately, he did not enjoy his stay very much.

January 29, 1995 marks his definitive return to Canada. After a brief leave of absence, he did pastoral ministry in the Diocese of St-Jérôme. Two months later, he had a serious health problem: a serious heart attack required his immediate hospitalization at the St-Jérôme hospital. Once he had re-



covered, he took a few months of rest with the Jesuits in St-Jérôme and then at our Provincial house in Montreal.

Once well recovered, Maurice did pastoral ministry in St-Jérôme and then in Gatineau where he stayed for 11 years. He visited the sick in the hospital, comforting them and responding to their spiritual needs.

A confrere who knew him well said of him: "I often experienced his attention to people who are suffering during his first stay at Lennox. Maurice always volunteered whenever I asked him to accompany me to visit a confrere in hospital or any other health institution. It was not only me he accompanied, it was the sick confrere he was going to visit, and his reflections were always full of sympathy."

In December 2010, he resided for two years in Vaudreuil-Dorion. He was then appointed to our community of Lennoxville in June 2012. But after one year, he could no longer live in the community and

asked permission to go to a seniors' residence. One year later, he obtained permission and went to live in Lachine in a flat. But soon, due to new health difficulties, Maurice asked to return to Lennoxville where he could receive appropriate care. This materialized in 2015.

Little by little, his physical condition seriously was deteriorating. He also realized that his cognitive faculties were diminishing. During the last year, he needed assistance to move about in the house.

On February 2, 2020, Maurice was rushed to the Hôtel-Dieu where he died three days later. He was 89 years old, 63 years of which were spent as a missionary in Tanzania and Canada. May the Lord he served in Tanzania and Canada grant him the eternal happiness promised to his faithful servants!

The funeral Mass was celebrated in the chapel of our house in Lennoxville on February 15, 2020. Maurice's ashes were given to his family for burial in the family graveyard in La Tuque.

Jacques Charron

Jan van Haandel 1931 – 2020



Jan was born on 7th January 1931 in Bergharen. To become a missionary he followed our formation in St. Charles near Bortel, 's-Heerenberg, and Thibar in Tunisia, where he took the missionary oath on 26th June 1957. He was ordained in Carthage Tunisia 3rd February 1958.

Jan had sound judgment, and an optimistic, more practical disposition. A steady and persevering worker, slowly but surely, with attention to details, but day to day without planning further. Good hearted, ever ready to render a service, and a pleasant talker who could also speak frankly. Many emphasised his simplicity. He loved music.

On 22nd November 1958 he left for Mali, Sikasso Diocese, Karangasso parish for learning the Minianka language and culture, and for pastoral work. Mali is 33 times the size of The Netherlands with then 7 million inhabitants, of which 1% Christian (Catholic and Protestant). In Karangasso the M.Afr had been working for 23 years and had baptized only 53 adults. Jan was known to prepare carefully his teaching and preaching. In 1960 he baptised 19 adults; for the next year he foresaw 25. Each week he visited 6 church-villages and 2 primary schools. A steady worker indeed! He wrote 13th December 1960: "Our mission-work still consists of ploughing and sowing, hoping and trusting that others will come to harvest".

In the course of 1961 Jan made himself very useful for the surrounding parishes by typing in the Minianka language the Bible, and the texts for the liturgy. During his home-leave in 1963 he took the time to put the translated texts of the Old and New Testament in sequence and to stencil them!

In October 1965 Jan moved to Boura parish; on 28th May 1969



to Koutiala parish; and on 14th September 1972 to the cathedral parish in Sikasso. There he learned Bore and later too Bambara, languages and cultures. He wrote 22nd September 1976: "I am doing famously. Much work, because the school-year starts beginning October, and we are quite busy preparing the ordination of our new bishop". Mgr. Jean-Marie Cissé was the first indigenous bishop of Sikasso.

Writing in May 1977 Jan's Regional Superior characterized him as "Someone with an unlimited benevolence, he welcomes whoever comes with personal attention". That was his limitation too, as the remaining work remained undone.

