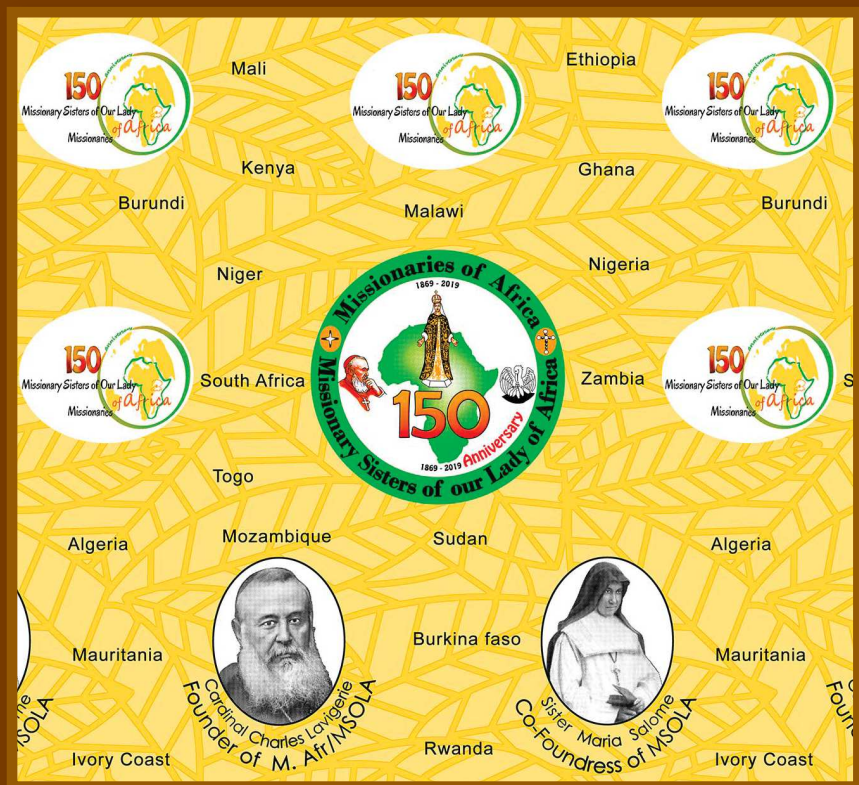


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EDITOR'S WORD

This seventh issue of the 2020 Petit Echo brings together the fruits of the Jubilee Year that we closed in December 2019. Confreres, especially Provincials, tell us about the graces received during preparations, celebrations and after the official closing of the 150th Anniversary celebrations of our foundation.

Wherever possible, Missionary Sisters of Our Lady of Africa and Missionaries of Africa met from the very beginning of the Jubilee journey to “tune their violins”, to allow themselves to be reconciled by and with God in order to produce “a symphony” that pleased Him and honored their Founder. Wherever they were, the celebrations expressed the deep joy of Mission and an awareness of the importance of daily actions as well as of the commitment of each missionary to the service of the Gospel. We had the joy of appreciating the graces that the Lord poured out on the particular Churches of Africa starting out from our predecessors and continues to do so through each one of us. The wish is that the past will instruct us to live the present well and prepare a better missionary future made of the joy of collaboration among ourselves and with God.

Freddy Kyombo

Cover

Patterns of the Jubilee loincloth made by SAP.

PHOTO SAP

Mossi proverb: “*The plant owes its fragrance to God.*”

Meaning: The good name and honor we enjoy belong to God the Creator.

“Graces we hope will continue to bear fruit”

The decor of the walls of common rooms and offices in many of our houses has recently changed. It has been enriched with new pictures and frames that were made on the occasion of the commemoration of the one hundred and fifty years jubilee of the foundation of our two institutes, the Missionaries of Africa and the Missionary Sisters of Our Lady of Africa. One should also mention the many other articles such as pens, calendars, diaries, T-shirts, chitenge cloths, songs, poems, etc., that were produced for the same occasion and have now become part of our heritage. All these have one thing in common: they bear one or another logo designed for the Jubilee Year. All logos have in turn a particularity. We find on each one of them, placed together next to our founder Cardinal Charles Lavigerie, the two names of our institutes thus highlighting the bond that exists between us as daughters and sons of the same founder. This also indicates the unity that should accompany our commitments in our service of the mission, given the charism received from him.

The growing awareness of the unity between our two missionary institutes is one among the many graces of the jubilee. It was the basis of the great collaboration that in many ways characterized the preparations and celebrations of the one hundred and fifty years of our existence. Although we were founded on different dates and in different years, we opted as children of the same founding father, to inaugurate and close the jubilee year together. This moment of grace invites all of us to go beyond our differences in order to continue giving thanks together to the Lord for having given us the same

Stanley Lubungo
Superior General





FOREWORD

founder. The younger generations should get inspiration from it to work more and more together in view of a more collaborative and complementary apostolate.

The various events linked to the Jubilee Year helped us to regain awareness of the common vocation we have received to be missionaries to the African world according to the particular charism given to our Founder. It follows that the unity that binds our two Institutes and which we celebrated during the commemorations is rooted in our origins as they are related to our unique Founder and in the vision of mission that he passed on to us. Faithfulness to the aspirations of our Founder can only lead our respective Institutes to meet in the field of mission. It also calls for greater collaboration between us.

The 2016 General Chapter encouraged such collaboration in our missionary commitments in Africa and towards the African world today. It called for the mobilization of the whole Society, in collaboration with the Missionary Sisters of Our Lady of Africa and with other associations around the issue of migration and human trafficking (CA. 3.7.d). Provincials and leaders of the different MSOLA entities, together with members of the two General Councils once organised together a time for formation, information and reflection on the subject. It was a time that confirmed how much collaboration is needed in certain areas of the mission for it to have an impact.

While it is not always easy to collaborate, the experience of the Jubilee Year showed us that it is possible if our approach is animated by a spirit of dialogue, nourished by listening, respect and by the search for the good of the mission. What our confreres and sisters in Karlsruhe are striving to live, an example that is mentioned in this issue of the *Petit Echo*, should be an encouragement to all. Pope Francis, as Aloysius Ssekamatte reminds us, clearly invited us to go in that line.

This volume provides interesting accounts about the many opportunities for collaboration the Jubilee awakened and which it called upon us to consolidate. Both Gerard Chabanon and Felix Phiri share how collaboration was actually lived even with people outside the circles of our two Institutes, with the local Churches for instance. A concrete mani-



festation of this was the involvement of the many lay people in the jubilee celebrations. Some of the lay people, as Innocent Maganya tells us, wish to live a more intensive communion of life and to share in the mission according to the charism of Missionaries of Africa. This is related to the massive animation of the jubilee.

The various and beautiful commemorative images of the jubilee year, some of which have been carefully framed, will be there for a few more years before ending up in our archives where they will continue to serve as a memory and information for the generations to come. We must, however, translate them into deeds so that the spirit of collaboration, like all the graces of the jubilee, can bear fruit now and continue to do so in the future. To this end our two General Councils are in dialogue with the Church in Uganda for a possible presence and service together among the Sudanese refugees in the North of the country. This would be a courageous commemorative gesture worthy of our Founder that would make us more concrete signs of God's love and tenderness in one of the peripheries of the African continent that calls for urgent pastoral attention.

In this time of the Covid-19 pandemic and its related safety measures that are regulating and restricting certain activities and movements, we realize how blessed we were to have been able to prepare and celebrate in peace and quiet the one hundred and fiftieth Jubilee. We were meant to receive its many graces. Let us not miss out on them.

Stanley Lubungo, M.Afr.,
Superior General



APPOINTMENTS 2020 - 1

NAME	GIVES	RECEIVES
Fr AAYIRE Nicolas	GhN/Gha	PEP/Ita
Fr ABELEDO M. Yago	PAO/Bfa	AMS/USA
Fr AKKARA Saju	SOA/Ind	SAP/Saf
Fr AMONA John	GhN/Gha	PAC/DRC
Fr BABY Jigeesh	PAO/Ner	SOA/Ind
Fr BAHMER Thomas	EAP/Uga	PEP/Deu
Fr CULLEN David	SAP/Zmb	PEP/Gbr
Fr de SCHAETZEN Arnould	EAP/Uga	PEP/Bel
Fr EKUTT Peter	PAC/DRC	PEP/Bel
Fr GUBAZIRE Bonaventure	SOA/Phl	GhN/Gha
Fr HATEGEKIMANA Léonard	SAP/Zmb	PAC/Rwa
Fr LEDUC Francis	EPO/Lbn	PEP/Fr
Fr LENGAIGNE Emmanuel	PAC/DRC	PEP/Fr
Fr MAHWERA Anselm	EAP/Ken	PEP/Deu
Fr MATESO Peter	PAO/Civ	PEP/Fra
Fr MBUSA W. Prosper	EAP/Ken	PAC/DRC
Fr MUCHUNGUZI Théobald	PAC/DRC	EAP/Ken
Fr MWANZA Didasio	EAP/Uga	SOA/Ind
Fr NGOWI Deogratias	SAP/Saf	PAO/Civ

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Fr SOMA Olivier	EAP/Ken	GMG/Roma
Fr TIRKEY Erus	GhN/Gha	SOA/Ind
Fr UWIRINGIRA Adrien	PAO/Mli	EAP/Ken
Fr YAMEOGO Sylvain	SAP/Mwi	PAO/Civ

André-Léon Simonart,
Secretary General



Participation of Lay people in Mission and Charism of the Missionaries of Africa : Fruit of the 150th Anniversary Jubilee



The Society of the Missionaries of Africa and the Missionary Sisters of our Lady of Africa have just concluded the 150th anniversary jubilee since the foundation of the two institutes in 1968 and 1969 respectively. The jubilee was preceded by a three-year spiritual preparation. At the invitation of Pope Francis, we were called to look at the past with gratitude, to live the present with passion and to look at the future with hope. Indeed, the celebration of the jubilee was a moment of memory and gratitude. It was a moment of a great rediscovery of our founder Charles Cardinal Lavigerie and his missionary zeal, character and spirituality that led him to the foundation of the two institutes. It was a moment of getting in touch with our roots.

I was privileged to accompany and work with a group of lay people who got caught up by the Lavigerian spirit. Most of these men and

women are committed Christians at Our Lady Queen of Peace Parish in Nairobi, a parish run by the Missionaries of Africa. They had started the Lavigerie Lay Association some years earlier and have been part of the greater Lavigerie Family in Kenya. Since then they have been participating in most of the activities of the sector, including recollections, ordinations and major feasts such as the feast of our Lady of Africa, the Lavigerie day on the 26th of November and the feast of the Society on the 8th of December. Most of them are Godparents of our students and young confreres. They are also a big source of support in times of bereavement. They always organize a Mass to pray with bereaved confreres or MSOLA.

If I were to single out one fruit of the 150th Jubilee anniversary, I would say it is the participation of Lay people in Mission and Charism of the Missionaries of Africa. Lay people would like to be more and more associated with the Missionaries of Africa. This was even confirmed with their participation at the closing ceremony of the Jubilee in Uganda in December last year.

I was so amazed to see the commitment of Lay people who accompanied us all the way from Tanzania and Kenya. They did not want to miss the feast. They were welcomed by well-organized lay committees from Uganda. I really felt what was dear to the Missionary of Africa,



Kenyan laity at the celebration on the 8th of December 2019 in Namugongo



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that is “l’Esprit de Corps”, a family of Brothers, Sisters, Priests and Lay people, animated with one spirit. It was a wonderful experience. They did not want to miss anything. I saw there a call from the Spirit calling us to enlarge the space of our tents. Definitely there is a call to open our space for the laity to participate in the mission of God, alongside with us. It is their baptismal right to share in the Mission of Christ. There is a need to collate our experiences throughout the Society in a coordinated manner and see how to respond to the ever increasing call of the laity to partner with us in the Mission of the Triune God.

In Kenya Lay people took at heart the preparation of the Jubilee that led to a beautiful opening ceremony at Our Lady Queen of Peace in South B. They took part in the animation that we did in all the small Christian communities. They were always part of a team together with our confreres and the MSOLA. I can see a sense of pride in each one of them, proud to belong to the Family of Cardinal Lavigerie. One of them once told me that if asked about the canonization of Cardinal Lavigerie, she will not hesitate to say yes. For her Lavigerie is already a saint.

The second fruit that I see, is the increase in the number of vocations. This gives me hope for the future. We have a good number of young men who are willing to continue the work of the pioneers. They are well prepared and ready to face the challenges of Mission. They are ready to give their lives for Christ and for Africa. It is a cause of rejoicing, even though it puts pressure on the structures that are supposed to welcome and accompany them. The formation of young candidates as well as the formation and accompaniment of lay people is an imperative. It is in itself a ministry. If we are to sustain this trend, then we need to invest in the formation of our candidates and in the formation of the laity.

The third fruit of the Jubilee is a great desire to be at the service of the Church. The young generation of Missionaries of Africa has come of age and are now taking an active part in the Mission of God in Africa and beyond. This goes very much in the line of the last general Chapter. Wherever our Charism is needed we are there. This is a sign that as a Society we have something unique to contribute at the service of the local Church.



Meeting in the context of interreligious dialogue

Lastly, the great fruit of the Jubilee is the beatification of our four confreres, which coincided with the opening of the Jubilee year. John Paul II said that a true missionary is a saint (RM 90). We have our own saints who intercede for our mission. Cardinal Lavigerie had only one thing to offer his young missionaries, the “Visum pro martyrio”. It is not just a coincidence that our confreres were beatified during the Jubilee year. Is it not a heavenly stamp that seals our commitment to Dialogue with people of different religions, tongues and races? Our confreres were presented to the universal Church as model for Interreligious Dialogue. They have become our intercessors as we continue with our Missionary work.

Our pilgrimage in Algeria, where all started as well as our pilgrimage to Namugongo, is a reminder that the missionary adventure remains a pilgrimage. This pilgrimage which was started by our predecessors, continues with the current generation towards a future that is yet to unfold. For sure we cannot count all the blessings that have been bestowed on the Society during the jubilee. Seeds have been sown, we are yet to see more fruits in the years to come, provided we remain attentive to the voice of the Holy Spirit and to the signs of the times.

Maganya Innocent
Nairobi - Kenya



Fruits and Graces of the 150th Anniversary Jubilee Year



One of the biblical texts that has empowered me to be more positive instead of lamenting, is God's message to St Paul when he was lamenting about his weaknesses. God assured him saying, "My grace is enough for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness" 2Cor 12:9. I share on some of the graces of the Jubilee Year convinced like St Theresa that **ALL IS GRACE!**

GRATITUDE: The three years of preparation for the celebration of the Jubilee helped us to acknowledge the many graces received over the 150 years. It gave us an opportunity to return to our roots and to appreciate our grace filled history. These graces are reflected in our Charism and the words of our Founder, in the lives and achievements of our confreres and sisters, in the missions, congregations and institutions we founded, etc. In a special way we were blessed with the beatification of four members of our Society. We received the grace to acknowledge God's love evidenced in all that he has realised through our missionary Institutes.



COLLABORATION: The fact that we worked together as Missionaries of Africa and Missionary Sisters of Our Lady of Africa, to prepare and celebrate the Jubilee Year is a grace. It was not always easy but it made us aware of what we can achieve together. Our Founder had no doubt about the importance of complementarity and collaboration in mission. The time of preparation enabled us to revisit our history. We appreciated the family bond that has always held us together. We consciously recognised and named the joys and pains of working together. We acknowledged the hurts of the past, suspicions, fears, even abuses and the stereotypes they generated. It was a grace to acknowledge past mistakes and certain practices within their historical context, and to consciously refuse to be enslaved by them. We chose to forgive, reconcile and seek for better ways of collaboration in mission. We closed the Jubilee Year with a renewed passion for mission affirmed by the Holy Father when he told us, “May this Jubilee Year also contribute to the development of fraternal bonds between you, because the proclamation of the Gospel can only be lived at the price of true missionary communion.”

MISSIONARY ANIMATION: We were convinced that we are initiators of the Church in Africa so that the local Church had to grow and we had to diminish. Consequently, we have been forgotten in many places. The Jubilee Year offered us the occasion to share about our mission today. It was an opportunity to reconnect with the local churches and Christian communities. In many places where we celebrated we were reminded to go beyond vocation animation to play our part in the life of the Church in Africa.

REAFFIRMED BY THE CHURCH: During the Jubilee Year we were explicitly acknowledged and encouraged by Pope Francis, the Cardinal Prefect for the Evangelisation of Peoples, and many African bishops where we serve. Many church leaders welcomed and celebrated with us. It was a special grace to know how they see our Institutes and what they expect from us. Pope Francis told us, “May the celebration of your jubilee thus help you to become “nomads for the Gospel”, men and women who are not afraid to go into the deserts of this world and seek together the means to lead their fellow human beings to this oasis that



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is the Lord, so that the living water of his love may quench all their thirst.”

WORKING WITH LAY PEOPLE: We have always had collaborators in mission especially catechists and associate members but the Jubilee Year brought to our attention the many lay people who are happy to share in our mission in various ways. Many journeyed with us and supported us in the preparation and celebration of the Jubilee. I consider this a grace but also a sign of the times. Many people are aware of what they have received and they are looking for opportunities to make their contribution. It is time to reap this fruit of the Jubilee Year.

RETHINKING OUR MISSION: We are no longer at the centre of the Church in Africa but at the margins in terms of numbers and leadership. The Church in Africa has grown in most places, the African reality has changed drastically, and the pastoral priorities and challenges have changed too. We have to face the reality of migrations, refugees, radical Islam, new religious groups and ideologies, devil worship, human trafficking, environmental degradation, epidemics, threats to human life and Christian families, etc. What used to be African matters have taken on a



Group of Lavigerian lay people from Uganda



global dimension. This necessarily implies living our Charism in a different way that takes into account these changes. The reality of our Institutes has changed. We live in international and intercultural communities but we come from societies marked by individualism, racism, tribalism, negative ethnicity and nationalism. We desire to break new grounds to reach out to those living at the peripheries but we are confronted with violence, risky territories, limited means, comfort zones and fear of the unknown. Various prophetic voices during the Jubilee year told us that things cannot remain as they are. They challenged us to be nomads for the Gospel, inspired by the faith and zeal of our predecessors and seeking creatively for ways of being missionaries today.

Aloysius Ssekamatte

White Fathers - White Sisters: The Graces of the Jubilee Year in Ghana-Nigeria Province.



The Ghana-Nigeria Province celebrated the climax of the 150th Anniversary of our foundation on the 26th October 2019 in Tamale. It was an opportunity to thank God for receiving the Good News brought to our Province by the followers of Cardinal Lavigerie, who had passionately explained that he considered it his mission “to carry the Gospel beyond the desert into the center of this immense continent and bind Africa to the life of Christian people. This is our providential destiny according to God’s plan.” Indeed, the first Missionaries arrived in Navrongo, Ghana, from Burkina Faso in 1906 to carry out this dream of Lavigerie. From Navrongo, the Gospel spread to other parts of the northern Ghana. To the east, Churches were established at Bolgatanga,



White Fathers and White Sisters surrounding Archbishop Philip Naameh at the Jubilee celebration in Tamale, on the 26th of October 2019.

Binduri, Bawku, Garu, Walewale and Bunkpurugu. To the west, they went to Jirapa, Nandom, and other parts of Wa diocese. To the south, Churches were established in Tamale, Yendi, and Damongo dioceses.

At the provincial level, the launching of the jubilee celebration took place in Navrongo, where the first Missionaries of Africa had arrived. It took place on the 8th December 2018 at the Basilica of Our Lady of Seven Sorrows, built by the pioneer missionaries. The main celebrant was Bishop Alfred Agyenta of the Navrongo-Bolgatanga diocese, joined by our confrere Bishop Richard Baawobr of Wa diocese. In attendance were many sons and daughters of Lavigerie, religious groups, local clergy and lay faithful. Among the dignitaries were the Chief of Navrongo, the Regional Minister and others. It was indeed a simple and moving celebration. In his homily, Bishop Alfred praised the Missionaries of Africa for their commitment to Evangelization.

The Chief of Navrongo in his speech highlighted the arrival of the first Missionaries of Africa who were received by his grandfather who gave them land to settle. He commended the Missionaries for establishing hospitals and schools, where he profited to be educated. The Regional Minister who attended the St. Francis of Assisi girls secondary at Jirapa praised the Missionaries for providing education and discipline that enabled them to be successful. The Provincial then outlined the program of activities foreseen during the year of celebration, such as sessions on human trafficking. Note that in Nigeria, the inauguration of the Jubilee coincided with the celebration of our presence in that Sector for the past seventy-five years.

We had the second celebration at Jirapa (Wa Diocese) on the 17th August 2019 at which five confreres marked various anniversaries: Michael Targett - 60 years of Oath, André Schaminée - 50 years of priesthood, John Aserbire - 25 years of priesthood and Jacek Wróblewski



Missionaries of Africa at the launch of the jubilee celebration in Navrongo, on the 8th of December 2018 with Bishop Alfred Agyenta of the Diocese of Navrongo-Bolgatanga, and our confrere Bishop Richard Baawobr of the Diocese of Wa



and Joseph Bakuri - 25 years of Oath. It was well attended by priests, religious brothers and sisters and a big crowd of lay faithful. The Chief lauded the Missionaries for bringing them the Gospel and also education and health care. Bishop Richard Baawobr praised the pioneer missionaries who were moved by love and zeal in their missionary work.

The climax of the celebration took place in Tamale on the 26th October 2019. Archbishop Philip Naameh was the main celebrant with a good number of priests, religious groups and lay faithful present. Some bishops gave inspiring Goodwill Messages to mark the celebrations. Bishop Vincent Boi-Naa said, "The history of Yendi diocese cannot be written without the mention of the enormous work of the pioneer Missionaries of Africa".

To mark the 150th Anniversary, in Ghana/Nigeria workshops were held in parishes and schools on Human Trafficking, Modern Slavery, Migration, Domestic Violence, and Care of the Earth, so as to conscientize students and the general public. Many people benefited from these sessions, which opened their eyes to these evils. The youth felt empowered to protect themselves and others, and to report perpetrators to the law enforcement agencies.