Jan had the gift of finding underground water by using a divining-rod and pendulum. Thus many good wells could be dug (obviously not only for Catholics!), a true blessing for that Sahel region, particularly during the huge drought in the seventies. When asked how, he answered: "By trying, a lot of trying, talking with people who know the situation, and a lot of thinking about it". And talking with people he did enjoy. Consequently, he was often called upon and as he could not say "no", it did exhaust him. And wherever he worked in Mali he could find someone to train for it.

In 1980 Jan came to The Netherlands for stomach surgery. To have a good rest he took a sabbatical in Paris where he followed a course, which allowed him to acquire still more skills for his pastoral work.

On 15.10.1981 he changed Diocese moving to Bamako archdiocese, the cathedral parish, and later to the suburb Badala parish with 16 sections and 250.000 inhabitants (1/3 of the whole city). The M.Afr lived together with a diocesan priest, Director of Religious Education in the whole of Mali. There was a community of Swiss Sisters cooperating in the pastoral work, and a Belgian Sister for Women-development. The latter taught one woman from each of the 16 sections weekly, who in turn passed on in her own section what she had learned.

In addition to his pastoral work Jan set up a literacy-program for girls. His motto was: "Work together with the inhabitants so that they can progress on their own, even when I am no-longer there. And another motto: "The incapable becomes capable through practice!"

Beginning 1993 he moved to the sector Bajalan; and 17th July 1997 to Korofina parish. His Regional Superior characterized him in April 1997: "Jan is slow and patient. He takes the time to explain



things extensively and to listen attentively too. Together with his fellow-priests he succeeded in building well organized communities, with active and dynamic lay leaders". "He is a man of peace". Jan wrote 24th October 2004: "Since 1958 I am in Mali, and still happy about it". As recognition of his dedication he received 30th April 2005 the decoration of Orange Nassau.

At his golden jubilee in February 2008 the parish church of Korofina filled up, and people swarmed before the open doors. Jan was beaming; the 30 members of the choir had a T-shirt with a huge picture of Jan so that 30 "Father Jan" were staring at you! In Bamako he was known under his praise-name "Tyèkoro ba" (old wise man).

On the 15th October 2009 he moved to the M.Afr. guest-house in Korofina as guestmaster mainly for confreres, and in the weekends he helped out in the parish. The community comprised 3 elderly confreres and one of 53 who was vocation-promotor. Jan was a pleasant host, always ready for a chat. They had about 25 persons a month for lodging, sometimes several at a go. On the 27th of May 2010, he wrote "Telephone-calls come from all over the world. The laptop is my memory".

Daily, people would come for help: migrants, sick or hungry peo-

ple, students for school-fees. The parishes in Bamako had in each section some inhabitants who checked whether help was needed, and how. Jan also continued searching for water to dig wells. So in 2010 between New-Year and Easter he went to search in 12 places; the furthest a 5-hour drive by car.

Spring 2013 he returned to The Netherlands for good, and on 6th April 2013 he settled in Heythuysen. He loved to talk about his experiences in Mali and those in his birth-place. He was ever ready to push someone in a wheelchair. End 2018 he ended-up in a wheelchair himself. In the course of 2019 his health kept declining, but he continued to participate in community activities. On 12th March 2020 he attended the Vespers and the evening-meal. While at table he quietly breathed his last.

Overseeing his whole life, the aspect of Jesus which he lived especially was: "Whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him ... it will become in him a spring of water". John 4:14.

Together with only a few relatives due to Corona-virus we buried him in our cemetery at Saint Charles on 19th March 2020.

Marien van den Eijnden
and Jozef de Bekker.

Armand Duval 1928 - 2018



Armand Duval was born on February 20, 1928 in Vezin-le-Coquet, a town near the city of Rennes, in Brittany. His parents were of modest means: after starting a career as a roofing worker, his father became a non-commissioned officer, which enabled the family to live in a barracks. His mother contributed to the family budget with sewing work. Both were non-practicing. Armand was the second of three siblings. All his life he remembered with gratitude the poverty that his parents had had to face in order to

raise them. After nursery school with the Sisters, he began his primary education in a public school before finishing it at the Brothers' school. It was there that he came into contact with the life of the Church. Although he was quite allergic to catechism, he was an altar boy and especially appreciated his participation in the oratory and in the holiday camps.