The graces we received include the good collaboration between the MSOLA and the M.Afr. For the planning of the celebration, a joint committee was set up of both our Sisters and Brothers. As part of the first-year celebration, we had the opportunity to sort out misunderstandings and past conflicts, seek reconciliation and establish a family bond, which enabled us to work with one vision and celebrate as one family.

Another grace was surely the good collaboration and support from bishops, priests, congregations and laity in our preparation and celebrations at Navrongo, Jirapa and Tamale. People were indeed very generous, both financially and regarding time. Worth noting is the support and good collaboration with our family members and friends - MissaFamily. This has fired us up to continue to be witnesses. A good networking relationship now exists between the sons and daughters of Lavigerie and other stake holders and agencies, involved in advocacy, prevention and protection. In Nigeria, sessions and even radio programs took place in



The confreres, including 5 jubilarians, surrounding Bishop Richard Baawobr at the second celebration in Jirapa (Diocese of Wa) on the 17th of August 2019

the Ibadan and Osogbo dioceses with good collaboration from the bishops, clergy and lay faithful. A tree was planted in Ibadan in memory of the jubilee celebration.

The celebrations, often reported in the national newspapers, made us known again in places where our senior confreres settled and established Churches, but where often only the elderly still remember us. The jubilee gave us the opportunity to renovate the graves of our confreres and sisters buried in the Province. We even discovered such graves in some abandoned areas!

All this has made us aware of what the early missionaries accomplished. They did the planting of the seeds and that seed has grown and matured with many Christians. As a jubilee people we are proud with the legacy and work of these pioneer missionaries. Indeed, our hearts are full of joy and thanksgiving as we strive to continue in their footsteps.

John Aserbire, Provincial of Ghana-Nigeria

“White Fathers - White Sisters: the graces of the jubilee year”, The Southern Africa Province (SAP)



The Southern Africa Province (SAP) is composed of four countries, Malawi, Mozambique, South Africa and Zambia, of which only Malawi has remained to date the only country with the presence of the MSOLA. Nonetheless, the whole Province experienced something of the close collaboration with the MSOLA at the occasion of the Jubilee, mainly the Malawi Sector and to a certain extent the Zambia Sector. In 2016, the two superiors of the Missionaries Africa and MSOLA announced the Jubilee of the 150 years of the foundation of their two institutes, with a clear three years roadmap, each year marked by a specific theme. The Malawi Sector, being the only country with the MSOLA presence, immediately put in place a team composed of vocation animators belonging to both institutes to spearhead the planning and actualization of the activities related to the Jubilee. The team met on regular basis in order to organize the activities together.

Several activities were conjointly agreed upon and realized in the course of the three years. To start with, there was the pilgrimage visit to Mponda, point of arrival of the first Missionaries of Africa in Malawi in 1889, to revisit our origins in Malawi - a similar pilgrimage was done in Zambia to Mambwe Mwela the place where the first Catholic presence in what is presently known as Zambia was established in 1891, in connection with the 125 years of Christianity in Zambia. The pilgrimage in Malawi was extended to Mua, the place where the first permanent mission was established in 1902. The official launching of the Jubilee took place in 2017 in St Denis parish, Chinsapo, in Lilongwe. The colourful ceremony was presided over by Archbishop Tarcisius Ziyaye, the archbishop of Lilongwe. Each Sector organized its own closing ceremony; in Malawi the ceremony took place in St Thomas-Zolozolo and St Francis in 2019. In Zambia it took place on the 10th of November 2019 and the MSOLA were represented by two of the sisters. It was a colourful celebration presided over the archbishop emeritus Tresfor Mpundu whose personal knowledge and past history with the Missionaries of Africa added a special flavour to the ceremony. At the end of his homily he rolled on the ground in the traditional way of expressing gratitude for the missionary work realized in Zambia.



Archbishop Emeritus Tresfor Mpundu kneels down to express the gratitude of the
Zambian Church for the missionary work on the 10th November 2019.

In the course of the three years, a number of activities were realized, some together with the MSOLA others alone as Missionaries of Africa. For instance, to mark this common journey, celebrations of the 30th April, the feast of Our Lady of Africa, the 26th November (the Anniversary of the death of our founder), and the 8th December, the feast of the Immaculate Conception, were conducted with a notable participation of members of either institutes. These were occasions to express our common origin and unity of purpose in mission.

On different occasions, various talks were given conjointly with the MSOLA on the themes of the year and/or on the life of the founder and spirituality of the two societies. Furthermore, the team went around the parishes that have been previously run by the Missionaries of Africa for a reminder of our presence there as well as vocational animation. In some parishes this brought back nostalgic souvenirs of the ‘good old days’.

Among the accompanying artifacts produced on the occasion of the Jubilee the most significant epitomizing the close collaboration with the MSOLA was the printing of the Jubilee cloth (nsalu) in 2018/2019. Over 1,200 pieces of cloth was printed and sold successfully. This was the most conspicuous symbol of the jubilee, not only was it worn by many women but it was also use as ornament during celebrations. A similar initiative was undertaken by the other Sectors which also produced their own sets of jubilee clothes, alongside other products such as jubilee golf-shirts, calendars, Missionaries of Africa rosaries, etc.

In 2019, the MSOLA receive a special invitation from Bishop Lungu of Chipata Diocese, in Zambia, to come and mark their jubilee celebration in the diocese. Although the invitation was specifically for the MSOLA, it was an opportunity for us to interact with the MSOLA sisters who came to attend the events and to accompany them.

By the nature of the presence of the MSOLA in our Province, common activities could only be carried out in Malawi where they still have a presence and Zambia the last country where they were. In spite of that, we can discern tangible fruits of the Jubilee in collaborating with our sisters. Firstly, the very fact of working for the same cause during these

THE MISSIONARIES OF AFRICA (WHITE FATHERS) AND MISSIONARY SISTERS OF OUR LADY OF AFRICA (WHITE SISTERS)

Celebrate 150 years of their Foundation

Date: Sunday, 10th November, 2019

Venue: St. Lawrence Parish

Time: 09:00hrs

Parishes with Missionaries of Africa
ST. LAWRENCE • GOOD SHEPHERD • NABUYUKA • NEW KALOKO • ST. PETER • LUMBA

last three years reminded us of our common origin and drew us closer together. Secondly, this has been an extraordinary opportunity to revisit our immediate and distant history; the different talks given about the history of our two institutes refreshed our sense originating from something greater than we are and the visit to the historical places where the first missionaries first arrived made us realize the amount of sacrifice and courage that went to the beginnings of the church. Finally, the participation and involvement of the local church made us understand and appreciate the contribution of our two institutes to the founding of the church in this part of the world. This was not a celebration isolated from the rest but indeed that of the whole church, we were not the object of the celebration but the occasion for it.

Felix Phiri

THE GRACES OF THE JUBILEE YEAR AS SEEN FROM EUROPE



When Richard Baawobr's General Council sent its first letter to launch the three Jubilee years, many wondered: why three years? Now that the Jubilee has ended, I have a better understanding of the importance of this amazing initiative and the necessary steps that had to be put in place.

Simply put, it took us a good year to embark on the adventure and overcome some negative reactions. Once that was done, we were ready to plan our various activities. Three points in particular draws my attention. They are the three graces that I hope will continue to bear fruit in the future.

1. The first element concerns collaboration with the local Church in our various Sectors. This point was stressed in the Chapter documents, in the chapter on Mission (pp. 25-26). We have renewed and at times established new contacts with dioceses, bishops, Christian communities who were all very happy to meet us and vice versa. I will mention in particular the celebrations in Bayonne (Cardinal Lavigerie), Plouguerneau (Mother Marie-Salomé), Treviglio, London and Glasgow, and many others.



The Symbol of the common Project of the White Sisters and White Fathers in Karlsruhe held by Rudi Pint and Sr. Elizabeth, MSOLA

2. The second aspect is a renewed visibility of our Society in the European Churches. Thanks to reports on radio and television - special mention should be made of Spain on this point - articles in newspapers, interviews, conferences, such as those in Lublin and Cologne, and many other events, all this has helped to present a more attractive and lively image our missionary Institute. The message has been: look, listen, we are very much alive and the Mission continues. Here too, the orientations of the 2016 Chapter on media and social networks (pp. 30-31) were concretely implemented.

3. The third very important point is that of Mission. It is during these three Jubilee years that two missionary commitments were made. In Liverpool and Karlsruhe, two teams - one of them in direct collaboration with the MSOLA in Germany - are present in the field, especially in the area of migrants and inter-religious dialogue. It is interesting to note that the two points mentioned above: the collaboration with the local Church and the visibility of the Society have been priorities in the development of these two projects. Diocesan leaders were involved from the beginning. And their commitments were generously concretized financially, especially for the restoration of the homes of our brothers and sisters. It



Terry Madden in "White Father" clothing with two young Africans at the Jubilee celebration in London

was in close collaboration with the Dioceses of Liverpool and Freiburg that a missionary and pastoral vision emerged.

The Chapter recommended “to give priority to requests from local Churches interested in the Mission towards the African World” (p. 34). This has been achieved. Working with migrants is not always easy. It requires patience, tenacity and also humility. It is the same with encounter with Islam and other religions. However, many steps have already been taken to establish pastoral and friendly relations in Karlsruhe and Liverpool. I would add that, for all our missionary commitments in Europe, the question of discerning “places on the periphery” (p. 36) remains an essential imperative and requires regular evaluation. Our teams in the field are all intercultural and intergenerational. This is also a reality that we must preserve in the future.

Conclusion

These three years of 150-years Jubilee have been both a wake-up call and a vitamin shot in our Province. First of all, a reminder: we belong to an international missionary family and it is good to remember this: a family united around its founder and committed to a mission for the African world; a family open to today’s world, to its problems and in



In Tours, White Fathers and White Sisters having a meal

particular that of migration and inter-religious dialogue; a family eager to witness to its love of the Gospel and of Africa. In many communities, but also individually, the texts of the Founder have been re-read in retreats, recollections and conferences.

But equally, a shot of vitamins that awakened in many brothers and sisters, energies that were dormant. This was concretely translated into many initiatives and joint celebrations with the Missionary Sisters of Our Lady of Africa. Everywhere the joy of coming together has created a missionary enthusiasm. Now that the Jubilee is over, it is not a question of repeating exactly the same thing because the conditions are now different, but we can surf on this emotion. For example, the confinement imposed on us by the Covid 19 epidemic has forced us to look for other ways of communicating, sharing and remaining present to one another. It is in this direction and this openness that we will continue to move forward.

I would like to thank all those who have worked patiently, but with great determination and creativity, to make this Jubilee a reality. With them we give thanks to God.

Gérard Chabanon

“The Rue des Fusillés in Algiers”



On May 17, we received a letter from the Superior of the White Fathers in the Maghreb living in the Rue des Fusillés in Algiers, formerly called Rue Polignac.

He certainly did not remember that May 17 is a memorable date for this house. In fact, on 17th May 1957 a group of young Algerians were executed very close to our house “rue des Fusillés”, in front of the slaughterhouse of the city of Algiers, situated a few steps further down this street, called at that time rue Polignac. This abominable act was the work of the French colonial army, as an act of retaliation for an attack perpetrated in a café in the center of Algiers. The young people executed had the same age as our present White Fathers’ students. On the memorial plaque, in marble, right next to the front door of our house, are engraved forever the names of these young people who were sacrificed, thus recalling the struggle of Algerians for the freedom and independence of the country, but also the injustice and violence of this war, as in any armed conflict throughout the world, yesterday and today!



St. Monica's Parish

Our present house was once home to a flourishing parish called St. Monica. The place was well indicated on the old urban maps of the city of Algiers. The last parish priest of this parish, whom I had the pleasure of meeting during a stay in Morocco, was Father Fournier, a Salesian, Dean of Rabat Cathedral and zealous defender of the charismatic movement.

The Salesian Fathers of the parish of Ste Monique du Ruisseau in Algiers, animated many “pastoral” activities for young people, Muslims and Christians. The atmosphere between the two cultures and religions was good. Even today, the old people of the district remind us of this with nostalgia.

This memory was very useful when, later in the 1980s, our neighbour, the National Bank, wanted to take over this beautiful place and a block of about twenty houses around it. We didn't let ourselves be so easily beaten: together with the owners of the neighboring houses, we founded an association to defend the neighborhood. An experienced lawyer from Hussein-Dey helped us win all the cases! Father Ould Aoudia Belaid, Vicar General and Father Pierre Georgin, Regional, were very useful companions in this struggle. As for Bishop Teissier, he strongly supported us.

How did we get our house?

Immediately after independence, the White Fathers of Northern Algeria, looked for a house larger than the one in the rue du Jasmin, in Belcourt, Algiers. The Salesian Fathers wanted to leave, since almost all their parishioners, *pieds-noirs*, had left the country. Their plan to build a new church was abandoned! The walls of the new church under construction had already reached a height of 4 meters! So, in 1965, the White Fathers, under the direction of Father Jean Fisset, moved there. The old presbytery was transformed into the office of the Regional/Provincial and the bursar's office. The new church, unfinished, was turned into a chapel and guest rooms. The old church became a garage and store room. Later, Abbot Ould Aoudia removed the beautiful

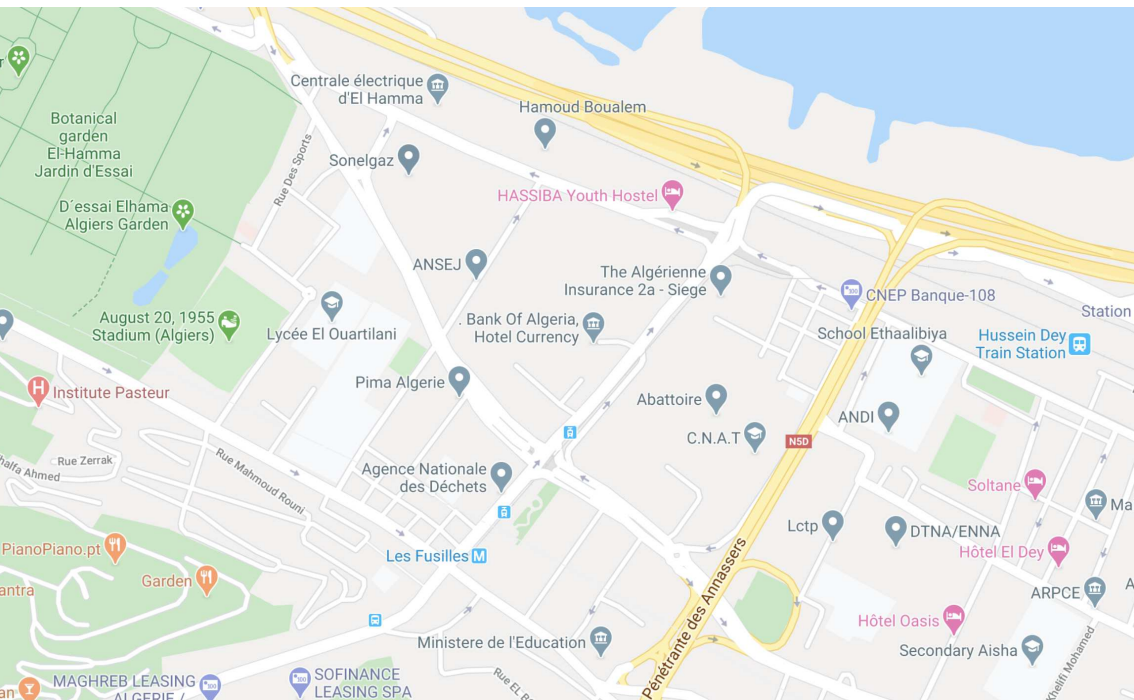
MISSION



ceiling to embellish new chapels in Boudouaou and Ténia (former Menerville) 50 km east of Algiers.

In the 60s and 70s, there were still a great number of Fathers in Algeria, about 100 in the North and 100 in the South. They had many schools and vocational training centers to run, the largest of which were in El Harrach (ex- Maison Carrée, now the new big mosque of Algiers). This necessitated a constant “coming and going” of Fathers and volunteer teachers (VSNA.) who came to our aid. The house was almost always occupied; the community had at least five or six Fathers or Brothers. Brother Roméo Lamoureux was the most famous these days because of his kindness and his beautiful Canadian accent, but especially as co-founder, with Brother Gallus, of the famous liqueur of Thibar, La Tibhérine. Other illustrious Fathers of that time were Louis Garnier, Jean Chevillard, Tiberghien and, much later, Alain Dieulangard.

From 1968 onwards, young Fathers felt less and less attracted to school and vocational training structures. It was becoming increasingly difficult for those in charge at that time to convince them to get involved. It was the time of the Second Vatican Council and of the May ‘68 revolution in France! Thus, around 1973, steps were taken to bring these cen-





MISSION

ters under the authority of the Algerian Ministry of Vocational Training where Blessed Charles Deckers was well appreciated (his friend, who had become Minister of Vocational Training, attended his funeral and was, unfortunately, himself assassinated shortly afterwards). As for the schools, they were more and more run by volunteers from France and by people from the Middle East knowledgeable of Arab language and culture. Abbots Thierry Becker and Gilles Nicolas were our strongest “pillars” in these difficult times. Blessed Jean Chevillard and Sister Friedenreich, MSOLA, managed the winding up of these structures for many years.

Change of status

Algerian political history took us all by surprise on June 30, 1976: by decree of the Government all our centers and schools were nationalized and came under the authority of the state. The then President, Mr Houari Boumediene, had indeed recognized, just before that date, the value of our institutions, but he let us know that to ensure national unity of the youth he had no choice but to nationalize our structures and other structures not directly dependent on national education. On proposal of Cardinal Duval, we got the permission that our school at Maison Carrée



The *Rue des Fusillés* in Algiers and the Provincial House of the Maghreb in Algiers



be transformed into a National School for Deaf Youth. I was able to work there myself for more than 35 years, as well as Father Jacques Gosselin, later parish priest of Jijel, then Miss Annie Robin and Sister Hayat, Lebanese.

On June 30, 1976, many Sisters and Fathers heaved a big “sigh” of relief. Indeed, our commitments, despite their qualities and the recognition by the local authorities, had become too heavy a burden for the weak congregations and the Church of Algeria.

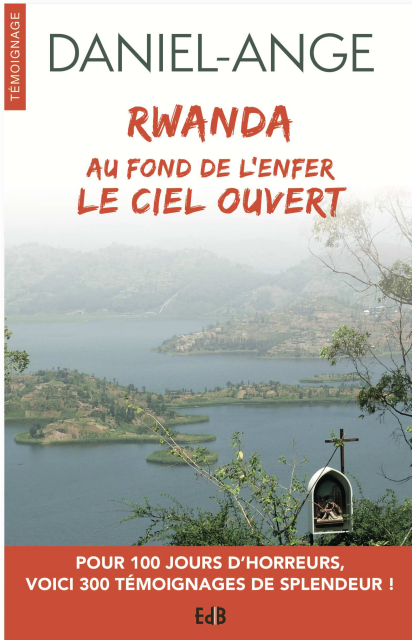
The fact of losing these schools and formation centers obliged the Church of Algeria, headed by the bishops and the leaders of the congregations, but also each Christian present in the country, to reflect on the place of the Church in a country with a Muslim majority. We were all inhabited by the will, without limits, before and after independence, to work hand in hand with the people of this country, for its development, for a better future. The loss of our works invited us, in all humility, without losing our identity, to find the necessary creativity to fit in. Twenty years later, the dark decade, with its new sacrifices, with its misfortunes, but also with its moments of intense communication between faithful of different beliefs, in misfortune and in happiness, has allowed us to deepen our vocation of presence “on the fractured zones of society”, a phrase dear to Blessed Pierre Claverie. A situation that constantly challenges us!

Meditating on the life and witness of our 19 martyrs and the thousands of victims of the violence of that time can help us to situate ourselves in the face of an uncertain future, while letting the Spirit of God work in us so that He may give us the courage and intelligence to follow the right path. This could lead to a simple life, close to others, giving ourselves “everything to everyone” and, as Cardinal Lavignerie said, “Omnia in Caritate”.

Jan Heuft



Daniel-Ange, Rwanda. Au fond de l'enfer le Ciel ouvert, Préface de Mgr Smaragde Mbonyinge, évêque de Kabgayi. Postface de Mgr Henryk Hosier, visiteur apostolique au Rwanda en 1994 et 1995, ISBN 979-10-306-0264-7, Editions des Béatitudes, juillet 2019, 355 pages,



Several books have appeared in recent years on the “righteous” of Rwanda, those who have given their life or have saved the life of others. I present Father Daniel-Ange’s book for several reasons.

The first concerns us, Missionaries of Africa, because we find in it very beautiful passages about our three confreres killed in Rwanda: André Calonne (p. 141-142), Joaquim Vallmajo (p. 25-26; 143-146) and Guy Pinard (p. 146-149). The author also mentions other confreres: Ferdinand Drion du Chapois, Otto Mayer and Antonio Martinez (p. 156), Marc François (p. 176-177) and Stany de Jamblinne (177-178). It includes a text written by Dominique Nothomb (p. 39-40). In addition, many stories of the “righteous” are taken from Henri Blanchard’s book published privately in 2009: “Quelques témoignages autour de l’histoire récente du Rwanda, Au Rwanda, l’Eglise compte de nombreux saints” (Some Witnesses on the Recent History of Rwanda, In Rwanda the Church has many Saints). To my knowledge, this is the first publication to include so many texts published by Henri.

The first and the last chapter are by the author himself. For the rest, he personally collected a number of testimonies during his annual visits to Rwanda. I also appreciated the inclusion of stories published in magazines or other little known books, which shows the author’s spirit of research, which, he points out, is far from being exhaustive.

In his book, he mentions those whose beatification processes are underway: Cyprien and Daphrose Rugamba (Archdiocese of Kigali), Félicité Niyitegeka (Diocese of Nyundo), Dorothée Mukansanga (Diocese of Kabgayi) and Mgr Christophe Munzihirwa (Archdiocese of Bukavu, in the DR Congo).


Only one regret: numerous typing errors for the names in Kinyarwanda and errors in the dates.