At the age of twelve, on the recommendation of the parish priest, he entered the minor seminary of Châteaugiron, where he stayed for five years. This was during the war and the regime was frugal and the discipline strict. Armand will keep the memory of an austere life. Although he was already thinking of devoting his life to the missions, he was oriented towards the diocesan major seminary because the bishop did not like to lose his seminarians. He is more interested in biblical studies and the history of the Church than in philosophy. He is also sensitive to the pomp of the liturgy, but regrets a total absence of pastoral formation. He is 19 years old and it is time to do his national service. Always thinking



of the White Fathers, he arranged to be sent for his military service to North Africa. He was sent to Rabat and very much appreciated this first contact with Morocco, even if he found the journey exhausting. Having passed his baccalaureate, he is oriented towards the E.O.R. (Reserve Officer School), first at Cherchell, near Algiers, then at the Cavalry School of Saumur, where he was introduced to armoured vehicles. He was then transferred to the 5th Algerian Chasseur, at Cap Matifou. He only stayed there for a month before being demobilized.

Without returning to Brittany, he went directly to the novitiate at Maison Carrée; it was from there that he informed the major seminary in Rennes of his change of orientation. Immediately he was shaved and began to grow a beard. He joined the group of 65 novices (including the future Cardinal Zoung-grana) who were preparing for missionary life under the guidance of the famous Father Blin. Here too life was hard, but Armand was ready for anything and he gave himself totally. He particularly appreciated the contacts with the fathers who return from the missions to spend some time at the Mother House. He listened to them with

interest and was already dreaming of other horizons. In 1950 he left for Thibar to begin his theological studies which he would complete in Carthage. He kept excellent memories of his years spent in Tunisia. He was captivated by Father Maurel's lectures on Scripture. He does a lot of manual work and sports. He made visits to the village, and Father Aeby, superior, sent him to teach catechism to European children. He was especially fascinated by visiting the ruins of old Carthage and the ancient Christian Church. He appreciated the memory of Cardinal Lavigerie and of the first generations of White Fathers. It was therefore with all his heart that he took his missionary oath on June 27, 1952 and was ordained priest on April 5, 1953. He was ready for the great departure for Africa.

Alas, his first appointment sent him to Strasbourg to take a licentiate in classical education, which he did not appreciate very much. But he integrates himself into the community of young student fathers who, like him, are preparing for life as a teacher. Fortunately, he was able to do some ministry, either at Sainte-Clotilde school or in the parish, especially during the summer. His second appointment did



not delight him any more than the first: he was sent as a teacher to the White Fathers minor seminary in Bonnelles. He kept no good memory of these four painful years. He was a good teacher, but, being quite tense inside, he was impatient and had some problem putting up with the students who found him too severe.

By chance, Spanish Sisters helped in the seminary and they took Armand on as their chaplain. He began to learn the Castilian language. He even went to spend holidays in Spain. This new string to his bow would be precious to him on many occasions. The first consequence was an appointment in Spain where the Society had just opened a philosophy seminary in Logroño. There he taught Church history and history of philosophy. At the same time, he was chaplain to the White Sisters who had their postulancy and novitiate in the same city.

Finally, in 1963, at the age of 36, he received his appointment for the Congo. After a six-month stay in Bukavu to learn Kiswahili, he was appointed to the parish of Ngene, in the Diocese of Kasongo. But very quickly the fathers were evacuated when the Mulelists ap-

proached. Passing through the Kasai, they disembarked in Bujumbura. Armand remained there for a year and a half, in the parish of Mutumba, where some of the parishioners spoke Swahili. This was a dark period in the history of Congo where many people, including many missionaries, have lost their lives. After three months, the situation was calm enough to appoint him to Bagira (Diocese of Bukavu). He stayed there long enough to really do his first missionary work: liturgy, catechesis, Legion of Mary, the secular fraternity of Charles de Foucauld, preaching, retreats...He was very busy. "I only spent a year and a half in Bagira, but they were happy months," he said later.