The sentence printed on the cover points to the spirit of the book: "For the 100 days of horror, here are 300 witnesses of splendor! »

Guy Theunis

**A MAVERICK
IN A MISSIONARY
CHURCH**

Memories of
Theo van Asten



There's a divinity that shapes our ends

**A MAVERICK
IN A MISSIONARY
CHURCH**

Memories of
Theo van Asten

Theo van Asten describes many incidents from his childhood in a Dutch village to his collision with Vatican officials. After ordination as a White Father and studies in Rome he was appointed to Kipalapala Seminary in Tanzania where he was a popular Rector in the difficult years following national Independence. Elected the Superior General of the Society he controversially withdrew his missionaries en masse from Mozambique where they were resisting pressure from the Portuguese government to preach an unjust political gospel. The Vatican authorities were further incensed when, in the Synods of 1971 and 1974, he criticised the worldly life-style of Vatican officials and questioned the necessity of the universal imposition of celibacy on the clergy. Unable to return to Africa at the end of his term of office, he offered his expertise to the UN office of the World Food Programme in which capacity he travelled widely. He eventually married civilly, but was refused a dispensation for many years in spite of his unswerving loyalty to the Church.

Copies of this book (English or French) are available at the Generalate. For information on how to acquire them, please contact the library: +39 06393634220 / gmg.biblioteca@mafr.org.



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- Hans Vöcking, “*Muslime im Königreich Belgien*”, in Religionen Unterwegs, 25.Jg. Nr.4, 4 Dezember 2019, pp. 10-16.

- Henry Moses Ariho (Fraternité Lavigerie-Abidjan), « *Mon regard sur la mission en France* » in Spiritus, n° 237, décembre 2019, pp. 438-444.

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- Diego R. Sarrió Cucarella, *On 'How to Discern the Truth of Religion' by Hunayn b. Ishaq. The Impersonal Recension*, in PISAI, *Islamocritiana* n°45, Human Fraternity, Rome, 2019, pp. 155-163.

- Alfred Weyirane Awogya, *Whitehead's Philosophy of Organism and Ecological Concerns in Laudato Si*, Tesi di Licenza, Pontificia Università Gregoriana, Facoltà di Filosofia, Rome, 2020, 68p.

- Justin Uwekmu Rimbarac, *L'attention comme exercice spirituel par excellence chez Pierre Hadot*, Tesi di Licenza, Pontificia Università Gregoriana, Facoltà di Filosofia, Rome, 2020, 77p.

The Archivist



Joe Braun 1931 - 2019



John Joseph Braun was born in Buffalo, New York, on March 16, 1931. He had two sisters and three brothers, one of whom was a diocesan priest and high school teacher, Rev. Francis Braun. After several years in the diocesan seminary, John Joseph entered Missionary of Africa formation in 1950, taking the habit at the Novitiate in Alexandria Bay in 1952. In those years, he became known as Joe Braun to avoid confusion with another John (Brown).

In a vocational promotional film, *Time in Between*, about Alex Bay, Joe speaks of his dreams of

mission. Soon to leave for theology in Tunisia, surveying the continent of his hopes, he muses: “I see opportunities, opportunities, opportunities.” We used to tease him about that narration. And yet...

Especially during his many years in education, chaplaincy, and other pastoral work in Malawi and Zambia, Joe was to see quite a few dreams come true and keep his enthusiasm for meeting those “opportunities.”

First, he studied theology in Carthage and Thibar. One exciting opportunity came during the Thibar years. The story is picked up by the Catholic press. “A letter narrating the experiences of three young American students for the White Fathers priesthood during a 32-day, 4,000-mile trip through North Africa has been received by Father J Alfred Richard, the order’s Provincial. The letter was written by John Braun of Buffalo, N.Y. On the summer vacation trip by train, bus, truck, bicycle, and afoot, he was accompanied by (two other Americans). The three are students



at the White Fathers' Holy Cross Seminary in Thibar, Tunisia."

Joe is quoted: "After standing in a jammed train for seven hours, we reached Constantine where the temperature was 107 F, and a strong sirocco wind was blowing. Nothing bothered us after that." He was full of enthusiasm after visiting the hermitage of Charles de Foucauld, participating in the mission life of older colleagues, listening to their experience of the Islamic culture.

It was the Bishop of the Sahara, George Mercier, who would ordain Joe in Carthage in 1957. He was sent to Rome for a doctorate in Philosophy, his ticket to a five-year stint teaching at Kachebere Major Seminary in Mchinji, Malawi. During those years, the Vatican Council changed how people thought of the Church. Independence in most of Africa changed life there. Joe embraced the new thinking in the Church and the empowerment of African Church leadership. For the young Joe Braun (as for many of us who came of age then), it was an exciting time.

Appointed to Washington in 1965, he returned to a changing America. Gone was the calm of the

flourishing parishes of the Fifties. Controversy was now common in the Church and in thinking about "the missions" in the newly independent Africa. In response, Joe eagerly devoured books, reviews including *Presence Africaine*, and much more. Working for the Africa branch of CARA (Center for Applied Research in the Apostolate), Joe commented on how CARA could apply research for "better methods of training laymen and religious, staffing and financing projects." He thought that we could learn a lot from methods applied in secular endeavors. In Washington, he ministered to the developing French-speaking "African Parish." African Americans, meanwhile, had burst into the consciousness and conscience of the nation. It may have been then that Joe conceived the dream of helping to bring African Americans into closer contact with their African brothers and sisters. This world and its links to the Africa of his experience never lost his interest.

In 1967 Father Braun took part in the *aggiornamento* Chapter, which attempted to bring the Society to a more flexible and dynamic style of life and mission. There was to be a new vision for formation in the Society. The novitiate was to be



called the “spiritual year.” Joe was assigned to lead the first U.S. experience. In retrospect, we can wonder if Joe and other educators in the Society that year weren’t facing an impossible task. Timing was bad amid the notorious turbulence of 1968. By some accounts, this first attempt did not go well. His students, product of the turbulent Sixties, were not easy to please. He had come of age in calmer times. It requires time and experience to ground enthusiasm and idealism into a cogent and thoughtful program. Maybe we can speak of “culture shock.”

His return to Africa in 1970 must have been a relief. In an interview published in his home town paper during those years, he speaks of the promise of Malawi. He served as chaplain counselor to 500 high school girls and boys, 350 students at the Colby College of Agriculture and 70 students at Likuni Nursing School. He also assisted the White Fathers’ Holy Rosary Parish. He was proud to tell of his African bishop as well as the African leadership throughout Malawi. As for the new generation of Malawians, they too are changing compared to their parents. “It’s like two worlds”, he said. “The new, young generation of Malaw-

ians has a broad horizon and has opened up terrifically from that of their parents who knew only the old village ways... (They) have very different ideas from their parents, he stressed, as to dress, behavior and marriage.” Joe himself always had a broad horizon faithfully observing not just the world of pastoral theology but also issues of social justice, economic development, and African world politics.

He next returned to America as Provincial. His was a big pastoral responsibility toward his priests and brothers as they attempted to find their footing at home. Those who were struggling found a patient ear. He tried to help them through the various programs such as Guest House as well as the now-defunct House of Affirmation. Departures and crises were fairly common. Joe was always looking for ways to help. He searched for ways for the Province to respond to changing times and the dearth of missionary vocations. He also dealt with a public grown skeptical of the old missionary spirit. In one article, he responded to questions as to whether missionaries have any role at all to play in the new Africa. He bravely retorted against criticisms of the name White Fathers. One journalist commented,



not without sympathy: “It seems as though Rev. Joe Braun is always explaining himself. But then again, heading a group called the White Fathers is bound to raise a few eyebrows.”

Meanwhile, Joe followed up on a long-running desire to bring Africans and the African-American “diaspora” together. Among his projects was accompanying the African-American priest composer, Clarence Rivers, on a trip to East Africa. As Provincial, he brought quite a few African diocesan priests to the U.S. for mission appeals.

After finishing up as Provincial, Joe resumed his service to youth and education and his presence in a parish, this time in Zambia. By the nineteen nineties, Father John, as he was known in Lusaka, had earned the title “Gogo,” grandfather, among the new generation of aspiring students. Not a few who later rose to prominent positions owed their continuing education to his sponsorship. His support for students and young clergy was unconditional. He may have had trouble spotting some who would take advantage of so much trust.

By the turn of the new millennium, he was back in America like

an exile in the Province retirement house in St Petersburg, Florida. There he continued to read and explore contemporary life, always subscribing to the daily New York Times. He had become rather reserved in community, perhaps missing his Zambian life. His service to St Joseph’s parish south of downtown St Petersburg must have seemed the next best thing. The congregation was made up of mostly black people, African-Americans and newcomers from Nigeria and elsewhere. There he was fully engaged, celebrating weekend Masses, leading Bible studies, participating in the social service of surrounding churches of all denominations. This ecumenical outreach helped people in trouble with the law and searching for housing and other needs. More “opportunities” had knocked, and Joe again did his best to answer, to realize his old dreams again. Even toward the end, when he could no longer walk, let alone drive, he had himself taken to the parish for Sunday Mass.

In 2014, he collapsed during a visit to his doctor’s office. It proved the beginning of a slow decline and, finally, his death on November 11, 2019, in St Petersburg, Florida. His funeral was cel-



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celebrated for a large congregation at his beloved St Joseph. People meeting his confreres after the Mass expressed gratitude and appreciation for his long service to the parish. One of his former Lusaka students spoke warmly of the one known as grandfather to her and her peers so long ago. Speaking to a Zambian friend in those last years, he confided jok-

ingly that his friend should steal some of his ashes and deposit them in a churchyard back in Zambia. "If I get a tombstone, he confided humbly, do not write anything on it, just: "He tried."

What more could we ask? May he rest in peace.

Robert McGovern

François de Gaulle 1922-2020



François was born on February 13, 1922 in Montceau-les-Mines, where his father, a brother of General de Gaulle, was an engineer. His father belonged to a Parisian family and had married a lady from Grenoble. As early as 1927, his father was affected by lethargic encephalitis, which forced him to quit his job. He had to spend the last twenty years of his life bedridden and increasingly handicapped. So, it was the mother who had to raise the 4 sons, of which François was the eldest. The family had to leave Montceau-les-Mines and move to Maisons-Laffite, then

to Grenoble, where the mother had a large family. And it was there that François spent his youth in a very religious environment, dividing his time between his family, the Notre Dame Day School and a scout troop. It was from the age of twelve that he thought of the priesthood. Little by little he heard the call of the mission in Africa, and in September 1940, at the age of eighteen, he left for Tunisia to begin his formation as a White Father in Thibar.

In June 1942, François was mobilized and sent to the youth work camp of Tabarka, where he learned roofing as a trade. After the Anglo-American landings in Morocco (November 1942), the French troops present in the Maghreb joined the allies, and François was sent to the officers' school in Cherchel, where he would be introduced to artillery. He was then assigned to the 67th artillery regiment in Constantine. On 21 December, 1943 the young officer landed in Naples. He took part in the advance of the allied armies, at the battle of Monte Cassino, in the liberation of Rome, as far as Siena. From there his regiment was directed towards Taranto, on the Adriatic coast. In August 1944, they embarked for France,



liberated Toulon and Marseille, continued fighting against the Wehrmacht as far as Alsace, and entered Germany on March 19, 1945. His army service earned him three commendations with La croix de guerre, and later the Legion of Honour. All those who lived with Francois know how deeply these war years influenced him, and how he liked to talk about them until the end of his life.