A new appointment gave him a new direction: in 1966 he began a career at the major seminary of Murhesa as lecturer of Church history and anthropology. He stayed there for four years, until a rebellion, this time led by European mercenaries, forced him to flee. Since he was free, he gave a hand in Jerusalem, in the service of the library and the magazine 'Proche Orient Chrétien'. It was the time when, after the Six Day War and the Israeli occupation of Jerusalem, the seminarians left Saint Anne. Armand was not satisfied with his



work on the spot, he took full advantage of these few months that were given to him to survey the city and visit the country where he felt so well; it was with a bit of a heavy heart that he left Jerusalem and returned to the major seminary of Murhesa. In fact, he stayed there for only one year, since in 1970 he was in Paris, where he enrolled in the “Year of Ongoing Formation of the Clergy” organized by the Catholic Institute. It was after the Council and many priests felt the need to bring themselves up to date with the new theology. He was a member of the rue Friant community and did some ministry in the neighborhood. Unfortunately, his spine became more and more painful and he had to be operated for a slipped disc, which forced him to interrupt the program he was following. But he made up for it by going to attend the renewal session given by the Dominicans in L’Arbresle.

He was ready for a new stage which took place in Mugeru, on the edge of Lake Kivu, facing the island of Idjwi. He was at the service of the Congregation of the Daughters of Mary Queen of the Apostles, founded by the White Sisters. His time was divided between visiting the communities and

working in the novitiate and postulancy. To this he added giving lectures in different schools. It was the time of Mobutu and the Zairianisation of the country. The country got gradually disorganized. After three years he was called to Paris to become editorial secretary of the inter-institute magazine “Peuples du Monde”. Again he lived in the rue Friant. In the evenings he attended a school of journalism. He loved this work where he confirmed his talent as a writer and broadened his horizons by discovering other mission countries.

In 1978, he returned to the seminary of Murhesa where he was asked to teach moral theology. After a year, he was in the parish of Bagera. In 1980, he was delegated to the Chapter. The main work consisted in finalizing and adopting the new Constitutions of the Society. His talents as a spiritual man and as writer were put to good use. The Chapter asked him to write a book of spirituality on the Constitutions to complete its juridical approach. He composed “Ta loi, je la médite” which was sent to all the confreres (in English: “Your law is my joy” by Eugene Lewis). In 1981, he was appointed director of the Pastoral Centre of Bukavu. There he wrote many small books



to help catechesis and liturgy. It was there that his life took on a new dimension with the discovery of the Congregation of the Theresian Missionary Carmelite Sisters. They began to recruit locally, but all their texts were in Spanish. So Armand was asked to write a biography of the founder, Father Palau, in French. He later wrote: "I had taken the bait, seduced by the personality of Fr. Palau, and that followed me the rest of my life".

In the meantime, his life took a new turn. He was asked to contribute to the foundation of a community in Mexico since he spoke Spanish. He was not thriving there. The project started hastily and the community was made up of confreres who were very different both in their personal history and in their vision. He was only there for three years. He missed life in Congo, but it was to Europe that he returned. He spent a year in Rome in the archives of the Carmelite Missionary Sisters. There he wrote a new biography of the founder and began the French translation of his works. He also translated the official documents of the congregation. It took him a lot of time and energy, but he was passionate about it. In 1988, the Provincial of Spain asked him to come to Madrid to help launch a new magazine *Africana*.

He spent a year in the community in Madrid which he enjoyed.