After the armistice he was demobbed in Algeria, and immediately entered the novitiate at Maison Carrée. Almost all the novices were former soldiers and former prisoners. He also discovered that twenty-seven of the aspirants he had known in Thibar before the war had died in battle. One can guess that this novitiate which had 67 novices was a bit special! Then it was the return to Thibar for three years and to Carthage for the last year of theology. It is understandable that going back to theological studies must have been quite a challenge and far from an easy endeavour. Nevertheless, Francois proved to be a good element, calm, docile, simple and straightforward. A man of sound judgement and pleasant in community, he pronounced his missionary oath on 29 June 1949, and was ordained priest on 1 February, 1950.

He was immediately appointed to what was then Upper Volta. The

journey was made by boat with stops in Algiers, Dakar, Conakry and Abidjan, and arrived in Bobo-Dioulasso after 37 hours by train. By truck he travelled first to Koudougou, then to Ouahigouya where he was finally able to begin his ministry. It was with a sense of wonderment that he discovered the country and its inhabitants. He learnt mooré, and very soon he was asked to build a classroom, then a church... It would be the beginning of a long series of building projects. This did not prevent him, in any way from starting his apostolic ministry and from beginning to tour the villages. He would later say that "Going on tour is the heart of missionary life". It was on returning from one of these tours that he learned of his appointment as treasurer of the fledgling diocese, which he accepted, considering it to be a the job of a fonctionnaire! So, he left Ouahigouya for Koudougou where Bishop Bretault resided. Fortunately, to his task as treasurer, was added the function of curate at the cathedral and director of the parish school. He would give himself totally, without counting the cost in the service of the Church and would find great fulfillment in all that he undertook. In 1958, he came down with hepatitis, which forced him to take a period of rest in France before leaving for Koudougou where he had been recently appointed Parish



Priest of the Cathedral. The future was bright, but happy moments can be fleeting and they came to an abrupt end. For in 1960, François received his appointment for France.

He had first been told of the possibility of an appointment to Lyon for missionary animation. But in fact, it was the post of the Provincial Bursar that was entrusted to him. He would occupy this post for some twelve years. The responsibility was important: at that time there were 900 French White Fathers, nearly two hundred of whom were in France, in about twenty communities. In addition to the ordinary administration of this province, François would have to manage important issues such as the official recognition of the Society; the integration of the confreres into the general Social Security system and into Entraide Missionnaire Internationale; the houses of formation to be built, bought or sold in Altkirch, Bonnelles, Vals and Strasbourg; and the foundation of the house for elderly confreres in Bry sur Marne. To this must be added important building work in several houses such as Billère. He carried out all these tasks competently. His interpersonal skills and his availability were appreciated by all. It should be added that during these years his uncle was President of the Republic, which meant that he often celebrated

Mass at the Elysée Palace. He also realized that his name did not go unnoticed, but he never made anything of it, even if he sometimes found it rather heavy to bear.

After a refresher course at l'Arbresle, 1973 saw him return to Burkina Faso, still in the diocese of Koudougou. After a few years as parish priest of Mukasa, he was appointed Parish Priest of the Cathedral. He readapted quite easily, and his simplicity soon won him the esteem of the Christians, catechists and diocesan priests. His sense of organization helped him to put the files and finances of the parish in order. In community he was simple, warm and fraternal, even if he sometimes adopted the stance of a superior and protector. But his remarks were always interesting and encouraging. He also liked to do manual work. His Regional spoke of him as an 'excellent missionary'.

In 1986 he was appointed Parish Priest of Kokolgho where he remained until 2001. It is a parish of 15,000 Christians. He quickly understood that the work of the catechists was fundamental. Their formation and animation became his priority. He also collaborated closely with the Sisters. He knew how to mobilize the laity not only for parish life, but also for the many projects he would undertake : churches, cat-



echists' houses, dispensaries, dams, well drilling...He was helped by Father Joseph Billot, an engineer in Arts and Crafts. His name and his many contacts made access to sponsors for his projects easier. His confreres would tease him by saying that he had "the stone disease". He also worked to improve the living conditions of the people by helping them to improve on agriculture. But Francois was above all a shepherd who cared for his sheep, whom he loved very much, and who loved him in return. He was a man of prayer who took care of his spiritual life. He enjoyed welcoming people, and many would stop in Kokolgho to take advantage of his hospitality. The Superiors entrusted to him volunteers or stagiaires, all of whom would have many happy memories of their time in Koudougou or Kokolgho. Several of them would enter the seminary and become White Fathers, like Fr. Georges Jacques.

But life goes on and in 2000, he celebrated his golden jubilee of priesthood, for which the parishioners and the clergy organized a great feast. The following year, he left for Maison Lavigerie, the first phase centre for the Missionaries of Africa in Ouagadougou. The seminarians always appreciated his warm pres-

ence. He gave classes at the novitiate of the Sisters of the Immaculate Conception. He was often in demand for the Sacrament of Reconciliation, and he continued to do some ministry in the vicinity of the house of formation.

In 2008, he returned to Europe for good. His family offered him the position of chaplain of the Anne de Gaulle Foundation for children with Down's syndrome. But he refused because he wanted to live in a White Fathers community. However, he asked to be appointed to the region of Paris, because of the proximity to all his family to which he was very attached. He would therefore spend five years in Mours before joining Bry sur Marne. There he lived in thanksgiving and serenity, being able to write: "I am very serene, and at the same time happy with what I have accomplished during my long life, and happy to have seen the rise of the Church in Africa". As the years went by, his health slowly deteriorated and it was at the age of 98 that he passed away, on April 2, 2020. Unfortunately, this was the time of the total lockdown due to the Covid 19 pandemic, and he was buried alone without the presence of family or confreres.

Les confrères

Ben Vulkers

1923 – 2020



Bernard was born on 9th September 1923 in Zwolle, in the Netherlands. His maternal uncle was Brother Luc, Gerard Westervoorde, who worked in Uganda (+ 1937). Ben's own brother joined the Brothers of Tilburg in 1935.

To become a missionary Ben followed our formation in St.Charles near Boxtel, 's-Heerenberg, and Thibar, in Tunisia; he

took the missionary oath on 9th April 1948; was ordained on 1st February 1949 in Thibar.

Ben had a sound judgment and a strong will, giving one's all. He had to learn doing things less hurriedly and to be less tense. He was cheerful and friendly, easy to get along with, ever ready to render a service. He was very pious and had high ideals. As a student he played the harmonium; he loved music and singing. These characteristics remained evident until his high age: very pious, a longing to spend time in our chapel every day, always in a hurry to finish something.

Starting in September 1949 he did 3 months at Claughton Hall, in England, being initiated to the "British Way of Life". On 17th January 1950 he left for Tanzania, Mwanza, Kilulu Parish. There one noticed his efforts to learn the Sukuma language and culture, and his care for the liturgy. In December 1950 he moved to Bukumbi at Lake Victoria, the oldest Parish. It had some 3.300 Catholics and many catechumens. Safaris lasting a week were on bicycle. They crossed the



lake's bay in a small rowing-boat; only years later came a ferry for the cotton-lorries. In 1951 the parish priest fell ill, and young Ben was asked to take his place. From 1954 he was there for the parish with Nico Borst and a diocesan-priest. Piet van Pelt looked after the three top-classes of the primary-school. He handed the school over to diocesan Brothers, formed in Kisubi, Uganda.

It was the time of extending primary education; that year 3 schools were being built, 3 or 4 were planned for the following year, with the required teacher-houses. As there were no Brothers, the priests had to manage it in-between: measuring-off, having sundried mud-bricks made, rocks brought for the foundation and for the one-meter wall. They were also collecting money among the inhabitants for a clinic.

February 1956 he went to Nyarubere Parish to help prepare it for the handing-over to the Diocesan priests. That October he, Lambert van de Schans and Paul Tremblay went to start Kahangala parish. Just then bishop Blomjous decided that church personnel had to be financially supported by their own parish. That transition was quite heavy.

Easter 1960, after having replaced the parish priest in Bujora for 4 months he became the Director of the in 1957 erected Catechists-Centrum (CTC) in Bukumbi, with a two-year-course for couples. Ben was assisted by a trained Catechist, a White Sister and by a local lady. The programme for the Catechists included: religion, bible, liturgy, simplified sociology, singing, public reading and speaking, catechesis, house-visiting, managing a budget. For their wives: religion, bible, reading and writing, cooking, sewing, knitting, child-care. As there were few books in the local language, they composed those needed as they went along.

August 1964 Ben participated in the Pan-African Catechetical Study Week in Katigondo, Uganda. Then he went to Kipalapala for a ten-week language course to switch from Sukuma to Swahili.

January 1979 Ben handed over the CTC to a Diocesan priest. He wrote: "These 20 years were a period of hard work, but of great satisfaction too, as I could live to the full my missionary priest vocation. ... In the course of the years we adjusted our programme to the requirements of the time".



He then went to Kahangala Parish and helped them move the parish 5 km further to Magu, which had become the center of the District. The parish-buildings of Kahangala were extended so as to allow the First Phase formation of M. Afr. candidates from Tanzania and Zambia to take place on the premises.

February 1984 Ben was appointed to Ng'angika Parish, in the from Mwanza newly cut off Geita Diocese. The bishop wished a diocesan Catechists' Training Centre, but as there were no buildings nor personnel, Ben yearly went with two trained Catechists to each of the 8 parishes to give to all Catechists a one-week course. The remaining time he did pastoral work in the villages. In December 1986 he also became the Diocesan Auditor for Marriage-cases, Director for Catechesis and Coordinator for Pastoral matters. All these he assumed up to 1998 when he became 75.

November 1991 he was appointed to Nzera Parish, with 40 outstations for 50.000 inhabitants, 10 % Catholics. The population was a mixture of many ethnic groups. As the soil was very fertile and large areas were still undevel-

oped, many arrived from all corners of the country.

November 1993 he moved to Bukoli Parish.

October 2003 Ben turned 80, his voice was diminishing, and he started feeling the weight of the years, so he decided to return for good to the Netherlands. He settled in Heythuysen. On 9.1.2006 he took over as sacristan, later as assistant-sacristan until 2012.

Looking back on 53 years in Africa, Ben was very grateful to have had the privilege to live and work there so long, especially for the formation of Catechists, "those grand missionaries of the African continent". Grateful also to all who helped him: "First and foremost my heavenly Father who was ever at my side with Christ, that grand Catechist, and Mary our sweet Mother". His only regret was to leave those he loved, and the work he loved. But he remained very confident that the work would continue.

The last years he was in a wheelchair, and he spoke little. However, he gave the impression of being contented. He took part in all community activities. He started to need ever more care, which was



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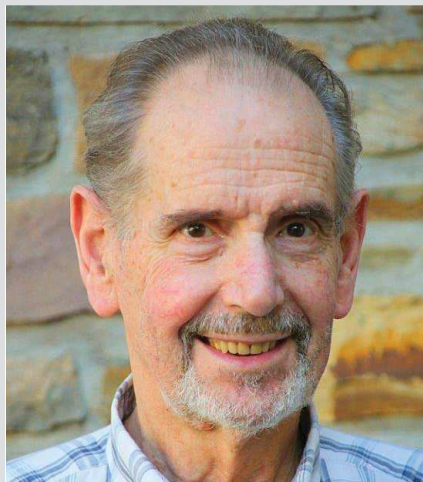
kindly given. Beginning April 2020 he weakened considerably, and the last two days a confrere sat up with him. On 14h April 2020 he peacefully died in his flat in the presence of a confrere.

On 18th we took leave of Ben in St. Charles Heythuysen, and

buried him in our cemetery there. The characteristic of Jesus which Ben highlighted in his life was: “He who reaps receives wages, and gathers fruit ... so that sower and reaper may rejoice together”. John 4,36.

Marien van den Eijnden
and Jozef de Bekker

Claude Jean-Pierre 1927 - 2020



Jean-Pierre was born on February 26, 1927 in Mons, in the Province of Hainaut, Diocese of Tournai. His father was teacher in Brussels. He was an atheist. Jean-Pierre was in his second year of Classical Studies at the Jesuit Apostolic School in Verviers when war broke out in May 1940. The director organized the evacuation. They left in a lorry and took the last train at the Guillemins station in Liège for Brussels, but the convoy was bombed at Fexhe-le-Haut-Clocher. The pitiful troop of children, accompanied by a few Jesuits, continued on foot, through fields and woods, and arrived in

Charleroi on May 14. Father Robert Claude watched over his nephew Jean-Pierre, whom he intended to take home in Mons. This city being bombed; they decide to move on to France. They passed through Quévy, survived a terrible bombing in Bavay and arrived in Valenciennes on May 19. There they found a truck to Amiens. At Escaudoevres, 3 km from Cambrai, a plane hit them and launched a gust of air: it dug a double bloody trail through the truck. The Germans, from a barge on the nearby Scheldt, fired a second burst... Some 200 bullets sifted the truck. Fifteen dead, including thirteen children (all aspiring missionaries!), fourteen wounded including Jean-Pierre (at the foot), and six unharmed. He was thirteen years old.

Jean-Pierre finished his secondary studies at the St-Jean-Berchmans College in Brussels. In September 1945, he entered the White Fathers at Thy-le-Château, did his novitiate at Varsenare and theology at Marienthal, for the first year, and at Heverlee, where he took his missionary Oath on 21st July 1951, and was ordained priest on 12th April 1952. His formators



emphasize his rather closed, taciturn and uncommunicative character. Indeed, his confidence had to be earned. He had a good intelligence, was devoted, generous and delicate. He was of a rich nature, endowed with a strong will; however, he was not a leader. He was pious and quiet. He could be a little dry in community. After his ordination, Jean-Pierre did a year of Roman philology at the University of Louvain, adding the courses that would replace his military service. He was medically cautioned not to overwork (he also suffers from stomach ache), he was exempted from exams and prepared to go to Africa.

On 7th October 1953, Jean-Pierre flew to Burundi. He was appointed curate and director of the primary school in Giheta, in the Diocese of Gitega. Soon, however, severe fatigue and stomach aches forced him to consult a doctor. In February 1954, the doctor sent him back to Europe and warned Bishop Grauls about this. Having heard about that, Jean-Pierre wrote to the Belgian Provincial explaining how he immediately went up to Gitega to tell Bishop Grauls of his desire to remain in the mission. On March 5, 1954, Jean-Pierre took the plane again, after 5 months in Africa.

Appointed to Thy-le-Château,

he became professor of biology, liturgy, missiology and Latin. In June 1955, he consulted a specialist in Louvain who found, in addition to asthenia, “a complete demineralization which had been progressing for years” and prescribed a diet of natural products instead of drugs. In 1956, he was appointed to Namur (Chaussée de Charleroi) to take over the secretariat and the accounts of the magazine *Grands Lacs*. A bookstore service was established to serve the magazine’s subscribers. Jean-Pierre opened it to confreres and to all missionaries working in Africa, which they greatly appreciated. He published a small newsletter “Actualité du Livre”. In 1976, the ‘Boekhandeldienst’ that existed at the Procure in Antwerp was absorbed (“which I took over, as I accepted everything too easily”), including the innumerable subscriptions to magazines. Overwhelmed, Jean-Pierre would ask in vain for the appointment of a confrère to help him. He succeeded in arranging for confreres not to have to pay the value added tax (VAT).

In 1978 he moved to our new house in the District of La Plante in Namur. Jean-Pierre was in charge of the layout of the large garden below the new house. At the age of ninety, he would still mow the enormous lawn. In 1982, after many



painful and difficult discussions, the bookstore service was stopped and confreres would henceforth address themselves to the UOPC in Brussels. Jean-Pierre was now completely free for Photos-Service and became the assistant of Gust Beeckmans. He took care of the administration with the meticulousness that characterized him and cared also for dispatching the famous series of photos, later CD-Roms, to magazines and subscribing publications.

His main apostolate was at the chaplaincy of Mont-Godinne, a university clinic, where he went by car three times a week.

In the house he maintained two enormous aquariums: "a corner of nature at home", as he liked to say. No surprise then that from the very beginning he was the secretary of the Walloon Aquarium Society. The premises of this association were in Franière, where Jean-Pierre equipped an important specialized library. In 2006, it counted 150 members, among which some French from the North. It published an information and training bulletin. Every month, he convened a meeting.

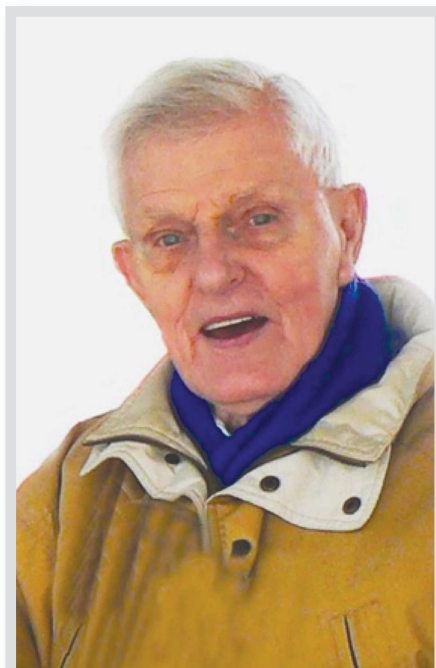
Jean-Pierre was an assiduous reader of Reader's Digest. He had a rich collection of art albums. He was a fanatic of newspaper cross-words. He was always the first to read the newspapers and never failed to point out spelling mistakes in red and to indicate certain articles to his confrères. Every morning at breakfast, he told a joke which he found on his calendar pad.

In memory of May 1940, Jean-Pierre kept a beret with a piece of shrapnel on it. The images of the tragedy never left him. On several occasions, he took part in the commemoration organized in Escaudoeuvres at the cemetery and in the "Chapel of the Martyrs" erected on the place of the event.

His whole life was marked by poor health. In November 2019, his condition required constant monitoring and so he joined our community in Evere (Brussels), where he adapted easily. In April he fell in his room and was taken, unconscious, to the Brugmann hospital where he died slowly on Wednesday, April 15. The funeral took place 'in private' - corona obliging - in Varsenare on Wednesday 22 April.

Jef Vleugels

Karel Louwen 1933 – 2020



He had sound judgment and a good brain. He had personal opinions and knew how to present them. These did not always go down well, however. He was communicative by nature, and had the gift, when the conversation halted, to make some comic observations and to get the conversation going again. A confrere thought of Karel as “matter-of-fact, with laconic observations”.

He was a go-getter, who would take initiative. He had a sense of responsibility. At times he was forgetful. Always ready to render a service, he was ever cheerful, optimistic and showed concern for the needy.

Karel was born in Rotterdam on 19th January 1933. He qualified as retailer in the textile industry and was for years sales manager. To become a missionary he followed our formation in St.Charles near Boxtel and in ‘s-Heerenberg, where he took the missionary Oath on 30th July 1958 as Brother Liduinus. For further formation he went to Marienthal, in Luxembourg.

Between 1960 – 1964 he was appointed twice to the Provincial house in Boxtel and twice in Sterksel for technical service and as doorkeeper. The second time in Sterksel he followed a car-mechanic course. In between he did promotion-work in Rotterdam. In the summers he was a leader in youth camps.

He had done his formation in English, but was appointed to



French-speaking Rwanda. Before going there, he was asked to go to Congo, as many confreres had left after the 1964 rebellion. Although the situation was still troubled, Karel accepted. To learn French he went in 1964 to our community in Namur, where he also worked in a garage to master the diesel-engine technique. He wrote: "My hands are geared more to oil and spanners than to pen and ink"!

On 19th September 1965 Karel left for Mahagi in Congo. At that time confreres as much as the local population spent the night in the forest. They were kept awake by continuous shooting. The cook would come and tell when it was safe to return for a few hours to the Bishop's house. It took months before the area would be safe again. The situation was even more heavy for Karel, as he had to learn both French and the local Alur to be able to communicate properly!

Initially he repaired some machinery and helped distributing aid. Later on he was put in charge of the building-work in the Diocese. In 1966 he built a Diocesan garage and carpentry-shop; July 1967 a girls-secondary-school; then a leprosy-centrum. He wrote on 10th December 1967: "To do this well

requires a lot of preparation and browsing through reference-books". Those days he started touring the Diocese for repairs in parishes, convents and clinics.

Beginning 1977 the M. Afr. took-over the Parish in Aba. During the rebellion priests and Sisters were murdered there? Buildings were looted and destroyed. Karel started repairing the buildings. He wrote on 12th June 1977: "It is hard to obtain the materials, the costs are incredible. For half a year no mail is getting through".

End 1978 he moved to the Diocese of Bunia and became guest master in a large guesthouse for several dioceses. He wrote in January 1978: "I loved being in the bush. Town-life is quite different, and in my work one does not too often meet common people". Moreover, one spoke Swahili there, so he started learning that language. He was quite busy: shopping for the guesthouse and for parishes, booking air-tickets, looking for visas and obtaining custom clearance. "One has to have much patience and a large smile", he wrote.

His health had never been perfect. Already in 1970 he had neck and shoulder complaints and these were getting ever more severe. It



appeared these were caused by a spine-anomaly. He was supposed to avoid bending and lifting things. Not easy for a builder or mechanic! End 1979 he lost appetite and started losing weight. October 1980 he went to the Netherlands for treatment, even to the United-States. May 1981 he had recovered sufficiently to be doorkeeper in St. Charles near Boxtel. October 1982 he could return to the Diocese of Mahagi and start building in Laybo.

April 1984 he returned to the Diocese of Bunia to build in Muhito the “Foyer de Charité” which would receive individuals or groups for spiritual reflection and retreats. During the week he lived in that community, for the week-ends he had a room in the M.Afr. procure in Bunia.

January 1992 he returned to Mahagi to look after the carpentry-shop, to build a girls’ secondary school and to do maintenance-work. In July there were worrying disorders again. The money kept devaluating, soldiers and civil-servants were not paid, and a new government kept being delayed. Fortunately, they lived in an agricultural area, so there was no lack of food. But the tensions remained

and Karel’s health worsened again. He went to the Netherlands on sick-leave and remained there.

On 18th May 1998 he went to live in our community in Leid-schendam where he was bursar up to January 2000. He got proficient with the computer and started sending to his friends inspiring messages and short films which he took on internet. Mid December 2003 he moved to Heythuysen. He walked with ever more difficulty, had to use a walking-stick and got a chair-scooter. He was so competent with the computer that he could with pleasure and much patience help many with their computer-problems.