Deep down, he felt called to devote himself completely to writing. He did not see himself as a writer who is also a priest, but as a priest who writes, a priest who evangelizes through his publications. In 1988 he moved to Dinard where he took on the role of hospital chaplain. He devoted the morning to writing and the afternoon to visiting the sick. This kept him busy until the end of his life. In 1997, he accepted to be chaplain to the White Sisters at Verrières-le-Buisson, while doing some ministry with the pastoral team at Massy-Verrières. After three years, he returned to Dinard. Although very attached to the Society, he said that he was not made for community life and that he preferred to look after himself. His activity as an author was extremely fruitful. We cannot give a list of his works here. There are almost fifty of them. He wrote books on spirituality, including one on Lavigerie, works on homiletics, biographies, including those of our confreres killed at Tizi Ouzou and in Rwanda, as well as a life of Father Lourdel and various books on the life of the Church. Of course, we cannot forget that he wrote more than 150 obituaries for the *Petit Echo*.



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Armand never had good health. Little by little his strength diminished. His gait becomes hesitant. He moved around with a walker and had to celebrate Mass in a seated position; it was at the age of 90 that, on July 6, 2018, he died in the house of the Little Sisters of the Poor where he had lived since October 2000. The preacher at the funeral quoted him: I believe I did my best in a somewhat chaotic journey and I dare to hope that the

Father of mercy and goodness will be kind enough to appear before him to give an account of the management of the donations received on February 21, 1928 in the small church of Vezin-le-Coquet, and on April 5, 1953, in the great basilica of Carthage. Baptism and priesthood were the two pillars of his existence, the two responsibilities that gave meaning to this beautiful life consecrated to the Mission.

François Richard



Missionaries of Africa

Father Louis Faivre-Rampant, of the Diocese of Besançon, France. He died in Pau, France, on the 8th March 2020 at the age of 85 years, of which 56 years of missionary life in Guinea, Burkina Faso and France.

Father Jan van Haandel, of the Diocese of 'sHertogenbosch, The Netherlands. He died in Heythuysen, The Netherlands, on the 12th March 2020, at the age of 89 years, of which 62 years of missionary life in Mali and The Netherlands.

Father Maurice Redouin, of the Diocese of Blois, France. He died in Férolles-Attilly, France, on the 15th mars 2020, at the age of 93 years, of which 68 years of missionary life in Nigeria and France.

Father Gyr Hans, of the Diocese of Bâle (Basel), Switzerland. He died in Sierre, Switzerland, on the 17th mars 2020, at the age of 90 years, of which 65 years of missionary life in Rwanda, Algeria and Switzerland.

Father Laberge Robert, of the Diocese of Angers, Canada. He died in Sainte-Anne-des-Monts, Canada, on the 18th Mars 2020 at the age of 83 years, of which 59 years of missionary life in Tanzania and Canada.

Father Lafollie Pierre, of the Diocese of Reims, France. He died in Pontoise, France, on the 26th March 2020 at the age of 81 years, of which 56 years of missionary life in Zambia and France.

Brother Frouin Henri, of the Diocese of Angers, France. He died in Bry-sur-Marne, France, on the 29th March 2020, at the age of 89 years, of which 66 years of missionary life in Algeria, Burkina Faso, Guinea, Mali and France.

Father de Gaulle François, of the Diocese of Autun, France. He died in Bry-sur-Marne, France, on the 2nd April 2020, at the age of 98 years, of which 70 years of missionary life in Burkina Faso and France.

Father Liogier Joannès, of the Diocese of Puy, France. He died in L'Isle-Adam, France, on the 3rd April 2020, at the age of 84 years, of which 56 years of missionary life in Nigeria, Niger and France.

Father Anton Weidelenner, of the Diocese of Rottensburg, Germany. He died in München, Germany, on the 5th April 2020, at the age of 85 years, of which 59 years of missionary life in Burkina Faso and Germany.



Father Devigne Paul, of the Diocese of Tournai, Belgium. He died in Liège, Belgium, on the 6th April 2020, at the age of 94 years, of which 71 years of missionary life in Rwanda and Belgium.