In the summer in 2019, his overall health condition deteriorated even more. He had increasing pain and discomfort, getting more and more medications as well. But despite pain and discomfort, Karel remained always cheerful and optimistic. Up to the very last he kept saying a cheerful word and cracking a joke.

Mid April 2020 he was hospitalized in Roermond twice with general shortness of breath. On 22th April 2020 he peacefully died there, half an hour after two confreres had visited him and prayed

with him. On 27th we said farewell to him in St.Charles Heythuysen, and buried him in our cemetery there.

The characteristic of Jesus which Karel highlighted in his life was: "... who will receive a hun-

dredfold now in this time, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions ..." Mk.10,30

Marien van den Eijnden
and Jozef de Bekker.

Marcel Amport 1934 - 2020



carpentry which he completed with a diploma. He then did his military service.

On August 13, 1955, he entered the postulancy of the White Fathers in Langenfeld (Germany); on March 19 of the following year he began his novitiate. His formation as a missionary Brother led him to Hörstel, Marienthal, Totteridge and Dorking (UK). After formation, he worked first in construction in Widnau and then in a car repair garage in Lucerne.

Marcel Amport was born on 26th March 1934 in Kestenholz, Canton of Solothurn, in Switzerland, in a family of four children. After primary school, he learned

In 1962, he was appointed to Mozambique. First he went to Lisbon for three months to learn Portuguese. His first appointments in Mozambique were in Charré, Mur-



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raça, Lundo and Manga Beina. He took his final missionary Oath on 22nd of March 1964 in Charré. From 1965, he was in charge of construction and carpentry work in Gorongoza. In 1968, after a leave of absence in Switzerland, he returned to Charré where he built mission outstations. For this work, he sometimes spent five months alone on site. After his stay in Charré he worked in Inyangoma and Murraça on various building projects.

In May 1971 all the White Fathers in Mozambique left the country as a sign of protest against the colonial policy of the government of the day. Marcel went to Malawi. He built the chapel of the Minor Seminary of Saint Kizito in Mten-dere, in the Diocese of Dedza. In 1975, he built the Catechist Centre whose administration he would at a later date look after. In the spring of 1980, he attended the biblical session and the great retreat in Jerusalem. In 1983, he was appointed to Tsangano, then the following year to the parish of Sharpe Vale.

In 1989, he had to return to Switzerland to be treated for skin

cancer. However, he was able to return to Malawi for a short stay which was to be his farewell to the country. Heart problems forced him to return to Switzerland for good. He lived in the community of Lucerne, where he was in charge of the administration of the magazine “Kontinente”.

In 2010, when our house in Lucerne was sold, Marcel stayed for a few months in our community in Fribourg and then moved to a home where two confreres were already living. Wishing to be closer to his family, he applied for and obtained a place in a home in Lucerne where he spent the last three years of his life.

In May 2020, he was hospitalized for a few days because of breathing problems. Noticing how his condition was worsening, he asked to return to the hospital. It was then discovered that he was suffering from pneumonia. Marcel died on May 15.

A celebration in his memory was held in Fribourg on June 13 2020, bringing together the community and some of his relatives.

Jean-Marie Gabioud

Lucien Van Wielendaele

1929 - 2020



Lucien was born on 18th June 1929, in Nederbrakel, in the diocese of Gent, Province of East Flanders. He followed the Greco-Latin humanities at the Sint Antonius College in Renaix (Ronse), where he was much appreciated as head of the K.S.A. (Catholic Student Action). In September 1947 he joined the White Fathers in Bouchout, did the novitiate in Varsenare, and theology in Heverlee. His mother died on July 11, 1953, one month before he took his Missionary Oath. Lucien was ordained priest on April 18, 1954. His formators appreciated his ardent spirit, sign of the per-

sonality of an apostle; he was a true idealist, hard on himself, but nevertheless balanced in temperament, always even-tempered, devoted and dynamic. He was an excellent organizer and worker; a leader who knew how to lead others. He was supernatural and at the same time very human. He was someone you could count on. He was rather discreet in community, a bit severe and firm. He was very successful with young people. In 1958, he obtained at the University of Louvain a licentiate in classical philology with aggregation. In the students' community of the Vital Decosterstraat in Leuven, he would later write, they had tried to practice "the \pm strict observance" of the White Father rules of conduct.

His first appointment was for one year in our minor seminary in Sterksel, in the Netherlands. In August 1959, when he was able to embark for Bunia, Ituri, with Mgr. Matthijssen, who sent him to the minor seminary of Fataki, he wrote "my missionary dream is coming true". The program of studies was fortunately for the last time still Belgian, including the teaching of



Greek and Dutch. He will also be in charge of Catholic Action in the south of the Diocese. With the help of the founder, Father Defour, Lucien started the Xaveris movement with success; up to that time only the Legion of Mary and the League of Sacred Heart were known there. He would travel in an old VW or on a motorbike. He reflected a lot and quoted at the beginning of August 1961, the wise words of an old confrere: "We worked a lot for the blacks, rarely with them, always above them, never under them. Now we must work with them and under them". "Unfortunately he does not know the language of the country," noted Fr. Vereecke, the Regional in 1962. Lucien, for his part, hoped that after his time in the teaching profession, he could finally join "the real missionary life".

In 1966, he was called back by his Province for home Service. After visiting Nigeria, Dahomey (Benin), Ghana, Ivory Coast, Mali and Morocco, he reached Roeselare where he settled having brought with him a collection of hundreds of slides. He spent a week in each of the big parishes with a new beautiful exhibition on Africa, showing in the evenings slides on "Man in Africa" and on meetings with

confreres who had been in Congo. He also collaborated with the Pontifical Missionary Works to obtain scholarships for priests in Africa. In December 1968, he was called to Brussels as Secretary of the Province and nine months later he became second Assistant Provincial. In August 1969, barely nine months after this appointment he was appointed Provincial after consultation of 700 Belgian White Fathers.

Many changes took place during his two terms of office. The heaviest of all came after the Council, when many confreres left the Society and the priesthood. Lucien took it as a personal failure, as if he had not been able to hold them back. Other changes were material in nature. In 1970 our house in Bouchout was sold and a new community was opened at Cogels-Osylei in Berchem. In Leuven, the house in the Vital Decosterstraat was sold and in 1971 a house in the Frederik Lintsstraat was bought. The provincial bursar's office left the Linthoutstraat and moved to rue Pelletier in 1971. The community of lecturers and students at Lumen Vitae moved to rue Lincoln in 1970 and to rue du Prévôt in 1972. In 1973 a piece of land was purchased in rue Charles Degroux, where the new Provincialate was inaugurated in July



1974. At the beginning of 1973, a parish community was started in Dongelberg. The same year a piece of land was bought in Genk, where the new house was opened in June 1976. At the beginning of 1976, an agreement was made with the Sisters of Ardooie, for the construction of Avondrust. While the Provincial Bursar Fr. Christian Deltenre followed the construction closely, Lucien looked after the 160 or so confreres in the Province, some of whom were getting very old. He also found time to visit the other Belgians, in Algeria, Burundi and West Africa. At the beginning of 1974, he attended a four-week course at the London English School.

From July 1976, he took a short sabbatical and followed the session at L'Arbresle. In February 1977, he returned to Bunia. After a few months in Badiya, Mgr. Ukec appointed him Director of Vocations. Lucien then edited a booklet (*Appelés pour un monde nouveau*), in which he described concretely the different types of vocations. He was also Chaplain of all Catholic Schools and visited them parish by parish. At that time he discovered with enthusiasm the Charismatic Movement. He was also a member of the Regional Council. During

his leave in 1983, he attended the retreat session in Jerusalem. At the end of 1984, the bishops named him "Père spirituel résident de notre Théologat interdiocésain de Bunia", where the priests of the nine dioceses of the Eastern Province were trained. One year later, our own philosophy seminary in Bukavu needed him and for six years he took part in the formation of our Congolese candidates. He was diocesan chaplain of the "Charismatic Renewal". On July 1 1991, Lucien was appointed Assistant Regional for South-East Congo. During his two mandates he was often on the road, by car, plane or boat, to meet the confreres from North Kivu to South Katanga. He was a good listener, but also someone who would take decisions.

In 1997, the Bishop of Bukavu asked him to revive the Christian periodical "Karibu", which Mobutu had banned. Lucien then lived in "Maison Saint Paul" in Bukavu. In September 1999, he had to bring forward his leave for health reasons and took the opportunity to follow in Rome the session for confreres over 70 years of age. In August 2002, he was called to lead the "propaedeutic", the "Foyer Ngon-go", in Goma. He started having problems to keep his balance. In



2005, he was able to return to his first love, Bunia, where the consequences of the war were still cruelly felt. He would always remember the poor state in which the priests' house was left; 11 doors and so many window paints smashed. His main apostolate was to give Bible and liturgy courses in the internovitiate of four congregations.

Throughout his life, Lucien, through Caritas or Proma, helped poor institutions (orphanages, schools, homes for the handicapped...). He regularly gave money to a whole range of organizations. Many poor, beggars and sick people were helped by him. "What you did to the least of mine, you did to me... Jesus breathed in the depth of my heart", he noted in 2010. And also: "I was and still am very happy in my missionary vocation, in Africa and in Belgium, thanks

to the presence of Jesus in me, the divine Missionary".

On 2 August 2010, he left Bunia and Africa... He stayed for a few years in the rue de Linthout in Brussels. On 18 April 2014, he celebrates his jubilee of 60 years of ordination. In September 2014, he was appointed to the community of Varsenare. At first he was rather unhappy, but he soon found himself at home there. However, there was urgency, because he became more and more confused and he lost track of time and place. In January 2016 he had to be transferred to Avondrust. In the last few months he did no longer recognize anybody. He died peacefully on May 20 in Avondrust. The funeral took place in Varsenare on Saturday, May 23rd, privately because of the restrictions due to the coronavirus.

Jef Vleugels

Missionaries of Africa

Father Aloys Reiles, of the Diocese of Luxembourg. He died in Luxembourg, on the 21st June 2020, at the age of 88 of which 66 years of missionary life in Great Britain, Uganda and Luxembourg.

Father Willy Delen, of the Diocese of Utrecht, Netherlands. He died in Heythuysen, the Netherlands, on the 4th July 2020 at the age of 86 of which 58 years of missionary life in Uganda and the Netherlands.

Father Landry Pierre, of the Diocese of Gaspé, Canada. He died in Sherbrooke, Canada, on the 13th of July 2020, at the age of 92 years, of which 67 years of missionary life in Uganda and Canada.

Missionary Sisters of Our Lady of Africa

Sister Anne Schweller (Antonita). She died in Trier, Germany, on the 27th of June 2020, at the age of 95 years, of which 70 years of religious missionary life in Algeria and Germany.

Sister Antonia de Bekker (Adriani). She died in Boxtel, the Netherlands, on the 7th of July 2020, at the age of 95 years, of which 69 years of religious missionary life in Tanzania and the Netherlands.

Sister Marie Bracquemond (Paul Christine). She died in Verrières-Le-Buisson on the 7th July 2020 at the age of 94 years, of which 70 years of religious missionary life in Algeria, Mauritania and France.

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