Father Tappeser Johannes, of the Diocese of Paderborn, Germany. He died in Köln, Germany, on the 6th April 2020, at the age of 80 years, of which 55 years of missionary life in Uganda, Zambia, Mozambique, Burkina Faso, Italy, Ghana and Germany.

Father Martinez L. Antonio, of the Diocese of Cartagena, Spain. He died in Madrid, Spain, on the 6th April 2020 at the age of 84 years, of which 60 years of missionary life in Rwanda and Spain.

Father Pantenburg Karl-Heinz, of the Diocese of Trier, Germany. He died in Trier, Germany, on the 7th April 2020 at the age of 92 years, of which 60 years of missionary life in Uganda, Luxembourg and Germany.

Father Chupin Bruno, of the Diocese of Paris, France. He died in Bry-sur-Marne, France, on the 8th April 2020, at the age of 82 years, of which 55 years of missionary life in DR Congo and France.

Father Kelly Peter, of the Diocese of Southwark, Great Britain. He died in London, Great Britain, on the 8th April 2020, at the age of 87 years, of which 63 years of missionary life in Uganda and Great Britain.

Father Lelong Michel, of the Diocese of Angers, France. He died in Paris, France, on the 10th April 2020, at the age of 95 years, of which 72 years of missionary life in Tunisia, Algeria and France.

Father Vulkers Bernard, of the Diocese of Utrecht, The Netherlands. He died in Heythuysen, The Netherlands, on the 14th April 2020, at the age of 96 years, of which 72 years of missionary life in Tanzania and The Netherlands.

Father Claude Jean-Pierre, of the Diocese of Mechelen-Brussels, Belgium. He died in Brussels, Belgium, on the 15th April 2020, at the age of 93 years, of which 68 years of missionary life in Burundi and Belgium.

Brother Louwen Karel, of the Diocese of Rotterdam, The Netherlands. He died in Roermond, The Netherlands, on the 22nd April 2020, at the age of 87 years of which 61 years of missionary life in Luxembourg, Belgium, DR Congo and The Netherlands.

Missionary Sisters of Our Lady of Africa

Sister Annette Péloquin (Soeur Arlette). She died in Cartierville (Montréal, Qc.), on the 23th March 2020, at the age of 95 years, of which 59 years of missionary life in Malawi and Canada.

Sister Béatrice Miburo. She died in Nairobi, Kenya, on the 23th March 2020, at the age of 70 years, of which 35 years of missionary life in DR Congo, Tanzania, Burkina Faso and Kenya.

Sister Maria Tecla De Souza. She died in Londres, Great Britain, on the 24th March 2020, at the age of 87 years, of which 65 years of missionary life in Uganda, Kenya and Great Britain.

Sister Alice Gaget (Saint Alain). She died in Verrières-le-Buisson, France, on the 24th March 2020, at the age of 103 years, of which 76 years of missionary life in Algeria and France.

Soeur Maria Bartsch (Christiana). She died in Trier, Germany, on the 30th March 2020, at the age of 86 years, of which 57 years of missionary life in Algeria, Rwanda and Germany.

Soeur Marie Augustine Christine Measson (Marie Daniélis). She died in Villeurbanne, on the 1^{er} April 2020, at the age of 96 years, of which 72 years of missionary life in Algeria, Tunisia and France.

Sister Dolores Cuadrado Palmero. She died in Alcal·de Henares (Madrid), Espagne, on the 4th April 2020 at the age of 91 years, of which 47 years of missionary life in Burundi, DR. Congo and Spain.

Sister Anne-Marie Bellière. She died in Evere, Belgium, on the 8th Avril 2020, at the age of 95 years, of which 68 years of missionary life in Congo and Belgium.

Sister Teresa Ortiz Lopez. She died in Malaga, Spain, on the 17th Avril 2020 at the age of 87 years, of which 59 years of missionary life in Algeria and Spain.

Sister Elisabeth Lintsen. She died in Erie, Pennsylvania, United States, on the 20th April 2020, at the age of 87 years of which 64 years of religious life in Algeria, Tanzania, The United States and The Netherlands.

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